In youth services, the best thinking of the past cannot be relied on today. By observing various populations in treatment, researchers and social service workers learn how certain types of care improve outcomes for youth. The methodologies of yesterday are revisited in the light of new information, resulting in positive trends in practices and programming.

Case in point: the trend toward greater community involvement in the work we do with youth. Rather than see ourselves simply as providers that deal with youth issues, we now look at youth service agencies as facilitators in a community-wide effort to help youth realize their full potential. Youth services is a “we” issue, and the best outcomes are realized when the “we” includes all of us.

The trend away from orphanages and toward the foster care model is one clear and compelling example. Here’s another: In the last few decades, the best information has led the youth service community to move away from an incarceration and institutional model to a mental health/community model, a trend that has proven better for youth at risk.

We also understand better than ever before the value in finding and engaging youth before real trouble starts. We have found that by involving community groups and working with structures that already exist, we can keep at-risk youth out of the system in the first place. And nothing works better than that.

In this report, we look at the trends—globally and locally—toward placing increased emphasis on working with the community to help our youth. In every case, working with youth in non-institutional settings through outreach, community resources, residential homes and foster care has paved the way towards better outcomes. On that we can all agree.
When I began my career in the late 60’s, individuals with mental health issues or developmental disabilities were served primarily in institutions, locked away in state hospitals without adequate treatment and without ever being reassessed in any meaningful way. Others were kept at home, out of sight, out of mind, and away from neighbors, family and friends out of shame, fear, or uncertainty about how to help them.

For youth at risk, the situation was as bleak: the vast majority of youth that needed services did not receive them. Before the days of special education, challenged youth in public schools simply dropped out. There were a handful of child welfare agencies, but the proliferation of services rising from the initiatives of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, the change in the Mental Health Act, and the civil rights movement that the 60’s provoked had yet to take place.

I was fortunate to be in human services during the “deinstitutionalization process” when state hospitals were closing and youth were being moved out of institutions into the community. Those changes allowed us to intervene earlier and to significantly alter the biographies of so many youth and families.

The terminology that became popular four decades ago still describes Hale Kipa’s goal today: least restrictive setting and community-based services. For us, this translates to providing opportunities to receive services in the home and community, and to receive as little service as is necessary to achieve a successful and satisfying life.

Today our community attempts to prevent future problems by intervening as early as possible with programs like Healthy Start. The need for more intensive or acute services hasn’t been eliminated, unfortunately, but now these services are better targeted than ever before. Today the resources available to youth includes a continuum of services, from outreach that meets youth and families where they live and work; to placement, residential, and shelter alternatives.

It is the richness of this continuum that is important, and the acknowledgment that no one size works best for every youth. It is the understanding that youth and families are best served in the communities in which they live and to which they will ultimately return, even if they require more intensive services that take them out of their homes for short periods of time.

Hale Kipa is part of a rich tapestry of resources and services that are available to those in need. The part we play is important, but it is not the only part; our work with youth is only a small part of the work that they will do over their lifetime. Forty years later I’m thankful that we have come so far, but I am vigilant about the possibility that we will regress, either by loss of funding or by lack of society’s will to improve the lives of youth at risk. It is up to the community to insist that we continue on this path.
Community. We each live in one. We each contribute in different ways, positively or negatively, to making our community what it is. We depend on our community to provide for our needs. Some community resources make our lives easier and more pleasant; others protect those of us who suffer misfortune.

No one chooses misfortune, children least of all. Hale Kipa is a resource of our community which provides help to children and families in need. Sometimes Hale Kipa is the safe refuge for children; other times, the counselor helping someone to change course. But while Hale Kipa is the vehicle for providing that help, Hale Kipa is not the source. The community is the source.

Hale Kipa succeeds, first and foremost, through its people. They are the faces and hands that comfort, support, cajole and celebrate the youth and families that we serve. They are the staff at the shelters, the foster parents, and the counselors. They are also the volunteers who lend a hand and give countless hours of time simply to help in whatever way they can. All of them—the helped and the helping—are members of our community.

To provide that help, those people need other resources: funding, of course, but also facilities for shelter, teaching and treatment. Furniture, clothing and toys to provide some semblance of normalcy for children often immersed in fear. Support from schools and businesses which can help our youth develop life skills. And from the community as a whole: to remember how hard it is to transition into adulthood for any child, and to imagine that challenge in a far less supportive environment.

