



# Nā Leo 'Ōhana

November 2021

## The Importance of Trust

By  
Samantha U'u  
and Wilma Friesema

I, Samantha U'u, first entered foster care when I was six years old. I'm the second oldest of six children, and throughout my childhood I wove in and out of different foster homes, depending on how my parents were doing. Usually, when in care, I was placed in a home with my older brother. Our two younger sisters were placed together, and the two youngest brothers were placed in a third home. Sometimes we would go for a year or more without seeing each other. It was hard. I would often worry about my younger siblings. I worried about my parents too.

My parents weren't bad people. They just had major issues of their own. Both of my dad's parents died by the time he was 17. My mom grew up in a family that had a lot of domestic violence. My parents started having children when they were only 17 and 18 years old. They were overwhelmed and ill-equipped to raise a family. They turned to drugs as a way to cope, but, of course, that just made matters worse. They loved us very much and would work hard to get us back, which they did several times, but they couldn't sustain their sobriety so we would end up back in care. When I turned 18 my dad got sober again, but this time he was able to sustain it. That was ten years ago.

When I look back at my time in foster care three experiences really stand out. The first was when we were living on Maui and it was planned for all six siblings to have a simultaneous visit with our parents. It turned out our parents couldn't make it, so we asked if we could meet on our own. I don't think that was a standard Child Welfare Services practice at the time, but the CWS aide got the ok. When my siblings and I met in the park that day we all sobbed. We were so happy and relieved to see each other. After that, we got to have regular sibling visits two times per month. Those visits meant the world to us.

The second experience was with a resource caregiver, Auntie Marilyn, who wasn't even the person taking care of me. She was the caregiver for my younger sisters, but Auntie Marilyn was really taking care of our whole family. She was unlike any resource caregiver I had ever known. While I had some nice caregivers, in most of the homes where I lived, it seemed like the focus was on me following the house rules and containing my behavior. It didn't seem like they were really interested in getting to know me, so I often felt isolated and would immerse myself in sports or spend a lot of time alone in my room.



*Samantha's family (Sam is third row, right)*

*Father: Simeon*

*Siblings: Sean, Shyla, Salena, Simeon IV, Solomon*

*Nephew: Kalawaia and Kamakana*

*story continued on page 5*

# BECOME A FOSTER HOME IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

CONTACT US TO BEGIN!

## EAST HAWAI'I

**MICHELE CARVALHO**

MCARVALHO@PIDFOUNDATION.ORG  
(808) 987-5988

## WEST HAWAI'I

**CHELSEA EVANS**

CEVANS@PIDFOUNDATION.ORG  
(808) 896-3829

## MAUI | LĀNA'I | MOLOKA'I

**GABRIELLA ALONSO**

GALONSO@PIDFOUNDATION.ORG  
(808) 268-5122

## O'AHU

**THOMAS TAKAHATA**

TTAKAHATA@PIDFOUNDATION.ORG  
(808) 285-3824

**BRANDON KIM**

BKIM@PIDFOUNDATION.ORG  
(808) 295-1084

## KAUA'I

**MONICA KA'AUWAI**

MKAAUWAI@PIDFOUNDATION.ORG  
(808) 346-8184

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**ALANA POWER**

APOWER@PIDFOUNDATION.ORG



# Project Pilina



PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

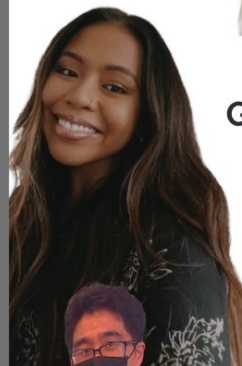
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CHELSEA



MICHELE



GABRIELLA



THOMAS



BRANDON



MONICA



CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
HAWAII

# Meet the Statewide Resource Families Programs



Charyl



Gregg



Tina

## Licensing & Home Study Services



Sarah



Teri

Aloha!

