



**HUI HO'OMALU**  
**STATEWIDE**  
**RESOURCE**  
**ADVISORY**  
**COMMITTEE**

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# Building Connections

A Newsletter for Foster/Resource Families



Volume 2, Issue 2

March 2009

## 'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER

### Expanding Boundaries

*By Wilma Friesema, EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing  
 Bernie Hvidding, EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing*

*For this Connections Corner I interviewed Bernie Hvidding my co-worker at EPIC. I thought Bernie would have an interesting perspective on renewing family connections between foster youth and their families since he was a social worker for 15 years; his foster son, David, has been with him for 14 years; and he works as an 'Ohana Engagement Specialist at EPIC. Little did I realize that an earlier, and deeply personal, journey helped form his perspective too.*

*—Wilma Friesema*

**Wilma:** Bernie, when you think of family connections work what comes to mind?

**Bernie:** In Western thinking there's been a myth that to develop strong connections to a new family you have to break all connections with the past family. But that's not true. In fact, just the opposite is true.

I grew up on the mainland and was the oldest of ten kids, which meant I had a lot of family responsibility early on. We were a poor, but close family. As attached as I was to my family, when I entered the Peace Corps after college I learned a whole new lesson about what family means.

I was sent to Samoa, and in Samoa the custom is: if you live with a family, you're adopted into that family. I found it was more than just a custom, though, as a real bond developed. I felt very attached to my Samoan family, and when I returned to the States after two years it was a hard adjustment to be away from them. It caused me to reevaluate some of my American customs and attitudes about family. I found I couldn't just leave my Samoan family as a memory.

Another family custom in Samoa is: if I'm acceptable to the family, then my whole biological family is acceptable to them too. While I was in Samoa my host family sent their granddaughter, Siu, to live with my parents. They felt they could trust my parents because they trusted me.

*In Western thinking, there's been a myth that to develop strong connections to a new family you have to break all connections with the past family...But that's not true...In fact, just the opposite is true.*

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**HUI HO'OMALU  
STATEWIDE  
RESOURCE  
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COMMITTEE**

*The Hui Ho'omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the foster/resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.*

The Building Connections Newsletter is published four times a year to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to foster/resource parents, service providers, legal guardians and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

[www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/  
social\\_services/child\\_welfare/  
foster](http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster)

[www.pidfoundation.org](http://www.pidfoundation.org)

To be placed on the mailing list or if you would like to receive an electronic copy, please call 441-1125 (O'ahu), 888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or E-mail: [RAC@pidfoundation.org](mailto:RAC@pidfoundation.org)

Partners in Development  
Foundation  
2040 Bachelot St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-2433

## 'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER (cont.)

When I returned home I got to know Siu and after 1 ½ years we were married. We moved to Hawai'i so we would be between both of our families and live in a multi-cultural environment. I remained close with my biological family, but was also welcomed into my Samoan family which believes the more people in a family the better.

**Wilma:** So how did that influence your perspective on foster youth's connection to their families?

**Bernie:** Well, it influenced me to work for Child Welfare Services. In my work as a CPS investigator and case manager, whenever I removed a child I always assessed the family's resources and availability. Even if I couldn't place the child with family, I always worked to try to maintain family connections. In about 95% of the families I worked with there was always at least one family member who was healthy, stable, and understood the importance of staying in contact with their relative in foster care. I never felt like it should be an "either/or" type of response -- you can be safe OR be with your family, but you can't have both. Instead, it should be an "also/and" response -- you can be safe AND still stay connected to your family.



I found this to be true when I became a foster parent too. When my family and I took David into our home I knew he could develop an attachment to us like I had developed with my Samoan family. I also knew I wanted to encourage and respect the attachment he had to his biological family, some of whom live here and others who live in Alaska. I never put any restrictions on calls to Alaska, for example, or on visits with relatives in Hawai'i. Granted, he never wanted to see someone who might be extremely problematic-- if that had been the case I might have put some precautionary measures in place -- but I think he didn't need to test or push on boundaries because I had that "also/and" attitude.

As a foster parent, I always felt the first step was to bring David into my home. The next step was to bring him into my heart. When I brought him into my heart, what was important to him became important to me, and that included his family. I remember the day David's brother, Isaac, came to visit from the mainland. They had lost contact for many years and when they first saw each other -- well it was a beautiful thing to see. Clearly there was a puka in David's life he could now fill.

