

Kaiser supports produce exchange program | Hawaii247.com

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MEDIA RELEASE

Kaiser Permanente has presented a \$5,000 grant to The Kohala Center to support the establishment of a surplus fresh produce exchange program – called Crop Share – at Malaai Garden: The Culinary Garden at Waimea Middle School.

Crop Share provides the opportunity for community members to bring surplus produce from their farm or garden to exchange with other community members.

“Kaiser Permanente is pleased to help launch this initiative with The Kohala Center to provide free locally produced fresh fruits and vegetables to the community,” said Lloyd Tanaka, Kaiser Permanente’s Waimea and South Kona Clinic Manager.

“The Crop Share program will serve to reach individuals and families in our community who are less able or inclined to purchase these items through traditional, commercial channels, serving to improve the collective health of our community,” Tanaka said.

It is anticipated that approximately one ton of fresh fruits and vegetables will be distributed and exchanged through the 24 Crop Share events planned at Malaai, impacting more than 400 in the community.

However, the program will reach those beyond the immediate community with excess food available at the end of each Crop Share event collected for delivery to local food distribution centers. Eight workshops are also planned providing the community with basic knowledge in all aspects of home gardening. Plans are to replicate this one-year pilot project at other school garden settings.

“We are very excited to add to our program of community food and education events at Malaai,” said Nancy Redfeather, Program Director for the Hawaii Island School Garden Network, a program of The Kohala Center. “We encourage everyone to bring their surplus produce from their farm or garden to exchange with others in the community. If you don’t have produce to share, you can just lend a hand to participate. No one will be turned away.”

Crop Share program is one of many Kaiser Permanente HEAL initiatives that promote Healthy Eating and Active Living. Other HEAL initiatives include support to Foodbanks, homeless shelters, farmer’s markets and various health education outreach efforts.

“In addition to making fresh produce accessible to more people, our hope is also to encourage home gardening as a way to supplement families’ consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables and engage family members in physical exercise together,” added Dr. Jeffrey Tolan, Family Practice Physician at Kaiser Permanente’s Waimea clinic.

Crop Share is sponsored by Kaiser Permanente and the Richard Smart Fund of the Hawaii Community Foundation. Malaai is located on the Waimea Middle School campus. To access Crop Share, participants may use the new road entrance directly across

from the Kahilu Theatre.

For any questions or information about Crop Swap, visit www.malaai.org or call or email Nicole Milne, Crop Swap coordinator, at 808-987-9210 or nmilne@hawaii.edu.

