

KEIKI DAY



Celebrating **50** years **West Hawaii Today**
 THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2018 WESTHAWAIIODAY.COM \$1.00

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PACT CONTINUING TO TEACH KIDS EARLY AND MENTOR FAMILIES ALONG THE WAY

Putting them in a learning environment at 3, it teaches them what is expected of you in the classrooms.

MARBELLA ALFORD
 PARENT COMMITTEE
 CHAIRWOMAN



BY GITA HOWARD
 WEST HAWAII TODAY
ghoward@westhawaii.com

KAILUA-KONA — On a sunny morning at Parents and Children Together's Head Start Preschool, it's not just the playful exclamations of children that carry. Though, carry over the colorful campus they do. Conversations between mothers and fathers at the Parent Committee meeting also bounce back and forth, an audible reminder that personal connections mark the foundation of healthy living. "They run the meeting because they know the value of getting our families together, talking story,"

Sherry Crandall, PACT's West Hawaii area manager, said of the gathering of parents in a place that's geared toward child development. "There's a lot of 'a-ha' moments." The monthly meetings are not only an opportunity for the parents to learn, but a chance to lead in their child's learning environment. The committee is simply one of several ways PACT Head Start families are involved in their children's education. "(Parents) need to be part of and helpful and in charge of their kids' education as well. So this is a good way for us to start," said Marbella Alford, Parent Committee chairwoman. PACT is a wrap-around, family-focused nonprofit that provides

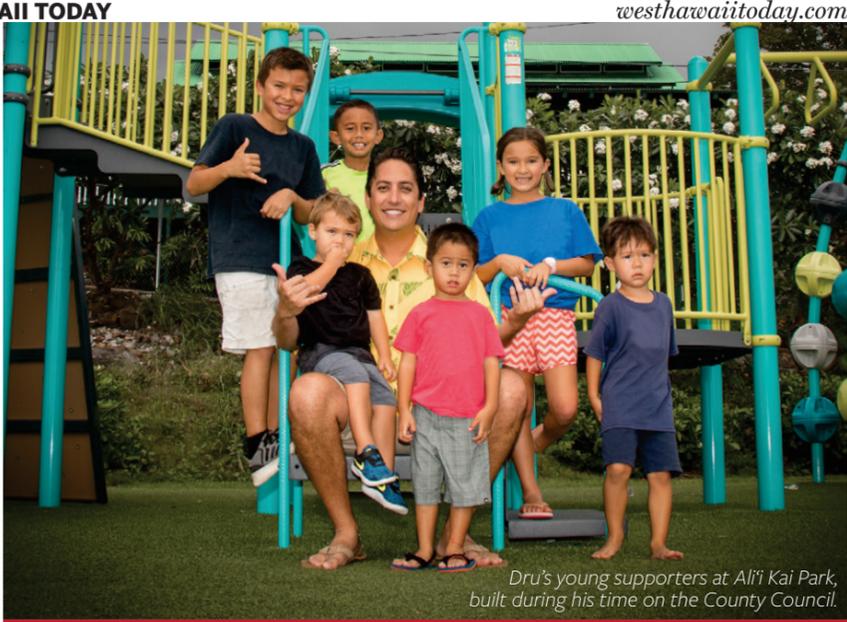
low-income families with access to early childhood education. Statistics show kids exposed to early education are more likely to graduate high school. But more than that, PACT guides parents in how to develop and foster their families. Via family advocates, PACT Head Start offers parents help with finding a job, housing, formatting a resume, and putting a budget together. "Anything like that can help (parents) have a good sense of, 'I'm worth it,' because we deal with some families where their past has not been as fruitful as what we would like to be, so we're there to encourage them, to empower them — so that when our families are successful, the children

are successful," Crandall said. True to its name, PACT encourages parents and children to actually be together in the classroom with parent-volunteer opportunities. In her son Matteo's class, Alford volunteers regularly by reading stories aloud. "The kids get excited when the parents come in because it's not just their teachers, it's their mom," Alford said. This particular morning, his mother reads to a few of his classmates while Matteo flips through a book with his teacher, Chotika Gaspar. Mid-story, teacher Gaspar asked