**Wilma:** How has David's connection to family enhanced your family?

*Continued on Page 3*

*'Ohana Connections Corner (cont. from page 2)*

**Bernie:** David was excited to introduce Isaac to our family, and now Isaac is like a cousin to my own biological children. Whenever we hook up with his family that lives here on O’ahu I feel their appreciation for what we’ve done for David, but there’s also a mutual respect. I’ve always found it’s more helpful to be inclusive, rather than exclusive, and that people generally respond in a positive way when they’re accepted.

On a deeper, more personal level, I think it’s been expanding for my whole family to have played a part in healing an old wound, even if it wasn’t our own personal wound. For me, it’s been a way to pay back the caring that I’ve received in my life from so many wonderful people.

**Wilma:** Any final thoughts?

**Bernie:** In my many years at CPS and as a foster parent I learned that trying to create change through the use of fear rather than caring and love just doesn’t work as well. With David I never tried to force our connection or make it more secure by diminishing his past connections, I only stayed open and receptive to him being in our family. As an adult, David chose to add us to his family; I am now his “Dad” because, as he says, I’ve earned the title. That, to me, has been the greatest gift of all.

*For more information about 'Ohana Connections work  
contact Wilma Friesema at EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc.  
748-7921*

**Mama Kazama’s  
Mantra Moments...**

*By Lynne Kazama,  
DHS Program Development Staff*



SPRINGTIME  
MAMA KAZAMA



**MAHALO TO...**

Do you know a DHS-CWS worker(s) that you would like to acknowledge for his/her exceptional work?

Share their name(s) with us and what makes them so special so we can let others know how wonderful they are!

Thank them today!

441-1125 (O’ahu)  
1-888-879-8970 (Toll Free)  
RAC@pidfoundation.org

**National Foster Care Month---**time to Honor, Mālama, and Respect (per Aretha Franklin 😊) the Keiki and Birth and Resource Families!

Also, Honor, Mālama, and Respect the staff of DHS-CWS and other Departments, the VGALs & GALs, the Providers, the Judiciary, and the supportive Community (faith-based, business, etc.) who all come together to do their share for the keiki and families!

## West Hawai'i Holiday Bash

*By Linda Case, Resource Parent & Hui Ho'omalua West HI Community Liaison*

On Saturday, December 6, 2008 the foster/resource families of West Hawai'i enjoyed a Holiday Bash hosted at the King Kamehameha Hotel in Kailua-Kona. Included in the day of fun was a Glass Bottom boat ride. The one hour boat ride departed from the Kona harbor going out into the Kailua Bay area. The Glass Bottom Boat was a scenic and educational ride for the entire family to enjoy.

Every child and their family received a bento lunch provided by Earl's Catering of Waimea along with ono pupus such as musubi, portuguese sausage, spring rolls, teriyaki, cookies. Entertainment was provided by THE BALLOON GUY. What a great show! The children laughed and were amazed at the many balloons and talent of balloon making .

At the end of the day each child received a bag filled with toys and goodies to take home. The event was filled with laughter, swimming, food, and entertainment for all the foster/resource families who attended.



The Holiday Bash was provided by the Department of Human Services, Hui Ho'omalua, Catholic Charities Hawai'i, Family Programs Hawai'i, Children's Justice Center of Kona, Project Visitation, Hawai'i Children's Council of Kona, Child & Family Services and many community volunteers.

Also, a special thank you to the Hawai'i County Council for their generous donation, making this event possible for the foster/adoptive children of West Hawai'i.

### Community Classifieds

Do you have something that you would like to donate to other foster/resource parents but you don't know how to get the word out? Are you looking for something that would help you care for your foster/adoptive keiki but you don't know where to find it? The **Community Classifieds** may be able to help.

Let's help each other by sharing our resources. The **Community Classifieds** is FREE to post items to donate as well as wanted ads if you are looking for items to help you care for your keiki.

Send your classified ads to:  
E-mail: [RAC@pidfoundation.org](mailto:RAC@pidfoundation.org)  
(O'ahu) 441-1125 or  
(Toll Free) 888-879-8970

## Annual Foster/Resource Families Conference

*By Jamie McLaughlin, Support Groups and Training Coordinator  
Resource Families Support Services, Family Programs Hawai'i*

Family Programs Hawai'i, in collaboration with the Department of Human Services, It Takes an 'Ohana and Hui Ho'omaluu, is proud to announce our Annual Foster/Resource Families Conference. The one day FREE conference, "My Home, Our Home; Cultural Considerations in Foster Care" is being presented by Dr. Kimo Alameda.

