

The Kohala Center receives small business success award

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MEDIA RELEASE

The Kohala Center has been selected as the 2012 winner of the Small Business Success Award in the Nonprofit Category by Hawaii Business magazine.



Young



gardeners work in their mala (garden) at Punana Leo o Hilo. The school's garden is one of 63 school gardens supported by The Kohala Center's Hawaii Island School Garden Network. (Photo courtesy of The Kohala Center)

The Kohala Center was one of six winners and 12 finalists for the magazine's SmallBiz Success awards announced last week. Other categories receiving awards were community service, family business, innovation, long-term achievement, and new business.

"Our independent judges picked The Kohala Center because they felt it is a well-run and effective nonprofit," said Steve Petranik, editor of Hawaii Business magazine. "We agree. Matt Hamabata and the center are doing great work for the people of Hawaii Island, and some of those ideas have been adopted statewide. That's an excellent record for such a young organization."

Headquartered in Waimea, The Kohala Center is an independent, not-for-profit center for research and education about and for the environment. Founded in 2001, the Center builds teaching and research programs for energy and food self-reliance as well as ecosystem health, bringing more than \$3,650,000 from its operations alone into the Hawaii Island economy last year.

"When the economic multiplier is considered, this work becomes even more significant," said Hamabata, executive director of The Kohala Center. "For example, a 2011 University of Hawaii study showed that for every dollar invested in research and education in The Kohala Center's ecosystem health work at Kahaluu Bay, two dollars of local business activity is generated."

"We have begun to fill a vital niche in Hawai'i by simply responding to the needs and wise advice of island residents," Hamabata said. "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."

The Kohala Center has planted seeds across the islands by working in partnership:

- * With communities to advocate for healthy, fresh, and locally grown food in the meals served to school children
- * With farmers' and fishermen's co-ops to provide them with resources needed to 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
- * With policy makers who are making good use of our independent research to move our state toward greater energy and food security

"It is wonderful to have The Kohala Center recognized by Hawaii's business and government leadership and to have those leaders understand that we can, indeed, create greater employment and educational opportunities by caring for our environment," Hamabata said.

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