

# Ke Ala Hou

*A New Path Forward*

Ke Ke'ena O Ke Kia'aina | Office of the Governor • June 2024

## GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE



Governor Josh Green, M.D.

May was a busy month with new housing initiatives, efforts to combat invasive species, and celebrating our students and state employees. We recently presented keys to the first family who will be residing in Ke Ao Maluhia at Maui Lani, as well as to the first families at the Hawai'i Housing and Finance Development Corporation's new affordable Ililani condominium in Kaka'ako. In addition, the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority's Ka Lei Momi initiative is making progress as the redevelopment of Kapa'a Homes on Kaua'i begins.

The state has also been battling invasive species, particularly the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture has taken action and preventive measures to eradicate CRB. The legislature approved grants to support community efforts to mitigate the CRB infestation.

We also had numerous reasons to celebrate during the past few months. Waipahu High School students became published authors and our state employees were recognized for their achievements. May was also Ha'aheo Pride in Public Service Month. We are grateful for all of our state employees who have been working tirelessly to make Hawai'i a better and safer place. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

From providing new housing opportunities to tackling invasive species and celebrating the achievements of our students and state employees, it has been a productive month for the state. As we look ahead, let us continue to work together to create a better Hawai'i for our people.

Mahalo,

*Josh Green M.D.*

## Ka La'i Ola - The Place of Peaceful Recovery



Left to right: Governor Josh Green, M.D., Office of the Governor Chief of Staff Brooke Wilson, Department of Transportation Director Ed Sniffen, HomeAid Hawai'i Executive Director Kimmo Carvalho, and Department of Human Services Deputy Director Joseph Campos.

Governor Josh Green, M.D. announced a new partnership with HomeAid Hawai'i to build Ka La'i Ola, a project that will create 450 units for wildfire survivors on Maui who were not eligible for FEMA assistance. Ka La'i Ola is the largest interim housing development announced for Maui wildfire survivors to date.

The state Department of Human Services leases the project's 57 acres in the Leiali'i area from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation. After five years, the state will commit the land and permanent infrastructure provided by the development, to the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL). This will fast-track DHHL development for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries by 17 years.

Governor Green shared, "We know that survivors are still suffering and this will help take care of our people. Ka La'i Ola represents one of many collaborative efforts to provide access to safe and secure temporary housing for our most vulnerable households. We are committed to a sensitive response that respects the dignity of every individual and family involved as they work to rebuild their lives."

*Ke Ala Hou intends to elevate, recognize, and celebrate the hard work done by our state departments. Our goal is to share top achievements from our state employees, emphasize aloha and kindness in action, and demonstrate caring leadership at the state level. It is our hope that by sharing these stories, we build trust and understanding in what we do everyday in service to you.*



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## Community Grants Available to Fight Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles



Image of a coconut rhinoceros beetle.  
Photo courtesy: HDOA

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) is offering grants to neighborhood organizations to encourage them to join the battle against the invasive coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). It announced that \$400,000 will be available to community-based programs via two grant proposals.

"It takes all of us to protect Hawai'i and we want to encourage our communities to get involved and help us manage this extremely challenging problem," said Sharon Hurd, chairperson of the Hawai'i Board of Agriculture. "We are looking for innovative, grassroots projects that could serve as models for other neighborhoods."

CRB were first detected in Hawai'i more than 10 years ago on O'ahu. Since then, beetles have gradually spread, devastating palm trees around the island.

## Kapa'a Homes Redevelopment Approved: Affordable Housing Inventory to Expand

The Hawai'i Public Housing Authority and Highridge Costa Development Company have announced plans to redevelop Kapa'a Homes on Kaua'i. Built in 1966, the community currently has 36 homes, but the redevelopment will bring that number up to 124 homes for families on the island. The project is set to begin in late 2025 and be completed by early 2027. It will offer affordable rentals for residents earning between 30 and 60% of the area median income.

The project has received unanimous approval from the Kaua'i County Council and has the support of various elected leaders and community partners. The new homes will feature amenities such as a community room, outdoor courtyard, playground, and more, aiming to provide a safe and comfortable living environment for residents.

Residents of Kapa'a Homes will be

More recently, lower levels of CRB have been detected on Kaua'i, Maui and the west side of Hawai'i Island, where eradication efforts continue by multiple state, federal and county agencies, as well as invasive species organizations.

