

For Immediate Release

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Planting Hope school garden conference

KAMUELA, Hawaii—July 6, 2011—School garden and classroom teachers from around the state will converge this week (July 7–9) at the oldest school garden in the state, Hoa ‘Aina O Makaha, for the 4th annual Summer School Garden Conference. The theme of this year’s conference is *Planting Hope: Growing the Next Generation*.

“We wish to plant hope in each of the participant’s minds, hearts, and bodies, so that they can bring this hope home with them as they begin the new school year,” said Nancy Redfeather, coordinator for The Kohala Center’s Hawai‘i Island School Garden Network (HISGN). HISGN is hosting the conference with Gigi Cocquio and the staff of Hoa ‘Aina O Makaha, and the Kokua Hawai‘i Foundation.

During the conference, Hoa ‘Aina O Makaha’s third grade teacher Cocquio and Lynn Okamura, principal of Makaha Elementary School, will discuss the challenges and opportunities that have arisen during their journey to reconnect students with the *‘aina* (land), with themselves, and with nature.

Hoa ‘Aina is a five-acre farm that adjoins the Makaha Elementary School. Hoa ‘Aina is more than a school garden—it is a school in a garden. The program offers unique opportunities to the children and the entire community of Makaha, such as the Malama Makaha Credit Work Program, a container garden program, a peace center, and a demonstration farm.

For the past 25 years Cocquio, his family, and staff have been teaching students and community members in Makaha how to care for the land, how to care for animals, and how native Hawaiians used plants in their everyday life. This past year Makaha Elementary’s third grade classes spent one full day each week in the garden.

Other conference presenters include Kumu Keala Ching, who will connect the Hawaiian *olelo no‘eau* with the six General Learner Outcomes (GLOs) that are an important part of the Hawai‘i Department of Education curriculum, and Sarah Sullivan, who serves as program coordinator for the Abernethy School’s award winning school kitchen garden in Portland, Oregon.

Abernethy is a model for the school garden movement because of its benchmark-standard targeted garden curriculum and because of its test-kitchen, which prepares minimally processed school meals using locally sourced ingredients. This year’s conference will also feature 24 different breakout sessions specially designed for garden educators. See www.kohalacenter.org/plantinghope/agenda.html for a complete list of afternoon breakout sessions.

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