

Year in Review 2019

Dear Friends,

Writing a year-end reflection is something I often procrastinate on. There is so much to say and finding the right highlights or insights from the year is always a challenge for me. But, this year's source for putting off my year-end reflection is quite different. I have felt both speechless and overwhelmed by the number of remarkably thoughtful messages that have come from all corners of our work. What could I add? Why should I add to the chorus of very meaningful and thoughtful messages?

Today I have decided it is time. It is time for me to exercise my voice and share some of the things we have been thinking at Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation before, and now during, this global pandemic.

I was inspired earlier this year by this 'ōlelo no'eau (proverb of Hawai'i):

"O ke kahua ma mua, ma hope ke kūkulu."

First is the foundation, next is the building.

Learn all you can, then practice. (2459)

– Mary Kawena Pukui, 'Ōlelo No'eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings

I know I am often in the pursuit of knowledge. I describe myself as a "continuous learner." I rejoice in the fact that foundations have a variety of capital and one of the most precious is knowledge. We grow when we learn something new that we can share with others. But what of practicing? Do we spend enough time practicing what we have learned? Hawaiian ancestors understood the importance of learning and of practicing.

I think of the Foundation's Partners and how they work with young people in 'āina based education settings, and in internship programs leading to a career in conservation and a commitment to aloha 'āina. These partners are helping young people learn new knowledge and skills and then practice what they have learned. These young people are encouraged to try new skills. They risk. They fail. They try again, with guidance and with support.



I am reminded, in this time of pandemic, how our humanitarian relief partners, Doctors Without Borders and Save the Children, are taking lessons they learned from the Ebola crisis and translating them to the current COVID-19 crisis. Whether those lessons are about health promotion and safety practices or ways to provide educational programming despite the closure of schools, they are practicing what they have learned previously.

At a time when inequity and lack of access to basic resources and safety, whether it be health care, safe housing, food security or social justice, is heightened, I have to ask myself, what have we

learned and what are we practicing? We know we have to practice anti-racism, not just use nice words. We have to practice justice and fairness and equity if those values are ever to become reality in our state, in our nation and across the globe. Practice takes commitment, time, and effort. It takes being willing to be uncomfortable and to confront ourselves, our systems, and our structures that maintain the status quo.

Since the pandemic, we have observed remarkable examples of aloha and compassion. Creativity and resourcefulness abound and bring rays of hope in what feels like otherwise dark times. The ability to express love during such unsettled times comes through practice. Our Partners, in a variety of ways, have been practicing this art for some time.

Over the past few months, we have confirmed that we want to stay close to our Partners. We want to be resources to them as they navigate these very unsettled and uncharted waters. We want to be at their sides, learning from them and supporting them as they adapt to the often-changing environment.

We have an opportunity today to commit to a better future. We cannot squander this moment in our history. Now more than ever, we, at Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation, are committed to practicing those actions that will be necessary for Hawai'i and the world to be more just, fair, and sustainable for our children and their children. Please join us as we practice what we are learning. And, if you have time, please share with us what these times have been teaching you and how you, too, are engaging in practice.

Me ka 'oia'i'o,



Janis Reischmann
Executive Director

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