Over the years, Hale Kipa has helped thousands of members of our community reverse roles, from the helped to the helping. Hale Kipa, in turn, has been helped by the community, which provides its resources and support. The cycle of helped and helping is our living success. There is no price by which to measure that success other than the overall well-being of all of us: our community, our ‘ohana.
The answer to stopping this cycle lay in the courage of social workers and agencies that made a revolutionary presumption: youth that would be someday living in the community ought to be served within the community whenever possible. What’s more, youth that are headed for trouble can be redirected before they get in trouble, saving them, their families, the taxpayers and society a lot of unnecessary suffering.

Of all the transformations in the way youth service providers go about helping at-risk or high-risk youth, these two have been most significant: the first is the trend toward providing treatment and services in a less institutional setting. That setting might be their own home or school, a foster or group home, or special activities that are accessed within the neighborhood. These programs would fight for funding and legislative support from the very start, but money was only part of the issue. Key to all these solutions is something money cannot buy: the active support of members of the community in which these youth live—and to which these youth will someday return.

The second trend has been toward intervention: reaching out to youth at the earliest signs of trouble and providing programs that help redirect them toward better outcomes. Like the first trend, intervention programs require the support and active cooperation of community groups and institutions to work properly. It is they, after all, who can recognize the trouble signs, and they who are most trusted by families to usher youth away from destructive paths.
FOSTER CARE VS. INSTITUTIONAL CARE

It is well accepted today that youth are much better off being raised in a family setting than in an institution. But only recently has solid research come to support this trend. “In almost every case, the sooner an orphan is placed with a family, the better off that child will be,” says Charles A. Nelson, professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and one of the lead researchers in an ongoing study called the Bucharest Early Intervention Project. He has found that the dismal development of orphan children simply reflects being raised in a facility. The brain seems to “rewire” itself wrongly when deprived of the close personal attachments within a family. The institutional setting itself, with its stressful environment and reduced levels of human interactions, seem to cause declines in growth hormones and other stimulants to healthy development.

“Sure, it sounds intuitive, that kids will do better in families—big surprise,” adds Sebastian Koga, a Romanian-born neurosurgeon involved in the study. “But at the outset, the thinking was that kids who failed to thrive in institutions probably just weren’t getting enough veggies and vitamins. It turns out that kids will suffer even in good institutions with good care.” And when children that began life in orphanages were put under foster care, they showed remarkable improvement in the deficient areas.

The research has supported our commitment to the foster care system. Whatever its flaws, and however difficult it is to administer, foster care is indisputably a better model of care for
We are reaching out to youth at the earliest signs of trouble and providing programs that help redirect them toward better outcomes.

youth that must be—for reasons ranging from sexual abuse to drugs—removed from the home. The “normalcy” of a family setting is part of the therapy, and no institutional setting can recreate that. The challenge to government and social service agencies is to recruit, train and maintain a sufficient number of good foster homes to answer the need. It is a prime example of how community involvement can support and enhance the work we do with youth.

RESIDENTIAL HOMES
The same concept is behind youth services’ use of residential homes. Even though they are not like the traditional homes used in foster care, these highly supervised group homes for older youth provide a sense of normalcy and responsibility that no institution can match. Youth live in small groups in family-like environments in neighborhoods, learning to “fit in” to the community by recognizing the rights of neighbors and becoming more aware of their impact on others. When guided by sensitive and competent staff and counselors, youth in these homes have the highest chance of succeeding when they are returned to their own families.

The success of these homes indicates the wisdom in taking youth services away from the old model of incarceration and institutionalization, and toward the newer mental health treatment model. As the Casey Foundation observed in a recent report, “The real woes of the juvenile court and corrections systems are costly—needlessly damaging the life chances of young people who become involved with the juvenile courts, often violating their rights, wasting millions of taxpayer dollars, and, in many cases, actually exacerbating the dangers of youth crime.” Besides being woefully expensive to run, the system of locking youth away simply doesn’t work well. Veteran juvenile justice scholar Barry Feld writes that “A century of experience with training schools and youth prisons demonstrates that they constitute the one extensively evaluated and clearly ineffective method to treat delinquents.”