Biracial and bicultural, Dr. Kimo Alameda grew up on the Big Island, a living example of multicultural Hawai'i. After many years in the Department of Education, Dr. Alameda went back to school and received a doctorate in Educational, Psychological and Cultural studies from the University of Nebraska. It is here that he immersed himself in cultural issues and broadened his views of diversity by collaborating with civil rights advocates like Coretta Scott King, widow of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Jane Elliot, prominent researcher of the "Blue Eyes/Brown Eyes" experiment. These experiences prepared him for his current work as the Department of Health Director of the Office of Multicultural Services and Co-director of the Office of Health Equity.



This conference will allow parents to have an open and candid discussion on cultural issues and explore parenting options that promote and enhance the cultural identities of children in foster care. Participants will learn of Dr Alameda's APLUS approach in parenting as well as be able to look into their own biases and prejudice.

This Annual Conference will be presented statewide in order to reach as many resource parents (foster, adoptive, guardianship, and kinship families) as possible. Family Programs Hawai'i is dedicated to providing ongoing support and trainings for all resource families statewide. Our programs and dedicated staff help these families along the incredibly tough journey of foster parenting. We are excited to have the opportunity to bring new and valuable information to families on a regular basis.

### **Conference Dates**

O'AHU: April 18, 2009 (Saturday) 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

KONA: April 23, 2009 (Thursday) 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

KAUA'I: April 30, 2009 (Thursday) 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

MAUI: May 7, 2009 (Thursday) 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

HILO: May 14, 2009 (Thursday) 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

### **There are three ways to register**

On the Web: [www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org](http://www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org)

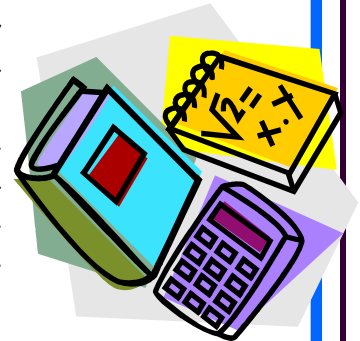
By Fax: 808-441-1122

By Mail: Partners in Development Foundation  
Hui Ho'omaluu  
680 Iwilei Rd., Suite 500  
Honolulu, HI 96817

# eXcel

“Building a foundation for life after foster care”

eXcel guides high school seniors in foster care to successfully prepare for and enter postsecondary education or vocational training. This new program targets foster youth interested in attending college or vocational training. eXcel initially concentrates on career and interest exploration, establishing goals, and learning basic independent skills. Support will be provided in the application process and completing financial aid and scholarship applications. Ongoing support will be provided throughout their college or vocational program.



For further information or referral, please contact Jennifer Cilfone at 521-9531, ext. 297 or online at [www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org](http://www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org)

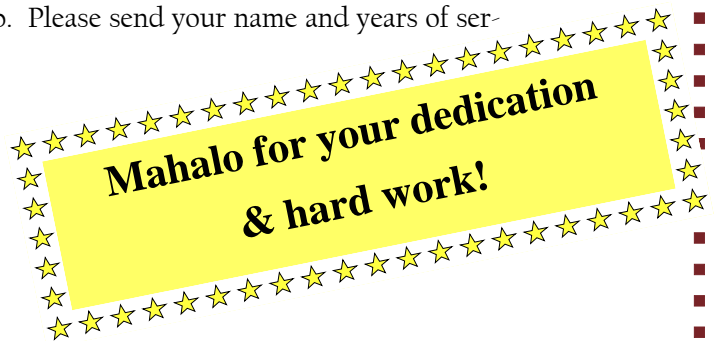


FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

## Happy Anniversary!

- How long have you been a foster/resource parent? We would like to honor you by printing your name and current years of service in our newsletter.
- We know you are out there but we need your help. Please send your name and years of service to:

- RAC@pidfoundation.org
- (O'ahu) 441-1125
- (Toll Free) 888-879-8970



## Advertise in the Newsletter—Promote Your Business

*100% of the proceeds will be used towards supporting our foster/resource families*

**Display advertisements with borders:** business card size = \$30; 1/4 page = \$50; 1/2 page = \$75; full page = \$115.

Send information to: Hui Ho'omalua—RAC, 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste. 500, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: 441-1125 (O'ahu); 888-879-8970 (Toll Free); Fax: 441-1122; E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

Hui Ho'omalua RAC reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements, articles and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations, and appropriateness.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### APRIL:

