



KBEC Seeks Kahalu'u Program Volunteers

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by **Big Island Now Staff**

Volunteers are needed by the Kahalu'u Bay Education Center for the ReefTeach and Citizen Science programs at Kahalu'u Bay and Beach Park.

The ideal volunteer loves the beach and has an interest in protecting the bay and its coral reefs, fish, and turtles.

"Ambassadors of aloha" are what ReefTeach volunteers have been termed. Individuals interested in volunteering must welcome visitors and residents to the park.



Visitors will be taught by the volunteers about proper reef etiquette and learn about fish identities, turtles, and invertebrates that can be found in the bay.

Kahalu'u Bay received over 400,000 visitors every year. The large amount of people visiting is putting a strain on the bay. ReefTeachers are necessary to teach visitors at the bay about keeping it healthy and educate swimmers and snorkelers about having fun without causing harm.

KBEC's Citizen Science program is made up of volunteers who monitor and track environmental conditions at Kahalu'u Bay through the collection of weekly samples at various specified sites.

The data collected is used to keep track of the bay and understand how a variety of events, including algae bloom, can impact the water quality and the health of the bay overall. The Citizen Science program also provides the opportunity to correct issues prior to them becoming a problem and impact the marine life within the bay.

No previous experience or scientific knowledge is required for individuals interested in becoming a citizen scientist. Anyone interested in learning about water quality, sampling, data interpretation, and a healthier environment are ideal candidates for Citizen Scientists. Training is provided.

Individuals interested in signing up for either program should contact Cindi Punihaole by e-mailing cpunihaole@kohalacenter.org or calling (808) 887-6411.

Both programs are part of KBEC, a partnership between The Kohala Center and the County of Hawai'i.

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