Today it is clear that targeted, high-quality community-based program options yield better results than the old model at a fraction of the cost. Research on juvenile justice consistently shows that troubled youth are more likely to cease delinquent behaviors and avoid re-arrest if they receive focused support and supervision from caring adults in their own homes or when necessary, in smaller programs within communities, rather than larger, less personal institutions.

Hale Kipa’s residential homes seek to answer these needs with the best information to date on how youth grow and thrive in out-of-home placements. By placing youth in a supervised home setting, treatment plans can be developed that take advantage of all we’ve
learned in the past decades. Our ongoing challenge is to maintain homes in real neighbor-
hoods that are accepted by the community, and to continue to offer the best opportunity for
success to Hawaii’s at-risk youth.

NO PLACE LIKE HOME
As the research shows, often the best choice is to avoid out-of-home placement in the first
place. Government agencies around the country are moving to limit the number of youths
removed from the home as they face the increasingly difficult task of maintaining effective
shelters and foster care systems. More than that, if the youth and family needs can be ad-
dressed without the trauma of removal, all the better.

For years, Hale Kipa has learned the lessons that the social sciences have offered,
leading us to the development of progressive programs that address the needs of youth in
non-traditional settings. The Youth Outreach (YO) project was the first of its kind in the state
and has been a lifeline for thousands of street-identified youth since its inception. Neighbor-
hood residents and businesses support the project, recognizing the value in giving youth a
place to breathe. Now in its 18th year, YO is expanding to the Leeward and Windward areas
to provide outreach services there and to help keep at-risk youth out of the system.

Closely related are our Valid Court Order and Ho’okala programs that provide advocacy to
youth that may be facing incarceration. Recognizing that outcomes are much improved when
youth are placed in the least restrictive care, these programs work to involve families and com-
munity services to deal directly with the issues that are driving the problem behaviors.

The Hui Malama ‘Ohana Youth Service Center (HMO), based at two middle schools in
Honolulu, provides a range of opportunities and experiences for youth that help prevent run-
aways and truancy, improve school performance, and strengthen family relationships. Again,
HMO takes it as truth that more severe problems can be avoided if the youth is connected to
the community in structured ways.

In recent years, this last trend has been proved by the success of some of our more
recent programs like Hawaii Advocate Program (see “Ashley”), Intensive In-home Services, and
Sexual Exploitation Prevention Program. These programs work with and within the community
to identify potential problems and to address issues before they escalate. The answer may be
in working with youth, with parents and siblings, with institutions or all of the above. Often-
times, we have found that the resources that can best serve the youth are already in the com-
munity, and our programs simply link those to the identified need.

In all cases we have found that providing youth services is a collaborative project. Tasked
with putting together the right combination of resources and service or treatment plan, Hale
Kipa has found that our programs work best when they integrate with community groups, in-
dividuals and neighborhoods. If we aim to prepare youth for life in the real world, then the real
world is the best place to prepare them.
Ashley Coffer was on the verge of serious trouble. Having been removed from her father’s care for alleged physical abuse, she was headed into the system, and demonstrating the onset of behaviors that might have ruined her life. In keeping with recent trends, it was decided to try to treat her without removing her from family, and so her birth mother—who hadn’t had a relationship with Ashley for several years—was asked to take the 16-year-old in.

The arrangements were made, but as it often turns out in such cases, the transition would not be an easy one. Mom was now remarried with stepchildren, and it was difficult to integrate Ashley into the home. There were major hurdles to overcome in the mother-daughter relationship itself. And Ashley’s behavior outside the home was spiraling out of control.

Success in youth services demands much more than one-time snap decisions. All the aspects of the youth’s life must be taken into account, and solutions must be thought of as a process rather than an answer. Sometimes the service plan must be adjusted on the fly, to take advantage of the youth’s particular strengths and challenges.

In Ashley’s case, the family was referred to Hale Kipa and the Hawaii Advocate Program (HAP). This statewide program prevents out-of-home placements of youth by providing comprehensive, community-based care. The services, which are a replication of the nationally successful Youth Advocate Program model, focus on the youth’s and family’s needs and goals. Each family is assigned a Community Advocate to help them cultivate relationships with people and associations in the community that can provide support.