We are very excited to launch the Nā Leo 'Ohana (*formerly known as Building Connections*) Newsletter! Nā Leo 'Ohana means "The Family's Voice." We believe that 'ohana includes a community: the youths in foster care, birth families, resource families, service providers and the community. Catholic Charities Hawai'i in collaboration with the Department of Human Services, Project Pilina, Epic 'Ohana, and other community partners are working together to share with you important information and resources that are available to you.



Gail



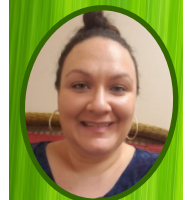
Jackie

Serving Hawai'i since 1947, Catholic Charities Hawai'i provides a wide range of social services with dignity, compassion, social justice, and a commitment to excellence. Through programs and advocacy efforts, Catholic Charities Hawai'i serves all people, especially those with the greatest need, regardless of their faith or culture.



Mere

As part of the largest private network of social service organizations in the United States, Catholic Charities Hawai'i offers much needed programs and services statewide, serving 40,000 individuals each year.



Tiffany

Contracted by the Department of Human Services in 2006, the Statewide Resource Families Program (SRF) at Catholic Charities Hawai'i began serving Child-Specific Resource Families and helped them navigate the licensing process by providing licensing support, Pre-Service Trainings (H.A.N.A.I) and Home Study services. As of July 2021, the SRF Program has been providing Home Study and Pre-Service Training services for General Licensed and Child-Specific Resource Families, as well as providing Support Services to resource caregivers, legal guardianship, adoptive, and ICPC families (please see page 4 for more details of our support services!)



Rachel



Kristopher

We appreciate all of you, for the care, love, and support that each of you provide to our precious keiki in the State of Hawai'i. We look forward to working with you!



Michael

Mahalo,  
Charyl E.O. Makanui  
Program Director II  
Statewide Resource Families Program at *Catholic Charities Hawai'i*

## Training & Support Services



Nikki



Jennifer



Leilani



Cheryl



Leeza



CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
HAWAII

## STATEWIDE RESOURCE FAMILIES SUPPORT SERVICES

Our program provides services to strengthen and support our resource caregivers statewide. The services provided include the **Warm Line**, **Support Groups**, and **Training** for all DHS licensed resource caregivers, guardianship, kinship, and adoptive families.

### Warm Line

- Monday-Sunday 8:30am-10:00pm
- Provides information, referrals, and non-emergency emotional support
- Registration for any of the events, trainings, or support groups

Contact information:

Oahu: **808-545-1130**

Neighbor Island: **1-866-545-0882**

Email: [warmline@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:warmline@catholiccharitieshawaii.org)

### Support Groups

- Opportunity to connect, receive and give support, and provide resources within your community
- Available statewide

### Training

- Information and knowledge that will empower you
- Training are approved by DHS
- Access to webinars, online videos, and other resources.



Check out our mobile application available now in the Apple Store and on Google Play.

*Resources made available to families as a collaborative effort by the Department of Human Services and Catholic Charities Hawaii*

Visit our agency website: [www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org](http://www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org)

Email: [warmline@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:warmline@catholiccharitieshawaii.org) or [supportservices@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:supportservices@catholiccharitieshawaii.org)

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*Continuation from page 1—The Importance of Trust*

Auntie Marilyn was just the opposite. Though she was the caretaker of my younger sisters, her door was always open to all of us. I could come stay for sleep-overs or, if I just dropped by, I'd always be welcomed in. She reached out to my dad too (my mom was incarcerated at the time), and would set up visits for us with him. She actually got to know my dad on a personal level, and as their trust grew he opened up to her more and more. That made such a difference. I think he started feeling better about himself because of how she treated him, and he started showing up more consistently for us too.

For me, it was relieving to spend time with a caregiver who was really interested in me, who didn't stereotype me or my siblings and assume that we would behave badly. Auntie Marilyn was so open-hearted and supportive. She honored that we were a family and what that meant to us. I believe she saw the good in us, even though our life wasn't perfect. It felt like she really trusted us.

