

# Giving the Hawaiian Way

*Supporting 2,000 Years of Good Ideas*

*Na Pualei o Likolehua* is an award winning *halau hula* (school of hula) that engages authentic Hawaiian culture and knowledge. Since its inception in 1976, this *halau* maintains and perpetuates the ethics of hula and the language and values of Hawai'i's indigenous peoples, valuable links to Hawai'i's past that are critical to its future. By training women to become knowledgeable teachers for future generations, *Na Pualei o Likolehua* ensures traditional practices will endure through time.

*Na Pualei o Likolehua* and organizations like it are vitally important not just to Native Hawaiians, but to all who love Hawai'i. These special schools and the *kumu* (teachers) who dedicate their lives to them are the keepers of thousands of years of Native knowledge about an island home in the Pacific. All that Native Hawaiians are—ancient chants that record their journey from the past to the present; the knowledge of places and best practices, both ancient and modern; the perpetuation of language and the ability to carry the Native Hawaiian culture into the future—hinges on the existence of these special *halau*. Without them, Hawai'i is merely a tropical location, but with *halau*, Hawai'i continues to be home to a unique culture and people for all to share and celebrate.

A new fund, the Hawaiian Way Fund, that celebrates the Hawaiian way by which *aloha* is shared and honors the indigenous culture of

Hawai'i was introduced into the local philanthropic community in December 2003 by the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA).

CNHA is a nonprofit organization composed of more than 50 organizations from around Hawai'i and the nation, all of which work in, or direct their attention to, Native Hawaiian community development initiatives. CNHA's mission is to serve Native Hawaiian populations through empowerment and informational initiatives. Its core programming consists of successful year-round training and technical assistance to bring resources to Native Hawaiian communities as well as effective informational products that support community development organizations to increase capacity and reach.

Native Hawaiians are the indigenous people of the Hawaiian archipelago, known as the state of Hawai'i. They are a member of the Polynesian family of people, with ancestral homelands in Hawai'i for more than 2,000 years. In addition to Native Hawaiians living in Hawai'i, there are more than 160,000 Native Hawaiians living in the contiguous 48 states and Alaska. While this Native community of approximately 240,000, representing 20 percent of the population in Hawai'i, faces considerable challenges in the areas of economic opportunity, education, health and housing, Native Hawaiians have made significant strides. However, great dispar-

*The Hawaiian Way Fund supports organizations that provide children with human services and an appreciation of the rich Native Hawaiian culture.*



ity continues to exist. In the state of Hawai'i specifically, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) population

- lags behind the majority Asian population and non-Hispanic white population in education (only 18 percent have an associate's degree or higher, compared with 35 percent of the total population);
- has a 21 percent poverty rate, which is higher than all other population groups in the state and 10 percentage points higher than the statewide poverty rate;
- has a lower per capita income (\$14,375) than the Asian (\$22,884) and non-Hispanic white (\$30,199) populations in the state;
- and experiences severe overcrowding at home, reflective of larger and extended families or the inability of individual family members to afford to establish their own households (while 32 percent of the NHPI population and 17 percent of the Asian population are classified as overcrowded, only 6 percent of non-Hispanic white households are overcrowded).<sup>1</sup>

CNHA remains steadfast in its belief that Native Hawaiian communities hold many of the best solutions and ideas to addressing their challenges. The Hawaiian Way Fund represents the support of community solutions that are tied to and celebrate the history, values and knowledge of the indigenous peoples of Hawai'i in all areas of community well-being, whether in the delivery of education, health care, affordable housing, language or cultural and environmental practices—truly supporting 2,000 years of good ideas.

While Hawai'i's local Aloha United Way programs provide funding to many important and valuable nonprofit organizations—mainly health and human services organizations—the Hawaiian Way Fund is unique in that it directly impacts Hawaiian programs and Hawaiian-based initiatives.

The Hawaiian Way Fund represents an alternative giving center that supports and builds capacity and staying power for successful projects that provide qualitative service and promote community building inside Native Hawaiian communities. The creation of the Hawaiian Way Fund solidifies a place and space for individual philanthropists and corporate contributors to invest in things Hawaiian, receive recognition and be assured that their investments and gifts are accounted for and have impact.

“There is no doubt that some of the best achievements and progress made with Native Hawaiian youth occurs, for example, when educational programs are available that acknowledge where they come from, who they are and instills the pride and strength of their ancestors,” says Robin Danner, CNHA president and CEO. “The sharing of things Hawaiian is a powerful foundation not just for our Hawaiian children, but everyone in our state. Hawaiian culture is a resource that we must encourage, we must build upon and something that serves everyone.”