It was the second of two advocates Hale Kipa found for the Nunes family that clicked. Donna is not a Hale Kipa social worker; she is not a government employee or contractor. In fact, she owns a pet business and works in the community. She also is driven to help young people. For the Nunes family, she was exactly what they needed to make the new situation work: caring, non-judgmental, and available—24 hours a day if needed.

Donna met weekly with the family, and then separately with Ashley several more times a week. By keeping their confidence, she gained their trust. By taking the time to learn about their needs, she was able to help them make good decisions. And by bringing everyone together in a non-threatening forum, she allowed them to open the lines of communication.

Today Ashley is thriving. She is bringing home A’s from school and working on extra credit courses. She has caught up the year she lost in the tough times and plans to graduate with her class on time. Most importantly, she has a real relationship with her mother that is based on trust and mutual respect.

Sherri Nunes can hardly believe the difference. What had been a living nightmare has become for her a source of pride. She even has become friends with her ex-husband after years of mistrust, and they often talk to discuss Ashley’s future. “We had to work really hard communicating,” admits Sherri as she describes the process fostered by their advocate Donna. “But I came into it with an open mind and the results have been a miracle.”
COMPREHENSIVE IN-HOME SERVICES EXPANDED TO OAHU, HAWAII AND KAUAI

For years, Hale Kipa has been providing services to youth in the CAMHD (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division) system through its range of residential programs. As part of our commitment to keep families intact and youth in their own communities, Hale Kipa applied for monies to provide Intensive In-Home Services (IIH) on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii and Kauai for youth between ages 3 and 20. The recently funded IIH program provides comprehensive behavioral, community-based services that focus on the youth’s and family’s needs and goals. A dedicated, geographically based team of licensed clinicians, therapists and trained therapeutic staff are assigned to assist each family with the intensity and frequency of services based on identified needs and goals.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION PREVENTION PROGRAM GETS NEW START

Since Sisters Offering Support closed its doors for lack of funding, Hawaii has lost a key player in the fight against sexual exploitation and prostitution. In response, Hale Kipa has been gradually taking over the youth program without any real designated and on-going funding. The program now has an official name, Sexual Exploitation Prevention Program (SEPP) and a clear mission: to point youth towards mature and informed decision-making in the arena of health and personal protection. To do that, SEPP provides sexual exploitation prevention education to youth of all ages throughout the State. We’ve been able to increase awareness of commercial and personal sexual exploitation with hard hitting presentations describing myths, realities, warning signs and safety tips in efforts to reduce the recruitment of young people into the commercial sex business.

SERVICES EXPANDED TO REACH HOMELESS YOUTH ON LEEWARD COAST

Our successful Youth Outreach (YO) program has done a good job reaching street-identified youth in Waikiki, getting them much needed services. But it was more difficult reaching out to homeless youth on the Leeward Coast, most of whom never make their way into town. So this past year, with funding from the City, we took YO out to the youth. Partnering with other agencies, we now provide ongoing outreach to identify youth who may need services at the beaches and parks. We also provide a drop-in center at our Waianae site for youth to get food, support, information and referrals, access to a computer, and school assistance among other services. Our staff provides case management services and helps youth link up with other community resources as well as our own emergency and transitional residential services.
## Financial Statement

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<tbody>
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<td><strong>REVENUE and SUPPORT</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<th>2007</th>
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<td><strong>EXPENSES and LOSSES</strong></td>
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<td>Program Services</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses and Losses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$10,560,359</strong></td>
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|                      |            |            |
| **CHANGE IN NET ASSETS** | **($394,457)** | **$194,729** |
| **NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR** | **$3,036,113** | **$2,841,384** |
| **NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR** | **$2,641,656** | **$3,036,113** |

Financial Information as of June 30, 2006 and 2007
Figures are excerpted from our audited financial statements.
A complete copy of the audited financial statement is available by writing or calling Hale Kipa, Inc.
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M.J. Roberts
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Luke W.T. Yeh
Clara Yokoyama

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STATEWIDE SHELTER
Maui Youth and Family Services, Hale ‘Opio Kauai, Salvation Army Family Intervention Services, Hale Kipa, Inc.

HAWAII ADVOCATE PROGRAM
Youth Advocate Program (YAP), Hale Kipa, Inc.