



The one thing more expensive than providing youth services is not providing youth services.

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Doing the math

Social services suffer first during an economic downturn, often having to reduce services. It's hard to imagine going another round of doing "more with less." But it is unthinkable to consider turning away young people who need our help.

And so it is part of our mission as advocates for Hawaii's youth to remind our legislators, community leaders, funders and clients how vital the work is that we do. Money invested in our youth today is returned many, many times over in the future. Put another way, the cost of letting youth slip through the cracks will be dramatically higher—economically, socially, morally—than investing in them in the present.

It is notoriously difficult to make the case for one specific program's efficacy in keeping a youth out of trouble. The research by social scientists can only hint at the potential of youth services to build stronger young adults with better tools for living. More tangible are the stories of our youths' successes: so many modest victories in our everyday work—sometimes two steps forward and one back—are the true yardstick of what we accomplish.

Today more than ever, Hale Kipa is a vital, non-negotiable investment in the future of our society. Think of it, if you will, as a human bailout plan.



PUNKY PLETAN-CROSS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In tight economic times, it is imperative to balance our concern regarding current conditions with keen attention to long-term goals and objectives. If we don't, we may squeeze into this year's budget, but at an unacceptable price: the loss of essential services and a much higher cost in social ills later on.

Several factors are contributing to what could become a perfect storm in youth services with an impact on our society for decades to come. The good news: in some ways we've been here before, and have a good idea of how we can weather this one with the systems that work intact.

For example, the recent end of the Felix Consent Decree has come at the most inopportune time. As State resources shrink, we'll likely see some downsizing within the children's mental health system. The Department of Education will make significant budget cuts targeting areas that will affect youth that require extra support and attention in the classroom—"Felix Class Youth" who could see the gains of the last decade erode.

In downsizing, there are essentially two approaches: one is to systematically assess the impact, efficacy, cost benefit, and value of each individual program; the other is to make across-the-board cuts. Each approach has its merits and pitfalls. A combination of both undoubtedly will be needed.

The claimed advantage of the across-the-board cuts is that everyone shares the pain, though in practice this is hardly the case: a 10% cut to one program may cause relatively little impact; the same percentage could cripple another. On the other hand, cutting whole programs completely can more quickly reach budgetary goals while ensuring the health of those that remain. But the idea that we can make objective decisions about what programs should survive is unrealistic.

"Objective," after all, is a subjective word. It implies there is some set of criteria on which we all agree with which to evaluate a program's effectiveness or long-term viability. The truth is that the criteria—and the way we assess programs against them—are always subjective.

In the end, what matters most are the youth that receive our services. Sure, we will always have to pay attention to socioeconomic and demographic trends as critical drivers in our decision making. But as long as we focus on the youth as "stories in progress", as long-term projects and not quick fixes, we will be able to have these conversations in the most constructive way. Only then can we meet our responsibility to do what is best for our youth and for our community.



PAUL A. SCHRAFF
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Short term. Anytime we hear that phrase, no matter the subject, we know that it presages an interim “second choice.” Were it not for this constraint or that, we would be doing the “right” thing, meaning something else. Today, youth services, especially those for prevention, are hearing a chorus of “short term.”

Hale Kipa, like all social service providers, depends on funding from the government and from gifts. Both of those sources are affected by the current and projected economic downturn. Hale Kipa’s constituents, in turn, are among the least politically powerful: most are not even old enough to vote. Thus, absent conscience, there is little to motivate government to maintain funding for youth services when allocating a shrinking pie. While those cuts purport to be “short term,” their consequences are not.

Financially, service providers barely live above hand-to-mouth. They have to operate in the black, and some try to build a modest reserve, but none has a goal of accumulating un-expended resources. Thus, when revenues are cut, services immediately follow. What is lost, however, is not only the services, but also the infrastructure which provided those services. Staff are let go, severing the relationships with the clients, as well as the staff’s institutional knowledge and skills. Facilities are lost along with the web of contacts and cooperation which wove that provider into the community. More importantly, it is the youth and their families who need those services who lose the most. And all of us bear the economic and social consequences for the long term.

Hale Kipa’s early intervention programs are designed to prevent problems before we pay the higher cost of trying to solve them. The more successful we are, the more invisible that success. We can count the arrests, placements, incarcerations, etc. which do happen, but not the ones which do not. Should we be funding only the incidents we are forced to confront, because failure has already happened?

Early intervention allows Hale Kipa to help construct the foundation of a youth’s life. Without a solid foundation, it is difficult to build a stable life. Each foundation repair that we miss in the short term risks a more expensive repair, or a total failure, in the future. “Short term” may be the asserted perspective, but it is achieved only by using blinders to shield the long term from view.

