



Homestead award ends family's 51-year wait

205 Hawaiian families get home lots in Kapolei project

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For many, it was a line several decades long.

But patience was rewarded yesterday when the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands awarded 205 families home lots in its East Kapolei project.

Vivian Perreira, 73, had been waiting for 51 years.

Today, she has four grown sons and several grandchildren. She plans to offer her home lot to her youngest son.

The Hawaiian Home Lands Department plans to award more than 1,000 home lots in Kapolei.

[By Gene Park](#)

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Vivian Perreira's road to home ownership began on July 29, 1957.

She applied for a Hawaiian homestead lot when she was a young mother and wife, married to a man who made little more than a dollar an hour for work.

Over the years, she and her husband piled up debt with credit cards and medical bills of raising four sons.

After a half-century, Perreira is debt-free and was among 205 families selected to lease a home lot yesterday by the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

"Don't get VISA cards," the 73-year-old laughed as she offered her advice for other families waiting for home lots. "I've waited long enough."

The Hawaiian Home Lands Department made the selections for the first phase of its East Kapolei project, the largest master-plan community project in Hawaii, said DHHL Chairman Micah Kane. More than 1,000 home lots are to be awarded.

The department gave out undivided interest awards, given to struggling families with weak financial standing. That means there are no pre-qualifications, but the applicants are required to participate in the department's home ownership program and engage in one-to-one counseling to better their situation.

People like Perreira had to prove they had their fiscal wherewithal before being awarded a lease.

"It's not so much the home, but the journey there that's important," Kane said.

Perreira's journey began because she wanted to find an open-air homestead home for her first-born son, who suffered from asthma. Instead, she moved to Waimanalo, where she still lives in a rented home.

Now that she has a lease, she plans to give the lot to her youngest son, who is 49 with a son and a daughter in their 20s. He has been staying with his parents as their caretaker for the past 10 years.

"At least now we can say it'll be ours," she said. "First thing my son will ask me is to move all my junk."

The lots awarded yesterday should be completed by 2013.

Kane credited the Office of Hawaiian Affairs with helping make the project possible.

In June, the OHA Board of Trustees voted to provide up to \$90 million over 30 years to DHHL to cover interest payments on bonds to build housing projects.

OHA also gives about half a million dollars every year to the state's Home Ownership Assistance Program so the service can continue to be free for lessees, said OHA Chairwoman Haunani Apoliona.

"It helps to prepare the families for the kinds of decision-making they have to sit with in their lives," she said. "I'm a social worker by training. Having a stable home is very critical for the many other things that go on."

Kane said yesterday's awardees are equipped with the skills that they will need, and if not, the assistance program can help with job training.

"If there's a crisis in the family, someone loses their job, we have a program ready to bridge them to a job immediately. We're prepared to weather the storm," Kane said.

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