

# Laupahoehoe Community PCS open house set

[http://haw.iiitribune-herald.com/sections/new\\_s/community/laupahoehoe-community-pcs-open-house-set.html](http://haw.iiitribune-herald.com/sections/new_s/community/laupahoehoe-community-pcs-open-house-set.html)

September 11, 2012

The Laupahoehoe Community Public Charter School, LCPCS, is holding an open house for the ohana of grade 6-12 students, as well as parents of prospective students, on Wednesday, Sept. 12, from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

First off, parents and teachers will have an opportunity to mingle and meet during a spaghetti dinner.

Following dinner, teachers will open their classrooms for tours, and the sharing of more specific information about class content, teacher philosophy and student achievement.

LCPCS is partnering with the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center to help build relationships between teachers, parents, other family members and prospective parents. On Aug. 30, Laupahoehoe held a similar open house for grades K-5.

Fresh paint and potted plants greeted the families as they entered the school, and smiles were prevalent. Approximately 70 adults and 85 children attended, which made for a lot of kid noise and energy!

Nevertheless, parents and guardians said they were able to make connections with teachers; meet other parents; understand expectations regarding homework and classwork; and generally get a feel for how the school has changed.

Before an excellent chili and rice dinner, Director David Rizor welcomed families, and introduced the new elementary teachers.

"It was a wonderful affair of building relationships between teachers and parents and other family members over dinner and classroom," said community leader Lucille Chung. LCPCS partnered with the Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center for this event and the Hamakua Health Center and the local 4-H Club displayed information about their organizations.

Gear up the Paauilo Annual Blue and White Fair is coming up. Vendors come one, come all; call the school to sign up for your space. The fair will be held on Oct. 13 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Interested vendors may call the school office at 776-7710.

---

The First Ku 'Aina Pa program has trained our island's school garden teachers. The school gardens of the Hawaii Island School Garden network (HIGSN) are shining examples of how the Island of Hawaii is becoming a model sustainability and self-reliance for the rest of the world. As Hawaii strives to be less dependent on the importation of food and other goods from outside the state, HIGSN schools promote the local production of healthy, fresh, and natural foods.

The program helps to support garden programs at over 63 public, private, and charter schools across the island, providing students with hands-on opportunities to learn about agriculture, sustainability, and nutrition. In 2011-2012, school gardens on Hawaii Island occupied over seven acres of land, and produced nearly 15,000 pounds of food that was consumed by students, sent home to families, or sold at student farmers' markets.

The success of these garden programs is due to the dedication of teachers, many of whom teach garden classes part time or as a secondary course, and work with their colleagues to create unique,

garden-based curriculum. With support from a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) “Agriculture in the K-12 Classroom Challenge” grant, HIGSN developed Ku ‘Aina Pa (“Stand Strong for Our Land”), a pilot professional training program for school garden teachers.

The objective of Ku ‘aina Pa is to establish program standards that integrate core classroom subjects—including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)—into school garden curricula, while cultivating a sense of place in the living world, nurturing interconnectedness, and fostering research and reflection.

Thirty participants from 20 Hawaii Island schools participated in classes held June 10-16 at Hawaii Preparatory Academy’s Energy Lab and at the Mala‘ai Culinary Garden at Waimea Middle School. Classes covered topics such as Hawaiian skills, values, and traditions; sustainability; soil biology and beneficial microbes; island agricultural zones; and linking gardens to school curricula and writing lesson plans.

However, Ku ‘Aina Pa doesn’t stop there: the cohort will participate in three weekend workshops, create action research projects, work with a mentor, and visit three other school gardens over the course of a year. A central website enables teachers to share lesson plans, resources, and success stories with each other. “Before Ku ‘Aina Pa, there really wasn’t a school garden teacher training program,” said Nancy Redfeather, HIGSN coordinator.

“The USDA grant enabled us to bring together educators to collaborate on curriculum and ideas to build a comprehensive teacher program. The more knowledge and tools our teachers have to connect outdoor activities, sustainability, and STEM education, the more our children’s health, knowledge, and our future benefit.”

By empowering school garden educators with interdisciplinary knowledge and tools for ongoing collaboration, Ku ‘Aina Pa creates a pathway to a healthier future for Hawaii’s children. Integrating STEM education, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, with agricultural learning gives students valuable, real-world insight into the interconnectedness of food, water, energy, waste, and economics. But there are greater benefits as well. “First Lady Michelle Obama has championed the fight against skyrocketing childhood obesity rates, most notably by raising awareness about nutrition, gardening, and physical activity,” Redfeather said.

“School gardens address all of these things, by making our keiki more aware of the food they eat and where it comes from, but also by getting them out of their chairs and into the outdoors. Healthier children are ready to learn, and ultimately healthier lifelong nutritional choices will help foster healthier families and healthier communities.”

“All subjects can be taught from a school garden,” says Kamuela Naihe, garden educator at the Hua O Ke Ao Garden Program of the Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden in Captain Cook, and a participant in this year’s Ku ‘Aina Pa.

“This program is building our capacity as a community to affect change in education. School gardens and other outdoor learning environments provide opportunities for relevant and engaging learning. These gardens are a catalyst to improving Hawaii’s generally poor statistics in health, nutrition, food security and even test scores. The resources, support and relationships that Ku ‘Aina Pa provides sets us up for success in our desire to educate children in new ways outside of the traditional classroom.”

Ku ‘Aina Pa will build on the experiences and successes of the pilot year, and expand its reach statewide in 2013–2014. For more information, please visit the Web site, or contact Nancy Redfeather. (This article is from the from The Kohala Center’s The Leaflet July/August 2012.)

*Carol Yurth’s column is published every Sunday and spotlights activities on the Hilo-Hamakua*

coast. She welcomes items for her column. Reach her by mail (46-1240 Kalehua Road, Honokaa HI 96727) at least 10 days before the requested publication date, call her at 775-7101, or e-mail [waiukahe@interpac.net](mailto:waiukahe@interpac.net).