

## Classes in the Garden

April 9, 2014

Thanks to the hard work of teachers, families and friends, students at Waimea Middle School now have an outdoor garden classroom.

As part of local efforts to connect Hawaii's children with fresh and nutritious food, the volunteers helped build the new Malama Keiki Edible Garden, where students can pick fresh produce and learn how to prepare flavorful, healthy dishes in the school's weekly health classes.

The original organic garden was planted two years ago.

More than a dozen parents, teachers and residents donated their time over spring break to handle every aspect of the project, from building the structure, two kitchen islands, cabinets, counter tops, sinks, electric and gas outlets, and an accessibility ramp, to securing cookware, utensils and accessories to be used in the classes.

For the remainder of this school year, students will participate in hands-on classes in the outdoor classroom, led by health teacher Landry Fuller and garden manager Jared Chapman. Nearly 400 students in the school's kindergarten through fifth grade classes will learn how to make recipes that they can take home and share with their families.

The students in all of the school's 18 health classes brainstormed on the name for their new facility, with Mr. Muromoto's fifth grade class' entry "Malama Keiki Edible Garden" selected as the winner. The school also plans to host its own version of the "Junior Chef" competition using ingredients from the school garden before the end of the school year.

One second-grader was especially proud of the new outdoor classroom. His grandfather, Lyle Hooley Sr., and father, Dan Hooley, were the two leading builders on the project, making this a three-generation effort. Hooley Sr. is the owner of Lloyds of the Pacific Inc., a general contracting company in Waimea.



Second-graders at Waimea Elementary School learn how to make pesto using fresh basil in their new outdoor culinary classroom. Photos special to West Hawaii

PTSO member Dore Centeio spearheaded the project. “It was heartwarming how many people wanted to help. They wanted to support the children in developing their health and well-being. It was a community effort that was truly all about the children,” she said.

The Malama Keiki Edible Garden was made possible by grants from The Kohala Center’s Hawaii Island School Garden Network program, the WHH Foundation, and a “Fuel Your School” program grant from Chevron. Honsador donated lumber, Manuel Olevera Buenavidos fabricated the granite tops and provided them at discount and Tommy Segovia installed the electric.

The Malama Keiki Edible Garden welcomes additional support to maintain the new outdoor facility and replenish basic supplies. Those wishing to contribute may contact Waimea Elementary School at 887-7636.



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