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***Kealakehe students awarded scholarships to summer environmental leadership program***

KAMUELA, Hawai‘i—June 27, 2008—Two Kealakehe High School students are spending two weeks this summer taking a closer look at the impact of human activity on and near Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island.

Amber Datta and Dominique Saks received scholarships from The Kohala Center and Brown University to participate in the Brown University Environmental Leadership Lab (BELL) on sustainable development, taking place June 29 – July 11. The scholarship is offered annually to youthful Hawai‘i Island scholars interested in biology, geology, or environmental science.

BELL is an outdoor learning laboratory designed to help students develop effective environmental leadership skills. At BELL, Amber and Dominique will learn by doing—whether trawling for marine organisms on a 45-foot research vessel, participating in the design and construction of a sustainable engineering project, practicing group problem solving and environmental advocacy, and learning to develop action plans that can make a positive difference in their community. They will live with other students from around the world on Brown’s Haffenreffer estate, a 372-acre historic farm adjacent to the Narragansett Bay watershed, considered by scientists as one of the most diverse and biologically productive ecosystems on earth.

Sustainability and environmental protection are integral to Amber’s life. The daughter of Tane and Maureen Datta, she lives in Kealakekua on the Datta’s certified organic farm, Adaptations, Inc. The farm is powered by solar energy, uses a catchment water system, and produces 50 different crops that are sold to restaurants and herbalists for cooking and medicine, while also serving as a distribution warehouse for approximately 30 other family farms. Amber has also done some work with her uncle’s bio-fuel company.

“I know the importance of sustainability. I have explored sustainability primarily in the field of energy, but I am also interested in learning other ways to assist in maintaining a healthy

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environment,” said Amber, who will be a senior this fall. “I am interested in learning about environmental problems and solutions in places other than Hawai‘i.”

Dominique, who will be a high-school junior, is the daughter of Marc and Anne Saks of Kona. For Dominique, BELL provides an opportunity to pursue “studies that relate to the environment,” so that she can apply what she learns to “aid humanity in living with harmony with the natural world.”

"With the growing necessity of addressing environmental issues, such as air and water pollution, global warming and the need for renewable energy and sustainable living, the responsibility for preserving the Earth is weighing down on mankind's shoulders," Dominique said. "It is important for everyone to gain knowledge about the way humans affect the environment, so that we can have less of a negative impact."

For more information about the BELL scholarship, visit [http://brown.edu/Administration/Continuing\\_Studies/pc/leadership/bell.php](http://brown.edu/Administration/Continuing_Studies/pc/leadership/bell.php) or The Kohala Center website at [www.kohalacenter.org](http://www.kohalacenter.org).

The Kohala Center is an independent center for research and education about and for the environment. The Center partners with universities such as Brown and Cornell to create educational opportunities for Hawai‘i Island students, and to provide research studies that preserve and enhance the Island's natural environment.

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