



February 29, 2016

Aloha!

Closing our books on 2015 prompts me to reflect on the past year and to imagine squinting through a pane of clouded glass to try to make out what lies ahead in 2016.

Looking back, I see that the grants we have made since the Foundation's birth in 1991 now total over \$40 million. Of that \$40-plus million in grants, approximately \$6 million was approved before the Foundation received full funding from our benefactor, Helga Glaesel-Hollenback, in early 2008. The remaining \$34 million has been approved since the Foundation hired its first staff later that year. There is much to be said for considering "spend down" (i.e., distributing all the foundation's assets over a set period). However, when noting that we have already made grants equaling more than 25% of our benefactor's original gift, I also see the potential of a perpetual foundation which could, over time, distribute far more than the donor's initial contribution.

This past year was a time of reflection for us. We completed the first phase of our six-year initiative, [Hope for Kids](#), in which we engaged 10 Partner organizations that work with children and youth in delivering hands-on learning in the outdoors to instill greater hope for their future. And, while this work was underway, each Partner explored ways to strengthen its programs and its organization and to share with the Foundation and the other Hope for Kids Partners the lessons it was learning.

For example, the Partners worked on ways to more effectively capture the interest and attention of older youths, on how to engage 'ohana in meaningful ways, and on how to strengthen their revenue streams so they can do more mission-related work.

The impacts of our Hope for Kids work were beautifully captured in 10 short videos - a t <http://hauolimauloa.org/program/hope-for-kids> - developed by each Partner organization with the help of [Paliku Documentary Films](#). Paliku also developed a short video documenting the Foundation's own Hope for Kids journey and highlighting the most important lessons we've learned. In addition, a two-year program evaluation by Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) captured the program's impacts - as told by program participants, their 'ohana and staff - on the kids served by each of the 10 Partners. (See <http://hauolimauloa.org/hope-for-kids-executive-summary-and-evaluation-report-prel-august-2015>.)

To help us understand both our successes and shortcomings in supporting Hope for Kids, all our Partners also provided us feedback and suggestions through a process facilitated by an external consultant.

The videos, two-year evaluation and Partner feedback, together with input from a number of community leaders, helped us reflect on how our future child-focused work should unfold. It is clear that the work begun with Hope for Kids is not yet complete. Our reflection and the feedback we received made us more resolute than ever in our

belief that for Hawai'i's children to be hopeful about the future they need:

- to feel connected to their community and to the natural world,
- to feel self-confident and take pride in their culture, and
- to have critical life skills.

We believe all this results from access to high-quality, 'āina-based education, and we are committed to helping provide this for all Hawai'i's children as we move into Hope for Kids 'Elua in 2016.



*The Foundation and representatives from all ten Hope for Kids Partners met together on March 4-6, 2015 in Molokai at the 9th convening meeting. The convening was hosted by Ka Honua Momona International.*

We enjoyed opportunities to celebrate in 2015. For example, as a part of our strategy to increase the number of homegrown conservation leaders in Hawai'i, which we call Environmental Leadership Pathways, we have been working since 2012 with the [Hawai'i Conservation Alliance](#) to increase the number of students attending the annual Hawai'i Conservation Conference. By boosting student attendance at this, the state's biggest conservation conference, we are helping introduce emerging professionals to potential careers in Hawai'i conservation and exposing them to people who could be their employers or supervisors a few years from now. We saw record numbers of students taking advantage of the student rate at the 2014 and 2015 conferences - increases of more than 250% from when we began working with the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance in 2012.

Also, a part of our Environmental Leadership Pathways, we have seen [KUPU's E2U Leaders](#) program more than triple in size - from 6 to over 20 schools - in just three years. The program places recent college graduates with highly motivated public school teachers so the teachers can offer their students more hands-on, engaging science and natural resource-based activities, for example, participating in the Adopt-a-Forest program. The growth of E2U Leaders is

evidence both of the demand from schools and of the quality of the E2U Leaders' contributions. We believe such learning experiences help prepare students to pursue the science degrees they will need for good conservation jobs in the future.



*Waipahu High School students documenting water quality samples at a lo'i.*

As we look ahead, we are excited to be celebrating our 25th anniversary. We know many of you came to know us only more recently, perhaps since our full funding and staffing in 2008. But others have been involved with the Foundation's early work - for example, when, following Hurricane 'Iniki in 1992, we got behind a small community group on Kaua'i that wanted to build the environmental education center at Kōke'e State Park from which today's [Kōke'e Discovery Center](#) emerged. Over this anniversary year, we want to celebrate our benefactor's foresight in establishing the Foundation and thank those who guided us through our first quarter century of development. We would not be where we are today without your counsel. We also want to honor the work of those with whom we have been privileged to partner for a better and more hopeful future. It is through your work that we have enjoyed successes.

We hope that over this year you will all join us in remembering the work of the past 25 years. We hope you will also give us your thoughts about what we should be doing over the next quarter century. To quote "The Singer not the Song," a provocative article on the challenge of impact monitoring and social change, "We need to become witness to our own stories, and then the story itself becomes an emergent process of change."

Sincerely,

**Janis A. Reischmann**  
Executive Director