Above, Matteo Alford reads with his teacher, Chotika Gaspar.
 GITA HOWARD/
 WEST HAWAII TODAY



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Keiki Day



Celebrating 50 years... together

MESSAGE FROM RYAN KUSUMOTO CEO OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN 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, aunty 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

Welcome to Keiki Day

Today's edition of the West Hawaii Today 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 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 17 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

This year's theme is "Together."

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS IN HAWAII



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Celebrating Hawai'i's Keiki

Childhood is about
innocence and joy. It is
about exploration and
freedom. Please join me
in celebrating Hawai'i's
keiki and those who
make a difference in
their lives.



Great-granddaughter Kulia, mom Shanelle, dad (and grandson) Aimoku, great-grandson Noah, and proud great-grandmother Lorraine.

Lorraine RODERO INOUE

SENATOR (D)

Keiki Day



2018 KEIKI DAY CONTEST WINNERS



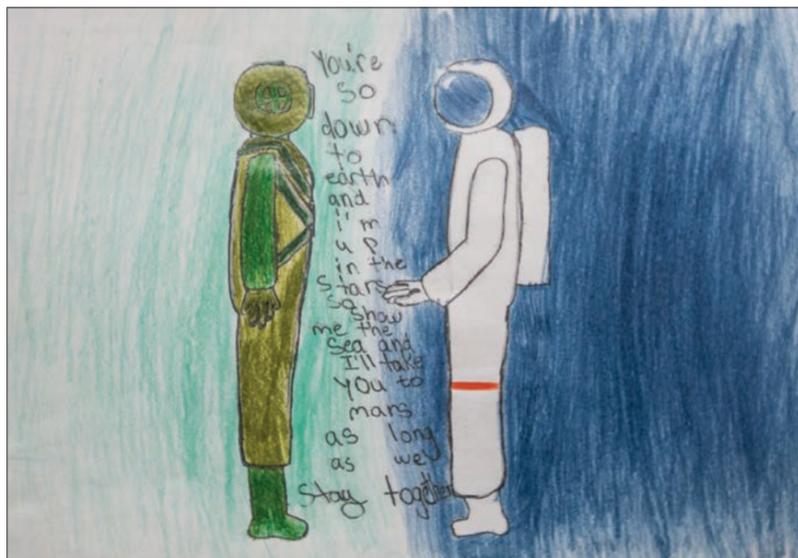
Writer: Gideon Clark
School: Kealakehe High School
Grade: 11

"Together" We Ruined the World

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.



Middle School Artist: Raylynn Lopez
School: Kealakehe Intermediate
Grade: 6

Artist: Carlos Nakamoto
School: Konawaena Elementary
Grade: Kindergarten



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2018 KEIKI DAY CONTEST WINNERS

Artist:
Shantalia Sanchez
School:
Keaau Middle School
Grade: 8



Artist/Writer:
Elina Bockrath
School:
St. Joseph School
Grade: 4

Writer:
Camille Alik
School:
Waiakea High School
Grade: 10



Forever Together in my Heart

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.
It was our thing.
Along with many other things.
You were my best friend.
We did almost everything
Together.

The day school started,
I'd already be looking forward to the next summer
A month before break
I would already start packing my clothes
I got so excited
Little did I know
Summer of 2012 would be our last break
Together



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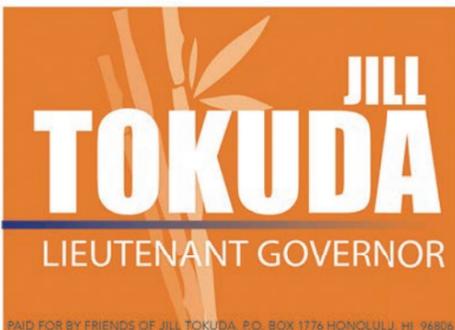
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Keiki Day



Kealakehe Head Start teacher Sandra Daiker plays catch with her pre-school students. LAURA RUMINSKI/WEST HAWAII TODAY FILE PHOTO

PACT:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Matteo, “Do you want to play?” The 4-year-old responded by eagerly bolting to the other side of the room to chat with his classmates.

