

The Kohala Center: Message from Hamabata | Hawaii 24/7

<http://www.hawaii247.com/2011/11/30/the-kohala-center-message-from-hamabata/>

December 6, 2011

Posted on 2:47 am, Wednesday, November 30, 2011.



From Matt Hamabata, The Kohala Center executive director:

As we celebrate the end of our first decade, The Kohala Center has much good news to share with you. We have begun to fill a vital niche in Hawaii by simply responding to the needs and wise advice of island residents.

We have planted seeds across the islands by working in partnership with communities to advocate for healthy, fresh, and locally grown food in the meals we serve to children in our schools; with farmers' and fishermen's co-ops to provide them with resources to help them succeed in the marketplace; with talented teacher-leaders in classrooms and gardens who understand that success in science, mathematics, and technical education hinges on engaging our K–12 students in hands-on, real world projects; and with policy makers who are making good use of our independent research to move our state toward greater energy and food security.

Our core areas of focus — creating food sustainability, energy sustainability, ecosystem health, and educational opportunities for our youth — have been embraced.

Our work is taking hold: one tree, one child, one hilltop, one teacher, one school, one watershed, one bay, one policy maker, and one friend at a time.

Though it may take years to realize the full impact of our efforts, we have created islands of change where positive transformation is now clearly visible.

Witness the change:

* In the propagation in Kohala of oha wai, or *clermontia peleana singuliflora*, a Hawaiian plant species once presumed extinct

* In the healthy polyps growing on 400-year-old coral heads in Kahaluu Bay

* In the smiles of children as they declare science as their favorite subject of study at Kohala Elementary School

* In the buying power of island families whose desire to purchase fresh produce has fueled an explosion of local farmers' markets and CSAs

* In the workshops we are mounting throughout the state to ensure that farmers and gardeners know how to save seed—the foundation of our island food supply

* In our research on behalf of lower income families, who spend a disproportionate amount of their earnings on energy, to ensure that these families benefit from energy-saving measures and technologies

* In the support we're providing to Hawaii's farmers, ranchers, and fishermen through the Lualaba Center, the state's first cooperative business development center, to form new cooperative ventures to purchase supplies at a cheaper rate, to share heavy equipment or processing facilities, and to market their products collectively and thus create and sustain a vibrant local economy.

— Find out more:

www.kohalacenter.org

You might be interested in:

1. [Kohala Center expands SNAP access to six farmers markets](#)
2. [Kohala Center receives USDA grant](#)
3. [Laulima Center offers assistance for cooperatives](#)