Making the Case for Youth Services



When tough times require the social services to justify their financial existence, funders often look for a cost/benefit analysis and proof of a program’s efficacy in reaching its goals. Youth services may be called on to show that the youth they work with are less likely to “enter the system” later on—as criminal offenders, drug abusers, and the homeless.

The numbers are hard to come by, but the equation is perfectly clear: subtracting support services in the community adds to child abuse and neglect, drug use, and criminal behavior. As families without support struggle to find access to resources—including prevention, early intervention, treatment and rehab—the system is forced to deal with increasingly complex problems.

It’s the longer view of the loss of prevention programs like Head Start that alarms Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children’s Defense Fund, who coined the phrase “leave no child behind.” Today, she says, “children are being left behind. The nation’s failure to invest in its children is absolutely suicidal for society as a whole.”¹ And the problem will only get worse as more programs get the axe.

Making choices to fund one program in favor of another forces governments to presume to know which programs are the critical driver in any given success. But the mosaic of human services is inherently difficult to analyze, to understand why a particular set of services is working. Several very different programs may be contributing to the success of a systemic attempt to address a specific problem, though some of them don’t get the credit.

As well, government departments can make decisions that shift the burden of their budget cuts to another area. The Department of Human Services, for example, might make choices to prioritize services that avoid causing an increase in child abuse. But those very cuts might show up as increased cases in Family Court, or high school dropouts, or a range of other social ills. One department’s savings is another’s cost. The youth and their families pay the ultimate price.

¹ “Children: Next Congress Has Tough Decisions,” *The Clarion-Ledger*, October 20, 2008.

Then there's the cost of not providing services that society—backed up by the courts—has come to expect. If social service cuts are not thoughtfully made, civil groups may seek redress from the judicial system. The cost of court-mandated fixes would likely far exceed the cost of providing the services in the first place. It happened a few years ago when the Felix Consent Decree forced the State of Hawaii to rectify shortcomings in its support of its weakest residents: children with disabilities. The pressure to adhere to the ruling's requirements resulted in untold millions of dollars utilized, resources wasted, and agencies scrambling all over the state. (See SIDEBAR p. 9)

In ways, the conditions that led to that situation are similar to what we face today. The way to avoid a similar result is to ensure that the money invested in youth services is used wisely, and not squandered on legal fees and compliance. Building on the programs that have been painstakingly developed, partnering with other service providers, and monitoring our impact can make the case for investment in youth—even during tough economic times.

Measuring Results

There is a tendency (often justifiable) to prioritize critical urgent services over prevention and early intervention. As a chain-smoking resident of war-torn Bosnia famously remarked, "I only wish that I lived in a society where I could worry about the ill effects of smoking." But barring crisis, we make decisions to spend at least some of our resources on preventive measures, difficult as it may be to measure their effect. In a costly immunization program, for example, you never know whether those you immunize would have ever contracted the disease.

In human services, the problem of measurement is even more difficult. We can't prove that past participation in any specific program has any impact on a youth's present behavior. Yet we also know with great certainty that the absence of prevention and early intervention guarantees an increase in all of the social issues that will cost society more in the long run.

One way to work around the problem is to look elsewhere for measurement. Efforts to reduce teen smoking is one place to start, as it is estimated that 6 million of today's underage smokers will die of tobacco-related illnesses. ² Say a localized program that teaches life skills to at-risk youth keeps just 10 kids from smoking cigarettes. The savings to the health care system, to these victims and their families is tremendous. As it turns out, national and local education and positive messaging have been dramatically successful. From a high of 25% of 12th graders who smoked cigarettes daily in 1997, only 12% in 2007 were daily smokers. ³ The savings in human suffering and health care costs are clear, even though we can't prove that one program deserves the credit.

² Hahn, E.J. et al., "Projected Smoking-Related Deaths Among U.S. Youth." Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ImpacTeen Research Paper Series, No. 22, 2004.

³ "America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being," Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2008.

