

The Hawai'i Island School Garden Network

Written by Pedro Tama

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Students flow into garden for a [recent celebration](#) at Mala'ai: The Culinary Gardens of Waimea Middle School. Have you ever wondered how the next generations will learn about where their food comes from? Or who will teach our kids how to grow their own food? Did you think that perhaps parents and families would teach their children these things? Think again: all evidence demonstrates that over the past century fewer and fewer parents even know where their food comes from or what a healthy diet is, let alone how to grow a backyard vegetable garden.

Although this tragic trend is starting to change in small ways, there is a dedicated group of Hawai'i Island farmer-educators who have thought about these questions for years and not long ago decided to answer them with an idea and program that is innovative, effective, and powerful. It's called the Hawai'i Island School Garden Network (HISGN).

In 2007 the Omidyar family sponsored a research analysis and report by the Rocky Mountain Institute that recommended expanding school gardens throughout the island as a means to strengthen capacity to grow food locally. The Kohala Center in Waimea, in conjunction with island educators, developed the Hawai'i Island School Garden Network. In September 2007, Nancy Redfeather, a local sustainable farmer, food activist and educator, was hired to direct the network.

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[HISGN site](#)