Two separate grant opportunities are available:

- For O'ahu, at least eight grants with a maximum of \$25,000 will awarded to nonprofit organizations to develop and execute programs to mitigate CRB infestations in their communities. (Total program funding: \$200,000)
- For Kaua'i, Maui, Moloka'i, Hawai'i Island and O'ahu, one nonprofit organization on each island will be awarded \$40,000 to plan and execute projects to manage green waste in their communities. Green waste is the primary breeding ground for CRB and includes mulch, grass clippings, leaves, branches and any plant composting material. (Total program funding: \$200,000)

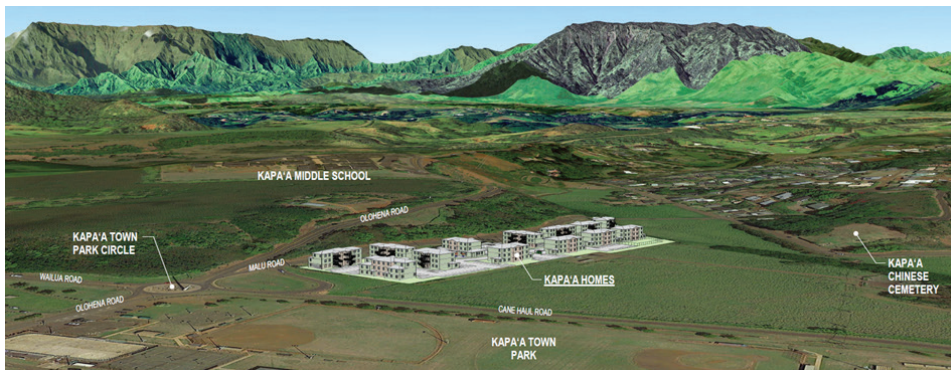
Higher award amounts may also be considered for proposals that are of extraordinary merit, that have a wider benefit outside their communities.



James "Aut" Flemming, plant pest control specialist, on Maui placing netting to the top of a coconut tree to protect it from CRB.  
Photo courtesy: HDOA

Priority will be given to community groups that have demonstrated concern about CRB during public meetings or activities within the past year.

The deadline to submit proposals for both grant programs is June 7, 2024. Grant applicants must be a registered nonprofit with the state of Hawai'i. More information on the application process is available at: <https://hdoa.hawaii.gov/blog/main/nr24-16crb-rfps/>.



A rendering of a map of Kapa'a Homes. Photo courtesy: HPHA

assisted in finding suitable replacement housing during construction and will have priority to return to the new community with the same rent as before. The project is part of the larger Ka Lei Momi initiative, which aims to create more than 10,000 affordable housing units at nine properties across the state.

Highridge Costa, a seasoned affordable housing development company, is the master developer of the project. The

redesign of Kapa'a Homes will honor the architectural themes of the area while modernizing the property. Overall, the redevelopment of Kapa'a Homes aims to meet the critical need for affordable housing on Kaua'i and provide residents with a community where they can grow and thrive.

For more information, visit the official website for the project at [www.kapaa-homes.com](http://www.kapaa-homes.com).



## Completion of Ililani Condominium Project Celebrated in Downtown Kaka'ako

Governor Josh Green, M.D., and other government officials joined the developers of the Ililani condominium project to celebrate the completion of the 328-unit project in Kaka'ako on Friday, May 17.

Ililani boasts 328 total units, with 197 deemed affordable one- and two-bedroom apartments. The development at Keawe and Pohukaina streets provides crucial housing opportunities for local families in the heart of one of the fastest growing neighborhoods on O'ahu.

"Making housing more affordable for working-class families so they can realize their dream of owning their first home is so heartwarming and will go a long way in addressing the affordable housing crisis," said Governor Green.

HHFDC reviewed, approved and transmitted the developer's application requesting exemptions from several developer fees and charges to the Honolulu City Council, which subsequently approved the exemptions. Similarly, a number of exemptions from zoning and land-use regulations were granted with the concurrence of the state Hawai'i Community Development Authority.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent surge in mortgage rates, developer and local architect Kenneth Chang and his team worked tirelessly with HHFDC to bring this project to fruition.

Prices for one-bedroom units start at \$477,500 and two-bedroom units are available from \$582,100. Fourteen units remain available for purchase – 10 of them affordable and four of them market. Interested buyers can find more information at <https://liveililani.com/>.

The grand opening featured a Hawaiian blessing and untying of a maile lei led by Kahu Kordell Kekoa.

"We are thrilled to unveil Ililani, which will help families live and thrive in the community they call home," Chang said. "This development is a testament to what we can accomplish when we work together to address the pressing issue of affordable housing."



Governor Josh Green, M.D., and key stakeholders pose for a photo at the blessing.