- 11 East Hawai'i Foster Parent Support Group. 12 pm—2:30 pm. Church of the Holy Cross. For more info, contact Family Programs Hawai'i Warm Line: 1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free)
- 18 West Hawai'i Kealahou Family Fun Day. 10 am—3 pm. Kealahou High School. Open to the entire family! FREE food & entertainment. Sponsored by the Neighborhood Place of Kona.
- 18 O'ahu Annual Foster/Resource Families Conference. (See pg. 5 for details)
- 20 West Hawai'i Foster Care Informational Meeting. 5:30 pm—6:30 pm. Tutu's House Waimea, Kamuela Business Center: 64-1032 Mamalahou Hwy. For more info or to RSVP contact Linda at 896-3829.
- 22 East Hawai'i Sign Waving for National Child Abuse Prevention Month. 4 pm—5 pm. Hopaco intersection.
- 23 West Hawai'i Annual Foster/Resource Families Conference. (See pg. 5 for details)
- 24 O'ahu Foster Care Informational Meeting. 5:30 pm—7 pm. Dole Cannery Office Building-Hui Ho'omalulu: 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste 500, Honolulu. For more info or to RSVP call 441-1117.
- 25 East Hawai'i Celebrate Your Family Event. 10 am-1 pm. Sangha Hall.
- 28 Maui Foster Care Informational Meeting. 4 pm—6 pm. Faith Family Fellowship: 420 N. Wakea Ave., Kahului. For more info or to RSVP contact Ethan at 268-5122.
- 29 East Hawai'i Sign Waving for Victims Rights Week. 4 pm—5 pm. Hopaco intersection.
- 30 Kaua'i Annual Foster/Resource Families Conference. (See pg. 5 for details)
- 30 East Hawai'i 25 years Victims Rights Celebration. 5 pm—6 pm. State Building.



### MAY: **CELEBRATE NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH**

- 2 East Hawai'i Foster Parent Mahalo Luncheon. More information to come.
- 3 O'ahu Foster Care Appreciation Event at Planet Hollywood. 3 pm—6:30 pm. More information to come.
- 6 East Hawai'i Sign Waving for National Foster Care Month. 4 pm—5 pm. Kamehameha Ave.
- 7 Maui Annual Foster/Resource Families Conference. (See pg. 5 for details)
- 14 East Hawai'i Annual Foster/Resource Families Conference. (See pg. 5 for details)
- 14 Kaua'i Foster Care Informational Meeting. 5 pm—7 pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, Lihue. For more info or to RSVP contact Monica at 346-8184.
- 16 East Hawai'i Foster Parent Association Kick Off. Time TBA. Church of the Holy Cross. For more info, contact Carol Manuel: 280-6463.
- 16 West Hawai'i Foster/Resource Family Appreciation Luncheon. 12 pm—3 pm. Kailua-Kona, Hale Halawai Pavilion on Alii Drive. "Bridging the Gap and Working Together to Build Healthy Families". To RSVP or more info, contact Linda Case at 896-3829.
- 16 West Hawai'i Foster Care Informational Meeting. 8:30 am—10:30 am. Hale Halawai & Higashihara Park: 75-5760 Alii Dr. For more info or to RSVP contact Linda at 896-3829.
- 19 Maui Foster Care Informational Meeting. 4 pm—6 pm. Faith Family Fellowship: 420 N. Wakea Ave., Kahului. For more info or to RSVP contact Ethan at 268-5122.
- 22 O'ahu Foster Care Informational Meeting. 5:30 pm—7 pm. Dole Cannery Office Building-Hui Ho'omalulu: 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste 500, Honolulu. For more info or to RSVP call 441-1117.
- 28 & 29 East Hawai'i Domestic Violence Conference. More information to come.

### JUNE:

- 10 Kaua'i Foster Care Informational Meeting. 5 pm—7 pm. Hale Halawai 'Ohana O Hanalei, Hanalei. For more information or to RSVP contact Monica at 346-8184.
- 19 O'ahu Foster Care Informational Meeting. 5:30 pm—7 pm. Dole Cannery Office Building-Hui Ho'omalulu: 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste 500, Honolulu. For more info or to RSVP call 441-1117.

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E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the foster/resource family community. Hui Ho'omalu facilitates this committee comprised of foster/resource parents and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the foster/resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's foster/resource families.

**RAC Committee Members:**

Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalu  
Department of Health  
Department of Human Services  
EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing  
Family Court  
Foster Family Programs of Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalu  
Foster/Resource Parents  
Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition  
Heart Gallery Hawai'i  
HOPE INC  
It Takes An 'Ohana  
Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalu & Kōkua 'Ohana  
Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center  
University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work

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