

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Puanani Burgess joins The Kohala Center's board of directors***

KAMUELA, Hawai'i—October 10, 2013—The Kohala Center recently named Rev. Puanani Burgess of Wai'anae, O'ahu, to its board of directors.

“We are honored to have Rev. Burgess join our board,” said Roberta Chu, president of The Kohala Center's board of directors and senior vice president for commercial banking with Bank of Hawaii. “She is extraordinarily gifted—a poet, a peacemaker, and an expert in values-based economic development. And she is a lovely person, whose counsel is sought after around the world because of her truly insightful and gracious way of being.”

A mediator, community organizer, cultural translator, and Zen priest, Burgess consults and does her work One-Peace-At-A-Time. She is noted for her experience in community, family and values-based economic development, mediation, and storytelling processes as part of conflict transformation, and developing community-based organizations.

In September, Burgess was recognized by the Pacific Buddhist Academy as a 2013 Lighting Our Way Honoree, citing her ability to recognize the gifts of others—those traits that best represent us and the purposes we bring to the world—to “pierce through the walls” that separate individuals. She uses this ability to facilitate processes in creating and reshaping relationships between people.

In 2009, Burgess was among five people named as Hawai'i's Living Treasures.

“I am so looking forward to supporting and learning from The Kohala Center's work and heart,” Burgess said.

She has been a lecturer with the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawai'i, where she was the first “Community Scholar in Residence.” She sits on the Board of Directors for the Positive Futures Network, the publisher of [YES! Magazine](#), and was the Miles and Zilphia Horton Chairholder for Highlander Research and Education Center in New Market, Tennessee.

As part of her Hawai'i-based work, Burgess helped develop several community-based organizations including Ka'ala Farm, Inc. (taro and 'aina-based cultural learning center in Wai'anae); Ho'a'aina O Makaha ('aina-based cultural and agricultural learning center in Makaha); Hale Na'au Pono (Wai'anae Coast Community Mental Health Center); Pu'a

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Foundation (the only Native Hawaiian foundation in Hawai‘i); Legal Services for Children (focusing on assuring children in Wai‘anae receive free and appropriate educational services); and Wai‘anae Coast Community Alternative Development Corporation (developed community and cultural-based aquaculture program with Native Hawaiian families).

Her work takes her all over the United States, the Pacific, and other parts of the world. Burgess says that it is fostering the connection—with self, with place, with community—that is the key to her success in bringing people together.

**About The Kohala Center**

The Kohala Center (<http://www.kohalacenter.org>) is an independent, community-based center for research, education, and conservation. The Center was established in direct response to the request of island residents to create greater educational and employment opportunities by enhancing—and celebrating—Hawai‘i’s spectacular natural and cultural landscapes.

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[Burgess photo caption]

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