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## News / Building community, changing lives

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December 18, 2007

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Lokelani 'Ohana is an organization dedicated to building community and changing the lives of people with special needs in Hawaii. It is their mission to "create socially therapeutic communities that are Camphill Inspired while incorporating unique elements of Hawaiian culture and tradition for children, youth, and adults with developmental and other disabilities."

The Camphill movement was founded in Scotland in 1939 and was designed to provide a meaningful life to people with developmental disabilities.

Camphill's principles are based on the studies of Rudolf Steiner. According to the Camphill of North America Web site three key focuses of these communities are:

1. To provide education, advocacy, therapeutics care and other services to support people with special needs and help them participate fully in the world as contributing citizens.
  2. Care for and heal the earth through sustainable and healthy methods of consumption, agriculture, and natural resource use.
  3. Create new social arrangements that nurture the growth and development of individuals and families.
- "There are several dimensions of the lives of the residents of the Camphill communities, those with and those without disabilities. There is the physical dimension: Health, nutrition, and exercise are important ingredients that nurture the lives of Camphill participants," said H. Rutherford Turnbull, III, former President of the American Association of Mental Retardation. This program is established in more than 100 communities and in 22 countries.
- Lokelani 'Ohana has begun a community home and has created a biodynamic farming program in Waihe'e, Maui. They provide a residential farming community for people with disabilities in order to, "gain self-value and have a rich cultural life," said Christina Chang, Vice President and Camphill Outreach Committee Chair. In addition to sharing produce with friends and family it is also sold weekly to an organic farmers market and occasionally to a health food store, to support their community.

The USDA Small Farm Agency Branch and the Natural Resource Conservation Service recently completed an evaluation on the land they are leasing and will be assisting in the initiative with funding in areas of water, soil, crop, and animal husbandry.

"Values that are held close to the heart in Hawaiian culture are what we hold close to this project... these values allow each individual to develop to their fullest," said Chang. These communities are inspired by the realization that every person needs friendship, a consistent and supportive social environment, meaningful work, and opportunities for creative expression. They are committed to providing a rich home and cultural life, educational programs, creative vocational crafts and arts, farming, and a wide variety of other therapies meant to enrich the lives of members in the community.

Dana Allen, a gifted weaver and artist, is donating his time by pioneering a Saori Weaving project. The philosophy behind Saori is self-discovery through free weaving. Sai is translated from Zen, meaning everything has its own dignity, and ori means weaving. All the staff and residents enjoy the creative freedom and expression it brings them. They have also reached out into the local community establishing a relationship with the Pestana's, owners of Maui Alpaca Ranch, to make the wool available for the program.

Lokelani 'Ohana is a non-profit, donation based organization with many needs such as

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land, time, and funds. They currently have three Medicare waiver day programs that come to the facilities located on Maui's north shore to help with work and farming. They are in need of ten to forty acres of land for residential and vocational support, and funding.

The organization has partnered with the Maui Disability Alliance Legislative Forum with Joan Bellard, Board of Director, heading the dental issues and Chang chairing the housing issues. These two-year legislative bills, one Federal and one State, are in support of housing issues for the special needs population have resulted from the work of this group effort.

Their goals for 2008 are to acquire land, fundraise, and continue the development of the organization so they may further expand services and lives with people of special needs.

"The healthy social life is found when the mirror of each human soul and whole community finds its reflection and when in the community the strength of each one is living," Rudolf Steiner. •

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First annual Maui water resource forum: "e malama i ka wai"

December 18, 2007

*Helen Anne Schonwalter*

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December 18, 2007

*Michele Shackelford*

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*Rob Lafferty*

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