

RECYCLE HAWAII

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2012 Keeping It Green Hawai`i Awards

Hilo, Hawai`i – November 29, 2012 – Recycle Hawai`i and Earth-Friendly Schools Hawai`i recognized the 2012 recipients of the Keeping It Green Hawai`i awards as part of America Recycles Day.

Keeping It Green Hawai`i Hawai`i is a program that highlights projects and activities of organizations, businesses, schools and government agencies that promote recycling, resource awareness and sustainable practices in Hawai`i. The program recognizes the positive “green projects” that are being implemented in our community and helps to motivate others to create projects that care for our environment and address local and global issues.

To be recognized for the Keeping It Green Hawai`i award, participants must meet at least three of the following criteria: Practice the 3 R’s: "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle;" protect our native Hawaiian forests; promote organic farming; develop alternative energy; support sustainable industry and green building practices; implement energy and resource conservation practices; create open space “greenways”; support youth programs that utilize service learning projects designed to protect our natural resources; educate our community about climate change and envision possible solutions; honor and respect native Hawaiian gathering rights and cultural practices.

The awardees for 2012 were recognized at the America Recycles Day Concert on November 15 at the Palace Theater in Hilo. They included the Kokua Hawai`i Foundation, Hui o Laka, Maui Tomorrow Foundation, The Kohala Center, Kanu o ka `Aina Learning `Ohana, Innovations Public Charter School, One Island Sustainable Living Center, Waianuhea Bed & Breakfast, Kohala Burger & Taco and Mr. K’s Recycling & Redemption Center

“Since initiating the Keeping It Green Hawai`i program in 2007, forty-six businesses, organizations and schools have shared their ways and means of promoting green practices and sustainability,” said Recycle Hawai`i Executive Director, Paul J. Buklarewicz.

“The growing awareness and participation in Keeping It Green Hawai`i by so many who express their conscious actions highlights their strongly held conviction in environmental stewardship of our fragile island communities.”

Among the outstanding recipients this year we are pleased to feature The Kokua Hawai'i Foundation, The Kohala Center and Hui o Laka.

The Kokua Hawai'i Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization created by well-known songwriter and recording artist Jack Johnson and his wife Kim. Their organization supports environmental education in the schools and communities of Hawai'i. Their mission is to provide students with experiences that will enhance their appreciation for and understanding of their environment so that they will be lifelong stewards of the earth. Examples of their programs include Plastic Free Schools, 3R's Recycling, 'Aina in the Schools and Kokua Earth Action Projects.

The Kokua Hawai'i Foundation also supports teachers through their Environmental Education Mini-Grants. Grantees have used these funds for garden supplies, eco-footprint workshops, compost trainings and other environmental projects. They also sponsor a field trip assistance program that helps bring students to outdoor sites where they can experience hands-on learning about Hawai'i's environment. Some of the places that students have visited include the Bishop Museum, The Cultural Learning Center at Ka'ala, Lyon Arboretum, TREE Center Hawai'i and the Mokupapapa: Discovery Center for Hawai'i's Remote Coral Reefs.

The Kohala Center focuses its work in three primary areas of interest: energy self-reliance, food self-reliance, and ecosystem health. By fostering a respectful approach to the engagement of Hawai'i Island's cultural and natural environments, the Center seeks to inspire higher learning by respectfully engage Hawai'i Island as a living model for humanity, integrating science with culture and community. They see Hawai'i as a living classroom that highlights the value of Hawaiian culture and science in the contemporary world.

One of their most successful school projects is The Hawai'i Island School Garden Network. The goal of the Hawai'i Island School Garden Network (HISGN) is to help Hawai'i Island schools build gardening and agricultural programs that will significantly contribute to the increased consumption of locally produced food by involving students, their school communities and their family networks in food production.

Since 1953, Hui o Laka, has operated Koke'e Natural History Museum as the visitor center for Waimea Canyon and Koke'e State Park. This community-based non-profit greets more than 111,000 park visitors each year, as well as sponsors guided hikes, forest craft classes and two interpretive festivals each year. Volunteers of all ages "kokua Koke'e" by hand weeding front country trails, picnic areas and roadsides. In 2011, over 1,100 volunteers contributed more than 8,000 hours to park projects.

Starting in 1990, Hui o Laka pioneered renovations to the abandoned Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, intent on creating a volunteer and research field station in honor of one of the Hui's founders, Joseph M. Souza, Jr. Today, through the efforts of their dedicated volunteers, the 11-building complex is now a shining example of community-driven historic renovation, serving as Hui o Laka's headquarters and providing overnight accommodations for up to 50.

For more information about **Keeping It Green Hawai`i**, go to www.recyclehawaii.org or call 808.969.2012.

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Photographs

1. Kokua Hawai`i Foundation:

Students participating in the `Aina in the Schools program. Photo courtesy of Kokua Hawai`i Foundation

2. The Kohala Center

Hawai`i Island School Garden Network. Kupuna and students making laulau
Photo courtesy of The Kohala Center

3. Hui o Laka

Volunteers helping to remove invasive species from the forest in Koke`e on Kaua`i.
Photo courtesy of Hui o Laka