## Recent Highlights!



### Hawai'i to Host the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture (FestPAC)

FestPAC is the world's largest celebration of indigenous Pacific Islanders, which will convene on O'ahu from June 6-16, 2024.

Governor Josh Green, M.D. announced the festival at a news conference in May. "We're pleased to announce we are ready to welcome guests and festival participants from across the Pacific to our beautiful state for this important cultural event," said Governor Green. "FestPAC embodies the spirit of unity and diversity, and we look forward to hosting a memorable and enriching experience for all."

"This is an incredible opportunity for Hawai'i to showcase our rich cultural heritage and to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the diverse traditions of the

Pacific Islands," added First Lady Jaime Kanani Green. "We urge kama'āina to gather their family and friends to take advantage of the many free events and activities that FestPAC has to offer."

For more information, visit [www.festpachawaii.org/](http://www.festpachawaii.org/).



### Department of Human Services Deputy Director Trista Speer

Deputy Director Speer recently gave the keynote address at the Utah Emergency Management Association's annual conference, alongside Ed Flick, EMPA, Oregon's Mass Care Coordinator. Aligning with the conference's theme of "Building Relationships, Uniting Response," Speer and Flick highlighted how their collaboration has led to more innovative approaches, better resource deployment, and a focus on the importance of communications—all of which have helped to expedite Maui's ongoing recovery.

Hawai'i was highlighted for its quick and substantive response to the wildfires. Conference attendees were eager to learn from Speer's and Flick's insights and discuss how these kinds of partnerships across states and regions can better prepare communities for the future.



## Waipahu High School Students of Multiple Languages Become Published Authors



Waipahu High students pose with their scholarship certificates.  
Photo courtesy: HIDOE

In late April, Waipahu High School celebrated the recent release of two published books featuring stories multilingual students penned over the past two years about their unique experiences and diverse cultures.

Around 175 students in the school's English Learner (EL) Program, who have limited English language proficiency, took part by writing stories in English that included their native languages and reflected their cultural heritage from Chuuk, Pohnpei, the Marshall Islands, the Philippines, Samoa and Tonga. Some students were matched with non-EL students who assisted in editing the stories or creating accompanying artwork.

Approximately 50 stories were selected for publication in each of the books by Bess Press:

- “Windows and Mirrors” — Described as an anthology that serves as a window into the student authors’ cultures and a mirror reflecting universal human experiences. Students said the book explores themes of family, identity, challenges and loss, new beginnings and love.

- “Holding On” — Described as a collection of folktales from the Philippines, the Marshall Islands and Chuuk that have been passed down through the generations and kept alive for the next generation and new audiences.

The project came to life under Waipahu High’s EL Program coordinator, Jeremiah Brown. “The students all have super-interesting stories, what they’ve been through in their lives and that they come from interesting places. We knew that there was material there that could fill a book,” said Brown, “but I think what surprised me the most is how having the physical book really makes a difference. Having it to share really made it real and memorable for them.”

These are the second and third books in a series, that have been supported by a grant from the Hawai’i State Department of Education’s Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant. The first book – “Rising from our Roots” – was released last year; two more books are in the works.



Photo courtesy: HIDOE

## May Recognized as Ha’aheo Pride in Public Service Month

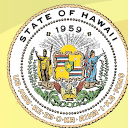
Governor Josh Green, M.D., proclaimed May 2024 as Ha’aheo, Pride in Public Service Month in Hawai’i. This month-long celebration aims to honor and show appreciation for the contributions of members of the state workforce, who dedicate themselves to serving the public.

“Ha’aheo, Pride in Public Service month provides us an opportunity to join together to recognize our employees for their dedicated public service and take pride in their accomplishments,” said Governor Green. “Mahalo to all of our state employees for your contributions and tireless efforts!”

In observance of the month the Governor encouraged department heads via executive memorandum to honor and recognize employees for their commitment.

“We are happy to recognize our hard-working employees during Pride in Public Service month,” said Brenna Hashimoto, director of the Department of Human Resources Development. “The work they do every day keeps state government running while supporting the needs of our residents and visitors and they deserve our aloha.”

The Public Employees Roundtable and the Partnership for Public Service sponsor an annual nationwide Public Service Recognition event, to raise public awareness of the work done by public sector employees on behalf of their respective communities during the first full week of May. This event reinforces pride in public service and recognizes the critical role played by public sector employees in promoting the well-being of society. In honor of the month Ha’aheo, Pride in Public Service flags were flown outside the state capitol for the month of May.



**Ke Ala Hou** is a monthly publication of the Office of Governor Josh Green, M.D.

**We invite you to stay connected with us!**

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