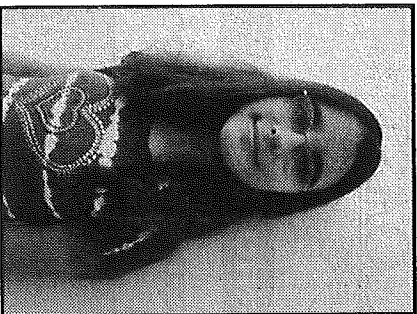


# Sustaining Hamakua



*By Seraphim Benoist  
(age 11)*

## Support for Food Sovereignty Grows on The Big Island

*"Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children." Kenyan Proverb*

There are so many ways that we can be live more sustainably. We can live in harmony with the earth by growing our food at home or buying locally grown groceries (in little or no disposable packaging.) Like the Kenyan proverb, something adults tell children is to leave a place nicer than when they came to it. I am one of the children who are stepping into your shoes, living with what you leave behind. And like you, I am responsible to leave things better for my children and their children.

I'd like to share with you about organizations that support local food sovereignty.

According to Agroforestry.net and the Hawaii Homegrown Food Network, Hawaii imports more than 85% of its food even though we have a year-round growing cycle. Additionally, they say there is only a 7-day supply of food in stores at any given time. That means it would only take one week after a shipping stoppage to have a whole island of hungry people---unless we are growing food in our back yards.

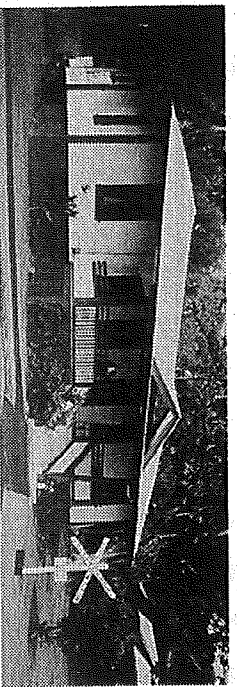
The Farmers Union has monthly potluck and seed exchanges at the ILWU building on Mamane Street in Honokaa. To get the date of the next seed exchange, join, or for any questions call 331-3002 or visit there website at [www.hawaiifarmersunion.org](http://www.hawaiifarmersunion.org)

The Farmers Union sponsored the widely popular Earth Day 2010 event at The Honokaa Theater in April, showing the "Living Pono" documentary with Jason Scott Lee, who lives part time on the big island and is known for Hollywood martial arts and actions movies. In addition to the many sustainability-related organizations with information tables at the event, the movie taught viewers that anyone can live in an environmentally sustainable way and that the Hawaiians lived sustainably before modern times.

I was inspired to see that even a Hollywood actor would choose to live so simply, without electricity and being as close to the land as he can. Seeing his joyful smile, as he fished with his friends and ate the poi he'd made from his own kalo patch communicated a powerful message. He's also been taking his message for living in harmony with nature to children in island schools and in their community. I think that's amazing and it gives me hope for the future.

The Hawaii Island School Garden Network (HISGN) and The Kohala Center are helping children find their joyful connection to the earth and grow food at schools throughout the Big Island. "A school garden is a magical venue for the kind of learning that our keiki and youth need today," declares the HISGN brochure. "As an isolated island people, we have become aware of a need for greater community education and action to build strong and resilient food security systems for Hawaii Island. Forty-nine schools are currently creating garden programs."

With all this support and the support of so many wise farmers and elders, I believe we can change our ways and be happy living in harmony with



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