Another indicator we can learn from is the cost of incarceration. On national average, it costs taxpayers \$100,000 to build a single prison cell, and \$22,000 per year to maintain one prisoner (in Hawaii that cost can top \$35,000). Put another way, the cost of a year at the University of Hawaii in 2007—with tuition, room and board—was less than half the cost of maintaining that person in a Hawaii prison. And as University of Hawaii Professor Meda Chesney-Lind has noted, as more money is needed to imprison people, less money is available for the university system. In western states from 1987 to 2007, corrections spending increased by 205%, while spending on higher education rose only 28%.⁴

The high cost of building prisons, especially in Hawaii, has led our government to export criminals to mainland jails, which can lower annual costs. But keeping inmates on the mainland makes it more difficult for them to be reintegrated into society, says Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland, Vice Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.⁵ Their rates of recidivism increase on their return. Other economic hardships are less obvious: incarceration renders a low-risk offender incapable of paying child support, victim restitution, or taxes.⁶

As can be expected, much of the debate on the prison problem centers around facilities, who should be sent to prison, and for how long. For youth services providers, those issues are the triage treatment of a much more endemic problem. Seldom does the conversation include the discussion of how to prevent young people from getting into the system in the first place. As a long-term answer that transcends annual budgets and legislative terms, it is hard to get on the table.

Even when Hale Kipa has a chance to deflect a young life away from the trajectory leading to drugs and crime, it is often only after the youth has shown the first signs of trouble. There is good and bad in that. The good is that we are able to direct services precisely to the youths who need them most, those most likely to encounter more serious issues later on. Of course, the downside is that the youth has already learned behaviors that may be difficult to unwind.

Another place to find signs of the success of intervention programs is in the Hawaii Juvenile Drug Court (JDC), which was created to slow recidivism among youthful offenders. JDC makes juveniles part of the treatment team by giving them responsibility for their own choices. When they complete the program, the charges against them may be dismissed, or sentences set aside or reduced. Most importantly, participants get the tools to rebuild their lives.

The results of the JDC program are promising. In addition to saving the State money (the cost of estimated annual cost is just \$3,500—one-tenth the cost of incarceration in Hawaii), the JDC program kept more people out of the system and returned them to normal lives. Understanding the high cost in dollars and human suffering of incarceration, there is little argument against the relatively minor investment in such programs.

⁴ “One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008,” The Pew Center on the States, 2008.

⁵ “Isle Inmates on Mainland Keep Moving Farther Away,” Honolulu Star Bulletin, May 16, 2004.

⁶ Sen. Will Espero, D-Ewa, “Hawaii Corrections at the Crossroads,” Hawaii Reporter, April 14, 2008.

An Ounce of Prevention

These are just a couple of programs that begin with known problems—teenage smoking, drug use, criminal activity, etc. We need only take a short step back to see how cost effective programs can be that recognize and attack problems at the very first indication. If the very first run-in with the system can be avoided, there will never be an incidence of recidivism. Programs in early intervention and prevention are significantly less expensive to maintain, especially when compared to cost of later issues.

Hale Kipa is unique in that we provide services, but also a voice for those who desperately need our services. We will continue to improve our programs and to look for new ways to measure their success over time. But even without clear statistics showing our results, we insist that Hawaii can ill afford to do without the programs we and other agencies provide. And we join society in demanding that the long-term effects of policy decisions regarding youth services be taken into account.

The Felix Consent Decree

In 1993, a group of parents of disabled children including those of Jennifer Felix, along with like-minded organizations including Hale Kipa, sued the State of Hawaii for failing to provide mental health, special education and other services to their children. U.S. District Judge David Ezra ruled Hawaii was in violation of the Federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act. In the Felix Consent Decree settling the lawsuit, the State agreed to ramp up those services with clear benchmarks over the next six years.

