



August 7, 2018

Aloha!

Is there reason for hope today? Depending on when you ask that question, my answer might vary. Like many of you in the past year, we at the Foundation have felt buffeted by waves of uncertainty arising from a confluence of unusual weather and natural disasters, displacement of people around the globe, and a flood of head-scratching national headlines. These waves have brought a sense of disbelief, unsettledness and uncertainty. But since such feelings can be immobilizing, I have tried moving to a place that allows room for optimism. Making the mental transition to that place, I was reminded of these thoughts from Rebecca Solnit's book, *Hope in the Dark*:

*Cause-and-effect assumes history marches forward, but history is not an army. It is a crab scuttling sideways, a drip of soft water wearing away stone, an earthquake breaking centuries of tension. Sometimes one person inspires a movement, or her words do decades later, sometimes a few passionate people change the world; sometimes they start a mass movement and millions do; sometimes those millions are stirred by the same outrage or the same ideal, and change comes upon us like a change of weather. All that these transformations have in common is that they begin in the imagination, in hope.*

These words reassure me that despite the waves tossing the world about, our partners continue on their journeys, day after day. And it is their work, and the results that flow from that work, that bring us hope in these unsettling times.

Since 2009, when the Foundation launched its [Hope for Kids initiative](#) – our first funding partnership with Hawai'i nonprofit organizations that create experiences that enable young people to engage with and learn from the 'āina – we have been inspired by stories of growth of the youth and their families that this initiative has touched. From a partner ([www.hookuaaina.org](http://www.hookuaaina.org)) in the second Hope for Kids cohort ('Elua) comes a touching story about how a young person found his purpose through relationships, hard work and a connection to place.

*My story with Ho'okua'āina begins shortly after I finished my studies at UH Mānoa in the spring of 2016. I spent the summer (after school) submitting applications for jobs but was never accepted for any of them. Eventually I gave up, stopped looking for jobs, and spent my time having fun. A friend of mine who was familiar with Ho'okua'āina brought me down to work with the crew for a day, introducing me to Uncle Dean. A couple of weeks later I found myself again at the lo'i.*

*At first I viewed my internship as just a job, a really cool job, but every now and then I would see a position open up somewhere else and send an application. Gradually I became more and more comfortable with the rest of the work crew, opening up to them and really enjoying their company. Before long we were singing together, having laughs together, and even consulting each other on the deeper, more personal aspects of life – all while working hard and getting things done at the lo'i.*

*The lo'i has become my home. There is no place I would rather be, and now I would never consider leaving for another job. This is the best job I will ever have and I know for certain that someday I will look back on this time as the "good old days".*

*I don't know where life will bring me next or when that may be. But I do know that I will forever carry the experiences and memories that this place and this family have continued to bless me with. I truly feel like I am a part of this place. Wherever I go I will carry Ho'okua'āina with me and maybe I can touch peoples' lives in the same way that Ho'okua'āina has touched mine.*

*My name is Zachary, home is Kāne'ohe, and I am a Kalo farmer.*



*Zachary Pilien with Uncle Dean Wilhelm (Photo: Ho'okua'āina)*

For a number of years, the Foundation has also done a portion of its work beyond Hawai'i's shores. We have been partnering with Global Greengrants Fund

([www.greengrants.org](http://www.greengrants.org)) since 2010. Our partnership began because we were seeking ways to have an impact on environmental issues in communities, especially smaller ones, internationally. Since we could not accomplish this directly, we needed partners with local community ties and knowledge. We found Global Greengrants Fund, which powers change from the ground up by investing in local leaders and which knows that women are often at the forefront of change.

In 2017, with our help, Global Greengrants Fund made over 300 grants to support women-led environmental and social justice organizations. One of these was a modest grant to a women's organization on Tansin, an island in Honduras with about 50,000 inhabitants, mostly indigenous Miskito. They live in villages accessible only by plane or boat and depend on subsistence agriculture. While many Miskito women farm, they tend to earn less and go hungry more often than men because they lack sufficient access to land and seeds, appropriate technology and financial services and a voice in community decision-making. The grant from Global Greengrants Fund is helping the Women's Association of Tansin end that disparity – and better feed themselves and their families – by teaching sustainable farming and forest management.



*Global Greengrants Fund helps empower women to become resource monitors across the Pacific Islands in the fight against climate change. (Photo: Global Greengrants Fund)*

While the times may feel uncertain, even dark, our partners continually remind us that we can choose where to focus our attention and that our efforts lead to accomplishments. Since its establishment in 1991, the Foundation has invested over \$57 million in grants to Hawai'i and international partner organizations. These partners are working for a future in which there is equity for all; where our natural resources are treasured and protected; and where human connections bring optimism for the next generation. They are exemplified in 'Ōlelo No'eau #187, 'A'ohē mea koe ma ku'ono. (One who gives freely without reservation.)

If our efforts are to calm the waves and move us closer to the future we dream of, we must lift up stories like these, help make them the norm and thus create fertile ground for positive change. At Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation we are not oblivious to the challenges we face. We are committed instead to doing things that hold promise and create hope.

We look forward to hearing and sharing more stories of what is working to improve the future for all our children and their children.

Warmly,



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Executive Director  
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