

Hope and Change in Our Own Backyard



Subashini Ganesan

In keeping with our national desire to embrace hope and change, I will dedicate the next few weeks to writing about organizations that create opportunities for the Hawaiian Islands. Although some of these organizations are based on Hawai‘i Island, they may serve as an inspiration for program development here on Maui.

Jack Johnson and the Kokua Hawai‘i Foundation

(www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org) announced last December that they will not be holding the Kokua Festival in 2009. The music festival that has brought amazing musicians to Hawai‘i was also focused on disseminating information about implementing positive environmental impacts. While the annual festival will be sorely missed, here are some programs that will keep us excited this year.

2009-2010 Kokua Calendar Art Contest: Clean Up a Beach and Create a Masterpiece!

“Organize a beach clean-up to help Hawai‘i become Plastic-Free!” according to the Website. “Use found objects to create a piece of art! Integrate paint, crayons, pastels, fabric, collage, or mixed media for your creation.”

All Hawai‘i school groups, home schools, clubs, individuals and families are eligible to participate. The judges will be looking for elements of “theme, beach clean-up summary, visual appeal, originality and creativity.”

The specific guidelines for this contest can be found on the foundation’s Website. The deadline is Friday, Feb. 20.

Green Fundraising for Schools

In order to develop more innovative ideas to address the needs of our schools, the foundation is helping them to consider fundraising ideas. Some of their favorite ideas are:

- Selling seed packets. Buy seed in bulk and repack through a student-run seed company, or grow and save seeds from home and school gardens. Download a great Seed School Curriculum at FedcoSeeds.com and fundraising tips at SeedsOfChange.com.
- A community-supported farmer’s market for the school!
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Environmental Education Mini Grants

From bringing worm bins to your classroom, to building an organic garden in schools, teachers and students in Hawai‘i can apply for mini-grants from the foundation to help jumpstart more environmental education programs. Designed to be a quick and easy grant process (a two month turnaround time), all application materials and guidelines can be found online at

www.kokuahawaiifoundation.org/schoolprograms/environmentaleducationminigrant.

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