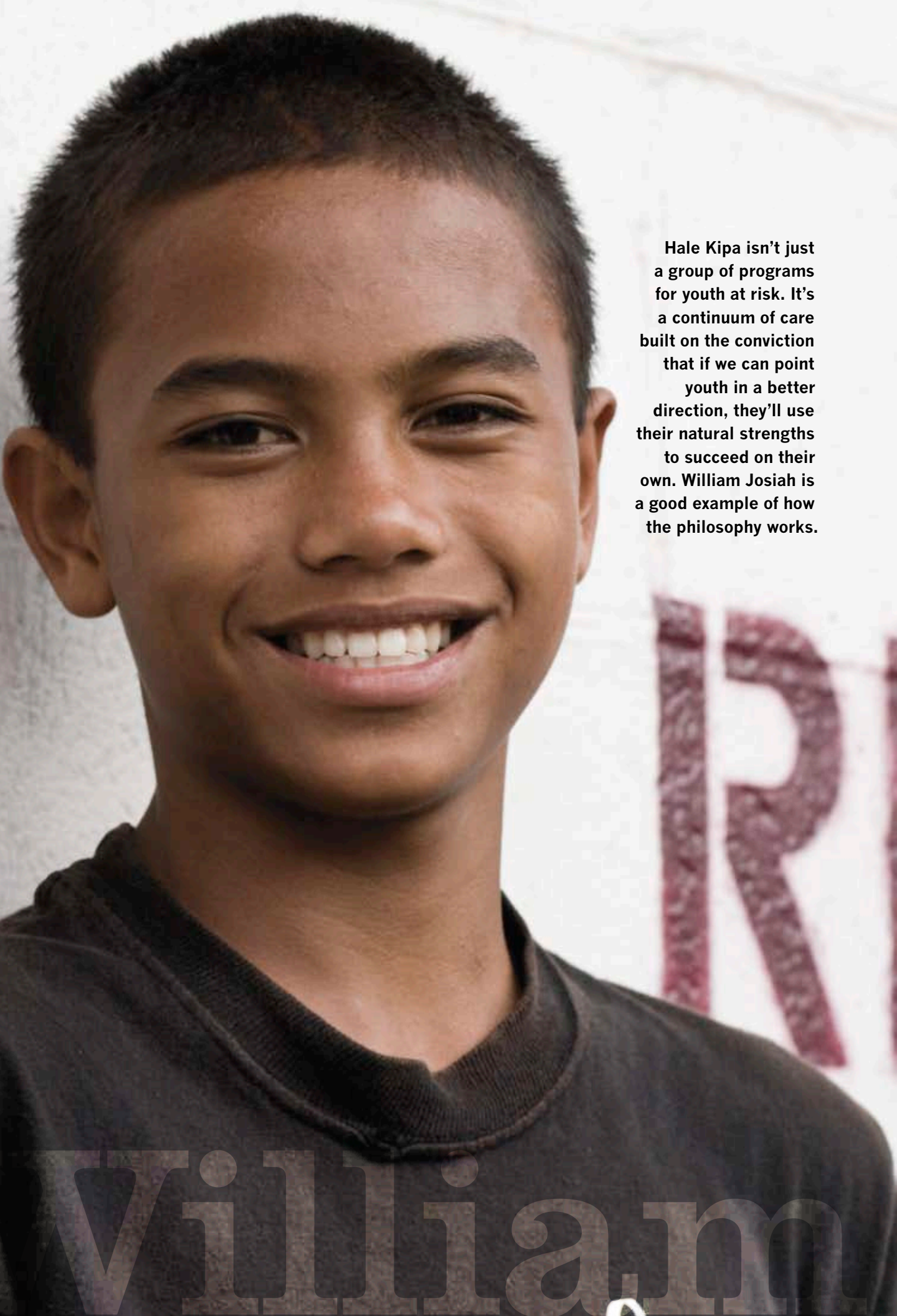
However, in 2000, Judge Ezra found the State to be in contempt of court for failing to meet those obligations, though services had certainly improved. A Senate-House Committee charged with tracking the \$1.4 billion spent blamed poor implementation of the Decree on the lack of oversight and accountability. Auditor Marion Higa agreed, saying that “The system of care focused

more on procedural compliance rather than on an effective system to help the children.”

By April 2004, however, U.S. District Judge Ezra approved a plan to end court oversight of special education in Hawaii’s public schools, stating that the state is in “substantial compliance” with federal law. In May 2005, the case was officially closed, ending 12 years of court oversight of the Departments of Education and Health.

The percentage of public school students classified as “special needs” has grown from about 7 percent before the Decree to approximately 12 percent today. Meanwhile, spending on special education has grown by more than \$400 million since 1994, to \$523 million this year—25% of the DOE’s budget. ¹

¹ “Spending on Hawaii Schools Outstrips Results,” Honolulu Advertiser, March 23, 2008.



Hale Kipa isn't just a group of programs for youth at risk. It's a continuum of care built on the conviction that if we can point youth in a better direction, they'll use their natural strengths to succeed on their own. William Josiah is a good example of how the philosophy works.

William

Removed from his home by the State, William was referred to Hale Kipa's Emergency Shelter (ESH). Staff immediately redirected him to the Community Mental Health Shelter (CMHS) because they recognized that his behavioral challenges would be better addressed there. While William made steady progress, some of his behaviors persisted, so when it became clear William would need a longer term solution, we guided him to Hale Kipa's Therapeutic Foster Home program.

William's rapid success since then has a lot to do with the chemistry in his foster home. As always, the right match of youth to foster home was as much art as science. Hale Kipa found a warm Samoan home with two children, and strong parents willing to work with William despite his history and raw emotional state. It was just what William needed.

We have lots of rules. If you break them, you get punished. Usually grounding. But they're always fair.

As William's behaviors improved, he was "stepped down" to the Hanai Home Program—a continuation of foster care, but without the therapeutic element. By this point, his foster family had become key to his success, so he was allowed to remain in the same home. As he settled into a structured life, William got very into football. A natural leader, he and his foster brother organized a league to make sure they always had competition.

