

Sunday, Nov. 18, 2012

## **Mala'ai School Garden's eBay Online Auction Tempts 'Black Friday' Shoppers To Make It A 'Green Friday'**

WAIMEA, HAWAII ISLAND -- "Black Friday" -- the popular nickname for the day after Thanksgiving -- is the busiest retail day of the year, a time when shoppers search for fantastic finds, even though it can mean getting up before dawn and fighting crowds.

To simplify holiday shopping...avoid crowds...reduce gas consumption...and also put gift giving to work to support a healthier planet, Mala'ai: The Culinary Garden of Waimea Middle School is staging its second eBay "Giving Works" online auction and inviting friends to convert "Black Friday" November 23, 2012, into "Green Friday."

Mala'ai's "Green Friday" online auction theme has a triple meaning -- first because purchasing any of the online auction items supports "green values," most importantly, helping sustain what is the state's leading middle school garden in teaching 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders environmental and cultural stewardship and about healthier choices. Second, most items offered reflect a "greener lifestyle" -- from giving a loved one the gift of a fig or olive tree that will be planted in their honor in the garden, to baskets of organic locally grown produce, to a Brewhaus Tasting-Tour featuring locally brewed beers paired with delicious locally grown foods, to a sumptuous dinner for eight created by an Island Thyme gourmet chef who sources only the best fresh produce, fish, meat and baked pleasures. The third benefit of this "Green Friday" online auction is not having to leave home!

Among this year's auction items is an opportunity to adopt a chicken for a loved one. The hen will take up residence at the school's beautiful new "Fort Chicken" -- an ultra-sturdy hen house designed and built by John Dean of Hamakua. Life in Mala'ai garden for the school's small flock of hens is pretty sweet -- mostly keeping down the unwanted bug population while providing delicious fresh eggs for students to learn to cook with.

Also on the tempting list of "Green Friday" auction items are several healthy pampering gifts, including a facial, a massage and a basket of wellness and relaxation items. Other items include beautiful clutch purses made from recycled leather, and for the loved one who has one of everything, a new wheelbarrow personally hand painted by island artist Archie Macaraeg.

These are just a sampling of gifts offered to help continue underwriting a school garden that -- from its very beginning -- has been deeply rooted in a community commitment to touch lives. Now almost eight years old, Mala'ai started out as a dream in a Waimea pasture of kikuyu grass. Today, Mala'ai is a productive ¾-acre organic garden classroom that reflects the generosity of many community donors coupled with the handiwork of over 2,000 pairs of student hands.

Taking a page out of eBay Giving Works' philosophy -- that "Each of us can make a difference for all of us," and that "we have the power to touch many lives by the choices we make," Mala'ai's cadre of volunteers invites friends of the garden and those who simply believe in the power of self reliance and innovative experiential learning to check out the online auction.

All items will be available Nov. 23-Dec. 2, 2012 on eBay's Giving Works; just search for Mala'ai. For more information about the Mala'ai school garden, go to [www.malaai.org](http://www.malaai.org). For questions about the auction or otherwise getting involved in supporting the school garden program, contact Executive Director Alethea Lai, [alethea@malaai.org](mailto:alethea@malaai.org) or call 808-989-7861.