“He’s nonstop from the time he wakes up to the time he wakes up to the time his head hits the pillow. A Tasmanian devil, slash Dennis the Menace, slash — you know, he’s just a kolohe baby,” Alford said, and laughed.

PACT has helped the family get a handle on Matteo’s high energy by instilling routines inside and outside of the classroom.

“He just has his routine down and it’s really nice, like, ‘Mama, after this we have to do this,’ and he sings his songs in the morning,” Alford said.

“For him it was trying to get him to control his active behavior, and you know so it was the complete opposite of Kainoa,” she said.

Kainoa Alford is Alford’s oldest son, a recent Head Start graduate and now 6-year-old kindergartner.

While Matteo runs wild

and social, Kainoa is more studious and introverted.

Again, PACT tailored to the family’s unique needs, helping them manage Kainoa’s social struggles and anger management issues.

“The teachers helped us along in trying to figure out the best way for (Kainoa) to interact and learn how he can better manage his own anxieties, his self-control. We even had a specialist come in and they observed him in class and they were able to identify some of the things that he had and I was able to learn how to work with it,” Alford said. “He’s amazing now.”

“It’s all about redirecting his attention to something else positive,” Alford said, explaining the helpful technique PACT used to help manage Kainoa’s anger.

And Alford still uses PACT’s redirection strategy with Kainoa today.

“His kindergarten teachers, I talk to them about what works for us,” she said. “So that helped me (at Head Start), that helped him in his future.”

Despite the fact that many schools on the island

don’t require preschool or even kindergarten, the importance of early childhood education should not be underestimated.

“That’s where they learn the most,” Crandall said. “That’s where the brain development comes, the first five years. You need to invest into your children and your families from zero to 5 years of age, that’s where they soak up as sponges.”

Central to the program is school readiness, preparing children from the ripe ages of 3 to 5 for both the social and academic components of school.

“I feel that putting them in a learning environment at 3, it teaches them what is expected of you in the classrooms,” Alford said.

Crandall highlighted health as another major part of school readiness, with Head Start ensuring students attend yearly physicals and dentist appointments.

“We always work with them so that they’re school ready so when they go off to kindergarten we can go, ‘OK, fly! We’ve done what we can do, fly!’”



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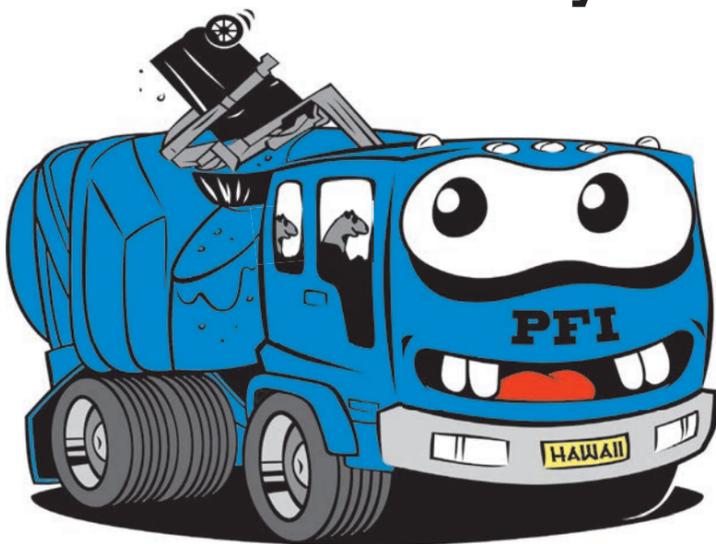
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