Having bounced around from foster home to foster home, trust didn't come easily for me. It was hard to believe that anyone really cared about me, and that they wanted to get to know me and what was important to me. To feel Auntie Marilyn's genuine interest and trust took a lot of weight off my shoulders. It felt like I could breathe again, and that it was safe to rely on someone other than myself. I knew if I needed advice or help, Auntie Marilyn would be there. Even after we reunified with our dad, we kept in touch and spent Christmas with her and her family. She's still like family to us, even today.

Auntie Marilyn didn't just passively support our family connection, she actively set up activities that brought us together. For example, when CWS had staffing cutbacks because of the recession, she worked with my resource caregiver, and the boys' resource caregiver, to make sure our family visits still happened. They all agreed to take turns supervising the visits, and it was during one of those visits that my resource caregiver finally got to meet my dad.

That was the third important moment for me. My resource caregiver, Christine, learned so much about my background and history from my dad; she later told me that it helped her to understand where some of my traits came from and what had formed me. Up to that point, she had had no idea what I had been through because it was hard for me to talk about it. I think her empathy and respect for me deepened after getting that fuller picture of my history and family life. I know our relationship felt stronger and trusting because of it.

If there are any resource caregivers reading this, I just want to encourage you to get to know the parents of the children in your care. It can make such a difference. You'll understand things about the children's behaviors and how they see things that otherwise might not make sense. It also is a building block for trust. When I saw Auntie Marilyn and Christine interacting with my dad and getting to know him, I felt less torn inside. My two worlds were coming together, which helped me feel more whole and hopeful. I could see my dad was relieved to know that his children were in good homes too, which freed him up to do the personal work he needed to do. It just made our world feel that much safer. It also helped me to trust that my present and future could be ok. I know that connection between my dad and the caregivers played a significant role in our family being able to reunify. It truly helped heal my family, and for that I will be forever grateful. Mahalo.

*A video of Sam and her family's reunification journey can be seen at:*

[Celebrating National Reunification Month -- The U'u family story — EPIC 'Ohana, Inc. \(epicohana.org\)](https://www.epicohana.org/celebrating-national-reunification-month--the-u-u-family-story)





801 S King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
(808) 521-9531  
FAMILYPROGRAMSHAWAII.ORG

July 6, 2021

Aloha Resource Families,

We are writing this letter to notify you that Family Programs Hawaii will no longer be providing support services to resource caregivers through the Resource Families Support Services Program. You will continue to receive services from a new provider, Catholic Charities Hawaii – Statewide Resource Families. Support services with Catholic Charities Hawaii will begin on or before August 1, 2021.



Sarah

Catholic Charities Hawaii will continue to provide you with support services through ongoing training, support groups, the 'Ōhana Navigator Program, and the Hawaii Foster Care Connections mobile application. The Warm Line number will remain the same and will continue to operate daily from 8:30am – 10:00pm, ready to provide you with information, referrals, and support. Catholic Charities Hawaii will continue to offer excellent, culturally and linguistically appropriate services at no cost to resource caregivers. Family Programs Hawaii staff will be working closely with Catholic Charities Hawaii for the remainder of this month to ensure a smooth transition so that you may continue to access services as needed.



Ria

Additionally, you do not need to take any action, as Catholic Charities Hawaii will be providing you with information on upcoming events and to welcome you to their services. Thank you for your understanding during this transitional period.



Kristen

Since 2006, it has truly been our honor to provide support services for Hawaii's resource caregivers, along with our Hui Ho'omalu partners, Partners in Development Foundation and Catholic Charities Hawaii, in collaboration with the Department of Human Services. It has been a privilege to walk alongside you during your fostering journey. Through the ups and downs, stories and experiences, which you have shared with our staff, we have been inspired by the work that you do and we cannot thank you enough for your commitment and dedication to Hawaii's keiki and their families.

