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Making a Difference the Hawaiian Way

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by Pacific Island Ranger



"Reef Teach" and "Citizen Scientist" help residents and visitors get involved in protecting our reefs. (Photo Courtesy the Kohala Center)

Visitors and Island residents received a special treat this morning thanks to the Kohala Center's Cindi Punihaole. During her program "Building Resilient Communities" Cindi showed how her organization is partnering with the local community, government agencies and local businesses to help Hawai'i Island achieve a sustainable future through special projects. One successful project that she highlighted was the Kahalu'u Bay restoration project. Through listening to and engaging community members, especially the *kupuna* (elders) and *keiki* (children), the Kohala Center has been able to successfully sponsor special programs that help island residents and visitors protect the bay's vital coral reefs. Through "Reef Teachers"

and “Citizen Scientist” the Kohala Center is able to instill the value of stewardship of the island’s precious natural resources and to promote the concept of *pono* or right living in relation with the land.



The Kohala Center offers special programs for children and adults to connect with Hawai'i Island's natural resources.
(Photo Courtesy of the Kohala Center)

Cindi explained that the Kohala Center tries to “honor the past”, by listening to and learning from the elders, in order to “enrich the future” by educating and engaging children. By helping visitors and residents live *pono*, this organization hopes to make the island a “healthy land” which will then provide “healthy people”. [If you would like more information about the Kohala Center, be sure to check out their website!](#)



Cindi Punihale of the Kohala Center answers questions at a special Talk Story Program at Pu`ukohola Heiau National Historic Site.

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