The Hawaiian Way Fund was conceived by CNHA as a means to bolster support for small grassroots organizations struggling to serve overwhelming needs in Hawaiian communities with scarce resources. “We know that there are numerous private individuals and businesses that would support a charitable cause for Native Hawaiian initiatives if given an opportunity to do so,” Danner states. Danner adds that while nonprofits are “working hard and creating real change and new possibilities for our communities, the Hawaiian Way Fund creates a venue for anyone to share their *aloha* and support some pretty incredible community organizations.”

Community organizations that will benefit from the Hawaiian Way Fund include affordable housing providers, community associations, health care initiatives, charter schools that promote Native Hawaiian indigenous rights and culture and *halau hula* (school of hula like *Na Pualei o Likolehua*)—small grassroots groups sustained largely through volunteerism—“who teach our children their culture, engage them in arts and sports, take care of our *kupuna* (elders) and look after our unique and precious resources. These community heroes deserve to receive as much support as they give,” says Danner.

Like *halau hula*, another organization that will be served by the Hawaiian Way Fund is *Na Lei Na'auao*, a statewide alliance of Native Hawaiian Charter Schools. *Na Lei*, which consists of 12 culture-based charter schools throughout the state, was established on the premise that the indigenous people of Hawaii have the right to establish and control their educational systems according to their customs and traditions. *Na Lei Na'auao* uses community-based models of education that are reflective of Hawaiian cultural values, philosophies and ideologies, all intertwined with modern teaching approaches to

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1. Data obtained from analysis created by the Asian Pacific American Community Development Data Center.

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the argument that only commercial media deserve unlimited advocacy rights. Under this definition, some old reliable progressive media outlets, like Altnet or Mother Jones, could be subject to nonprofit advocacy limits.

If that isn't confusing enough, it is not clear who will call the shots on nonprofit advocacy and issue education rules. Facing a flurry of new non-profits (so-called 527, c3 and c4 groups) to compete with President Bush's huge war chest, two Republican FEC commissioners demanded that the FEC redefine advocacy limits for non-profits. The problem is, of course, that the IRS already has a woefully misunderstood set of rules for nonprofit advocacy, lobbying and electoral activity. To the relief of many and the chagrin of others, the FEC ducked the question by deciding it could not change the rules six months before the elections. The 527s were allowed to stay in the game until November, but the FEC or the IRS will eventually have to clarify the rules. So get ready for another debate about nonprofit advocacy rights. If we want to win the game for media reform, we'll have to pay attention to who is calling the shots and where new lines are being drawn on the field. ☺

### Answers to Media Acronym Quiz:

1. What do NRA and NOW (the National Organization for Women) have in common? *They both lobbied against the FCC's deregulation of media ownership.*
2. What do NRA and NPR have in common? *They are both "media outlets" and are allowed to continue campaigning until the elections, unlike nonprofit advocacy groups.*
3. What do NPR and NAB (the National Association of Broadcasters) have in common? *They both lobbied against creating 1,000 new low-power radio stations.*
4. What do NAB and NCRP have in common? *The letter N.*

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the sciences, mathematics and technologies. The alliance has the potential of improving the educational success rates of thousands of kindergarten through 12th grade students. These students are currently the most underserved and undereducated population in Hawai'i.

The State Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA) is another organization supported by the Hawaiian Way Fund. The SCHHA is a statewide coalition of community associations serving residents of the Hawaiian Home Land areas, unique trust lands set aside for the specific purpose of perpetuating Native Hawaiian people and life ways. The SCHHA promotes healthy communities by creating forums for solutions to be shared and implements community-based projects and programs in the unique trust lands of the Hawaiian Home Lands program.

The most basic goal of the Hawaiian Way Fund is to support important community-based initiatives in all areas of community development. It empowers community associations and charter schools to increase their reach and mul-

tiply their impact. The Hawaiian Way Fund provides a place for anyone interested in things Hawaiian to share their *aloha* and support for a myriad of initiatives.

Anyone interested in supporting such community-based initiatives may contribute to the Hawaiian Way Fund through direct contributions, employee payroll deductions, automatic electronic transfers and estate planning. The Hawaiian Way Fund is also seeking employer support through corporate matching programs.

The Hawaiian Way Fund currently has 16 partner-recipient organizations, ranging from affordable housing providers to cultural practitioners and educators, to health care providers and charter schools. The first allocations from the Hawaiian Way Fund will be distributed at CNHA's 3rd Annual Native Hawaiian Conference Aug. 31—Sept. 3, 2004. ☺

*For more information about the Hawaiian Way Fund visit CNHA's Web site at [www.hawaiian-council.org](http://www.hawaiian-council.org).*