Today’s edition of the Tribune-Herald is dedicated to Keiki Day. What’s Keiki Day? The annual charity event, now in its fourth year on Hawaii Island, benefits family service agency Parents and Children Together (PACT). PACT assists more than 18,000 parents, children and families each year, serving around 400 Big Island keiki in its Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Founded on Oahu in 1968, the private nonprofit organization now has 18 programs statewide, focusing on early childhood education, domestic violence prevention and treatment, child abuse prevention and treatment, mental health support and economic and community development.

To help raise money for PACT, more than 1,500 community volunteers around the state are hitting the street to sell Keiki Day editions of West Hawaii Today, the Tribune-Herald, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and the Garden Island newspaper on Kauai.

Each special edition costs $1. All proceeds benefit PACT — celebrating its 50th year — and its programs. PACT receives funding from state and federal resources as well as private grants and donations, but Keiki Day is the organization’s largest fundraising opportunity of the year. Funds from today’s event will help PACT continue to provide its many services and fill the gaps created by cuts to other social service programs.

Copies of the Keiki Day edition also go to all public and private schools on the Big Island, thanks to the generosity of business and individual sponsors. Many teachers will use the newspapers in their lesson plan.

Today’s edition features artwork, stories and poetry made by Hawaii Island students as part of PACT’s Keiki Day Creativity Contest. Winners were selected by a panel of judges, and are featured in this section beginning on Page C4. This year’s theme is “Together.”
Celebrating 50 Years ... Together

"Together" is a powerful word. By working together, we become more efficient. By banding together, we become stronger. By sharing together, we show compassion and generosity toward one another.

There's so much we can accomplish if we come together as a neighborhood, as a community, as a state. This year, Parents And Children Together celebrates 50 years of serving the people of Hawaii. Our work would not be possible without the ardent support of the service community, government agencies, the Legislature, the private sector and community members like you. Together, we help 15,000 parents, children, individuals and families access much-needed social services and support every year.

This Keiki Day is a celebration of our 50-year journey and the work we've accomplished together. We're proud to present original artwork and stories from keiki all over the state, each sharing what the word “together” means to them.

We're also celebrating healthy relationships that bring people together — the bond between a child and his or her parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister, coach, godparent or teacher that provides guidance, safety and support. For 50 years, Parents And Children Together has worked to strengthen these important bonds with our educational, social service and community building programs.

Most of all, we'd like to thank you for standing with Parents And Children Together all these years, supporting our mission and sharing our vision of a peaceful, safe and vibrant Hawaii where everyone has the opportunity to fulfill their dreams. With your support, we hope to continue serving Hawaii for the next 50 years and beyond.

Mahalo,
Ryan Kusumoto
CEO, Parents And Children Together

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Head Start enables keiki to hit kindergarten running

By KIRSTEN JOHNSON
Hawaii Tribune-Herald

PAHOA — When 5-year-old Veronica Silva arrives to her Head Start classroom each morning, she partakes in a six-hour day filled with fun and learning.

In one area of the classroom there’s a “block center” where Veronica and her classmates learn mathematical concepts such as size, weight and numbers.

In another corner there’s a “dramatic play center” where they might role-play being a doctor or firefighter, or pretend to make a burger or pizza.

Other activities on the schedule might include music, outdoor play and practicing good hygiene habits such as toothbrushing.

“(Veronica’s) favorite part (of Head Start) is story time,” mom Karen Silva said recently during an interview at Head Start’s Hawaiian Beaches site where Veronica attends. “She’s always telling me about the books she’s reading here and she wants me to get them at home.”

Veronica is one of nearly 400 Hawaii Island keiki enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start, two early childhood education programs offered locally by the nonprofit organization Parents And Children Together.

Head Start serves children ages 3-5. Early Head Start is for infants and toddlers through age 3, as well as prenatal parents.

There are 18 sites islandwide, mainly in East Hawaii. Both programs primarily serve children from low-income families and those with special needs.

“The whole goal is really to prepare children for future learning,” said Keala Rowland, Big Island assistant program director for the programs. “We find that a lot of the children that do come, after they go into kindergarten, they are more ready to follow routines, they know basic rules and expectations and it’s really beneficial.”

“We make sure that when they enter kindergarten they are in step with their peers.”

All Early Head Start services offered on Hawaii Island are home-based, but that is hoped to change later this year. The Hawaiian Beaches site is working to open the first center-based Early Head Start program on Hawaii Island by this fall, according to Area Manager Malin Moy.

“It’s exciting, we’re almost there!” Moy said of the Early Head Start expansion. “It’s going to be really nice. We have a lot of parents here who have children 3 and under. So there are several who will have children (in two classrooms).”

“School is fun that’s what we want to do,” Moy continued. “It’s hands-on, they are still allowed to be kids, but there is a lot of learning going on in that day.”

Silva said Veronica has gained confidence through attending Head Start and also has gained experience socializing and interacting with other children.

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Raylynn Lopez

Grade: 6 | School: Kealakehe Intermediate | Teacher: Star Anastasio

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Let us work together with love
When we work together with love I am never gloomy.
Like when I have a frown we work together to turn it upside down.
When we work together with love to make a brownie
treat everything in the world turns happy and sweet.
If we all work together with a happy heart treating each other
so sweet the world would be dancing to a happy beat.

Grade: 4 | School: St. Joseph School | Teacher: Mrs. Bockrath
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Together we are evil,
Together we are cruel.
We fight one another,
Fight like frivolous fools.
We all are different,
Yet all just the same.
We just can't seem to find,
The right person to blame.
For all our troubling problems,
All our flaws and views.
All our pain and stupidity,
That we all go through.
We cannot hide the truth,
We cannot repay, hide,
Deep within ourselves,
In the darkness of our hearts.
Unable to see ourselves.
As we wander as lonely are.
We rage wars upon each other,
Leaving nothing but a scar.
Of suffering and hatred,
Of poverty and pain.
Then looking back we see,
To nothing did we gain.
As we turn upon the world,
And strip it of its youth.
For we are nothing more,
Than a black and rotten tooth.
A scourge upon the world,
Needing to be destroyed.
To go back whence we came,
To the darkness of the void.
That place we all belong,
Filled with endless fire.
A place we all earned,
With our deeds and those.
It is there we all deserve,
Because this is our reality.
For we are all together,
The evil called humanity.
"Together"

We are Human

Humanity is strong when kind,
But we are also evil when we're weak.
We have the freedom to choose,
That is what makes us unique.
We are indeed two parts cruel,
But we are also two parts gentle.
We are filled with love,
With our hate.
It is what side we choose
To embrace,
That will decide our fate.
As a species, as a caretaker,
Of these lands,
We must never forsake it,
As it is in our hands.
The past is filled with wrongs,
But let it be so.
It is what we decide now,
If we shall live and grow.
Our future is in the care of all,
For we together shall
Choose to fly or fall.
Let us choose the right path to take,
Towards the future we wish to make.

I remember waking up every morning and running to you.
I'd wake up extra early just so that I
wouldn't miss our morning rides.
We'd start our day,
Along with many other things.
You were my best friend.
We did almost everything
Together.
During that time
We were just kids.
You were already sick.

On every holiday,
I'd wake up early to watch my destination.
I'd get excited,
And I'd remember our first.

I didn't care that didn't see our mornings rides anymore.
Because I just liked the feeling of being with you.
I knew immediately that you had left.
My heart was broken.
Just imagining how we'd never be able to do anything
Together.
Now, I realize that you're forever in my heart.
And we will walk this path of life
Together.
Shantalia Sanchez

Grade: 8 | School: Keaau Middle | Teacher: Joanna Silva
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