There's a lot of kids around that area. We would bring them together and challenge them to play us. Some of them would give us a hard time, but we always won.

Throughout his time with us, William has worked with an Advocate from Hale Kipa's HAP (Hawaii Advocate Program). One of our Outreach programs, HAP matches a youth with a community advocate who stays with them through every transition. It's what we call a "wrap-around service," in that whatever program a youth goes through—within Hale Kipa or not—the same committed person will provide consistency and trust.

Just over one year in his foster home, the turn-around is nothing short of miraculous. William is not yet 14, but his advice for kids in a similar situation might as well come from a self-help best-seller.

Just give it a chance. When somebody is trying to help you, or try to find a good home for you. I know that I would have missed out on a lot if I didn't give my foster parents a chance.

What's most remarkable about William is the sense of empathy he's developed in his short year-and-a-half progressing through Hale Kipa. From a troubled kid who lashed out at any helping hand, he is becoming the leader among his peers that he was meant to be.

I had a bestest friend. He used to be really good. Then he started hanging around with these bad kids. He ended up running away from home. His dad was a teacher. He told me to tell my friend to come home if I seen him. When I seen him around, I told him, "go home. Everything is ok. Just go home." But he won't go home. Finally the cops came and found him. I seen him handcuffed. I started crying because he's my best friend. To see him in handcuffs.

William wants to play football. His eyes are on the NFL, but he knows he'll have to play some high school and college ball first.

2008 Program Highlights

YOUTH OUTREACH (YO) EXPANDS The YO project in Waikiki has been a oasis for street-identified youth since 1990. But not all youth end up in Waikiki. To get into other communities where homeless or runaway youth congregate, we expanded services into the Leeward area last year. This year, with funds from the Office of Youth Services, we added outreach to the Windward area. Our full-time worker canvasses a range of sites from Waimanalo to Kahuku looking for youth who need supplies, referrals to resources, or links to transitional housing. Going mobile is a different experience from our fixed sites; we hope to get a van to carry more resources.

COMMUNITY-BASED OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY (CBOA) For families that have “entered the system” through action by DHS or Family Court, a range of programs become available to help them navigate back to a better place. But many youths and their families might be spared untold problems if those kinds of services were available before the trouble escalates. That’s why Hale Kipa was pleased to be awarded CBOA contracts on Oahu and Kauai, one of the few programs that can provide supportive services to youth and family who are not in any system. While still able to accept referrals from Family Court or the Department of Human Services, CBOA can offer counseling, case management, referral and supportive services to youth ages 10-21 or their parents from community-based staff.

HO’OKALA-ATTENDANT CARE Ho’okala (“to free or release”) is a statewide diversion program that insures juveniles are not held inappropriately in police lock-ups. Since 1993, it has reunited youth with their families and, in cases where that is not feasible, provided the least restrictive care. In the past year, Ho’okala was separated from its emergency shelter due to reduced funding. While still servicing youth arrested by the police, it now provides Attendant Care (up to 12 hours) on an on-call basis. When police can’t connect with parents, they call a Ho’okala staffer who responds within the hour. The new system has its challenges but has still been successful in promptly reuniting the youth with family.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE Fiscal year 2008 saw a shift in our thinking about the complex on Old Fort Weaver Road. Rising projected construction costs and the shifting economic environment require us to reduce the number of shelters from six to three, and to downsize the service center. We are also segmenting the project, with a Phase II to include an educational facility. All this is intended to assure an “all in” cost of \$17M for Phase I. The campaign makes good progress toward our goal, led by pledges of \$75k by the Alexander & Baldwin Foundation, \$250k by the Mary D. & Walter F. Frear Eleemosynary Trust, and \$500k from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Final architectural drawings, as well as ground breaking in late 2009, will spark even more momentum.

Financial Statement

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	2008	2007
Government appropriations and assistance	10,740,322	10,221,294
Contributions (including Foundation Grants)	983,135	708,081
Aloha United Way Allocation	187,749	163,393
Interest Income	54,938	61,658
Realized gain on sale of investments	4,235	4,550
Unrealized gain on investments	(59,940)	24,840
Other Income	60,504	16,024
Total Revenue and Support	11,970,943	11,199,840
EXPENSES AND LOSSES		
Program Services	10,266,439	10,461,130
Management and General	831,958	847,521
Fundraising	191,371	285,646
Total Expenses and Losses	11,289,768	11,594,297
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	681,175	(394,457)
NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	2,641,656	3,036,113
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	3,322,831	2,641,656

*Financial Information as of June 30, 2007 and June 30, 2008
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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