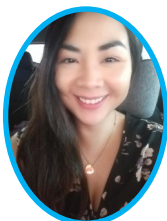


Noel

While this program is coming to a close with our agency, Family Programs Hawaii will continue to offer relevant support to children and families involved in the child welfare system through our other programs, including the Family Strengthening Center, Project Visitation, Enhancements, Wendy's Wonderful Kids, Ho'omalu o Na Kamali'i, Backpack Buddies, and Care to Share. We will also continue to celebrate the holidays with Oahu's resource caregivers through the Annual Holiday party, so keep an eye out for your invitation in October! For more information on our programs and service areas, please visit our website at [www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org](http://www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org).



Charla



Elizabeth

Mahalo and a hui hou,

*Keith A. Kuboyama*  
Keith Kuboyama, LCSW  
President and CEO

*April Lum*  
April Lum  
Director of Programs

*Ria Rigoroso*  
Ria Rigoroso  
Program Manager



Luisa



We help kids



## Message from Child Welfare Services

Child Welfare Services thanks you for your commitment to our children and parents involved in foster care. Your care for our children and support of their parents is invaluable and we deeply appreciate you and your family! If you celebrate the holidays, we wish you a Happy Holiday's. If you do not celebrate, we hope this next month is filled with lots of laughter, love and joy! ♥ Your CWS Ohana



**AVAILABLE NOW**

Hawaii Foster Care Connections is a place for Resource Families to connect with helpful support services, community resources, and most importantly, each other.

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

# Upcoming Events

## NOVEMBER 2021

### Keiki Fall Prevention & Bike Safety Presentation

November 22, 2021 at 11:00 am—12:00 pm Zoom Conference

RSVP at [KeikiFallPresentation](#)

### Statewide Support Group

November 23, 2021 at 12:00 pm—1:15 pm. Zoom Conference

RSVP to the WarmLine at (808) 545-1130 or at [SupportGroup11/23/21](#)

### Developing Teen Relationship

November 30, 2021 at 11:00 am—12:00 pm Virtual Workshop

RSVP the Parentline at (808) 526-1222 no later than 7:00 pm the day prior to workshop.

## DECEMBER 2021

### Relative Resource Caregivers Support Group

December 8, 2021 at 10:00 am-11:15 am Zoom Conference

RSVP to the WarmLine at (808) 545-1130 or at [SupportGroup12/8/21](#)

### Healthy Relationship

December 15, 2021 at 5:00 pm—6:15 pm Zoom Conference

RSVP to the WarmLine at (808) 545-1130 or at

For **ADULTS**: [HealthyRelationship-ADULTS](#)

For **YOUTH**: [HealthyRelationship-YOUTH](#)

### Statewide Support Group

December 16, 2021 at 6:00 pm—7:15 pm Zoom Conference

RSVP to the WarmLine at (808) 545-1130 or at [SupportGroup12/16/21](#)

If you would like to receive email updates, Please email [SupportServices@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org](mailto:SupportServices@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org)



CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
HAWAII

1822 Keeaumoku St  
Honolulu, HI 96822

The Nā Leo 'Ohana Newsletter  
is published quarterly by  
Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
1822 Keeaumoku Street  
Honolulu, HI 96822

Contact information:  
WarmLine: (808) 545-1130  
E-mail: [SupportServices@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org](mailto:SupportServices@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org)

**This newsletter may be viewed  
on the following:**

Website: [www.rcg.hawaii.org](http://www.rcg.hawaii.org)  
Facebook: Resource Families Support Services



**GO GREEN!**

Contact us today and request an electronic copy!



**IMPORTANT NUMBERS:  
Department of Human Services  
reporting:**

**Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect:  
(808)532-5300 or  
(toll free) 1-888-380-3088**

**Suspected Child Trafficking:  
(808)832-1999 or  
(toll free) 1-888-398-1188  
Toll-free Fax: 1-888-988-6638**

**All numbers available  
24 hours a day  
7 days**