

Hale Kipa

Annual Report 2009





My Auntie Yuraina (cover photo)
showed me that you can make
your life how you want it to be—
no matter how bad it is.

Kealii, age 16
Hale Kipa Project Focus participant

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Bouncing Back

The youth we work with are nothing if not resilient. They have seen challenges that most of us can hardly imagine. They have lived through scenes that belong on cop shows. They have suffered broken families, broken promises, broken dreams. And somehow they emerge, time and time again, with the courage to go on.

In the past year, we as an organization have had to take an example from them. These times have been tough on social services, as funding sources and the programs that counted on them were stretched thin, reduced, or even taken away. We've had to go back to basics, to remember what we're here for, who we're here for. Like our youth, we've had to swallow hard and bounce back.

There are two different stories to be told about the last year at Hale Kipa. One is the process of absorbing budget and contract cuts into sweeping program changes without turning away the youth that count on us. The other is finding opportunities to invest in our long term future through opportunities like generous funding from the Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation.

Resilience is the ability, even in the midst of the crisis, to put aside some amount of your time, energy and resources for the future. To recognize that there is a brighter future and to prepare ourselves to meet it. Like our youth, we have managed to do just that.

*Our nobility is not in never falling,
but in getting up every time we fall.*



It's hard to read anything about the social services these days without seeing the phrase "tough economic times." A year ago when we first started talking about those times, we knew it was going to be rough going for the foreseeable future. As expected, we found ourselves in a holding pattern, waiting to gauge the impact of the downturn in the economy on state and federal budgets. Our organization, like many others, bided its time, trying to read the economic tea leaves and figure out what the world was going to do.

It is remarkable how much that situation is like the everyday lives of many of the youth we work with. They live in almost constant flux, often not knowing what the next day will bring. Their resources are limited, sometimes to their clothes and a few personal possessions. They endure the sense that they have little control over what the world will do, and have to be ready for anything.

That readiness is one way to define resilience. It's the capacity to engage in appropriate behavior for the context or condition in which you find yourself. For a youth in shelter or foster care, it may be as concrete as leaving all his clothes packed in a small duffel, ready to move. On an emotional level, it means having the strength to face another new home, school, or situation, and make the best of it.

It never ceases to amaze me how resilient our youth are in this way.

The same holds true, we've learned this past year, for Hale Kipa as an organization. Our repertoire of approaches, models and methodologies—our "tool-kit"—has been put to work figuring how to best function in these "tough economic times," how to position ourselves in this new context. And it has been a particularly unsettled environment. There have been cuts, reductions, and challenges to almost every aspect of our agency.

What hasn't lessened is the need of youth and families in crisis. To be responsible to the populations that count on us, we have to find our resilience. That means being creative and innovative in dealing with our own fiscal crises carefully, with a plan for the future when, presumably, the cycle will come around. We must not foreclose our future—and theirs—by failing to invest in critical, essential functions of the agency that we'll need when this rough patch passes. In psychology, a crisis is defined as a short term disruption in normal coping behavior. Things will get back to normal.

When they do, we'll be here. Sure, there will be decisions made outside our control that impact us; some we will agree with and some we won't. That's part of being an intermediary—the folks between those that have the resources and those that need the services. No matter what the weather, we have to make sure that those in the greatest need get the services they need. To that end, Hale Kipa must remain as agile, resilient, creative, and responsive as possible. That, after all, is what we ask our youth to do.



Punky Pletan-Cross
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

When business is flowing nicely, it is an unmitigated pleasure to serve on the Board of Directors for an organization like Hale Kipa. The need for the agency's services is so immediate, and the results so significant, one can't help but feel privileged to play a part in supporting the efforts of funders and staff to make better lives for Hawai'i's at-risk youth.

Were it only so easy all the time. The truth is, the robustness of any social service agency follows the cyclical economy. There are fat times, and there are lean. The true test of an organization is how they handle the latter. I'd like to think we have been holding up well.

We have turned to an unlikely model for our inspiration: the youth we serve. They, too, live through phases that go up and down, and deal with circumstances far beyond their control. They, too, have big dreams and grand plans, often without the resources to see them through. And yet they keep going. Our youth bounce back, time and again, and so shall we.

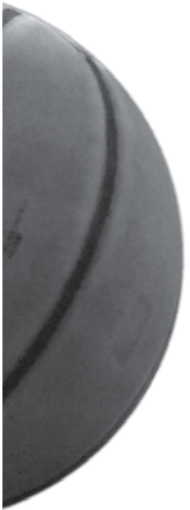
At this writing, we are not yet out of the woods, but we have gone through the initial reactions that any organization will when faced with lean times. We have made some difficult decisions, and may have more to make. But we also know that now is not the time to abandon our goals, even though it is often difficult to see the path to them.

As a board, we have resolved to work with Hale Kipa and its funders to use this time wisely until the cycle comes around, to encourage the organization to strengthen its infrastructure and enrich its staff. If we are diligent in staying on course, we will emerge a stronger organization, and one that can better serve Hawai'i's youth.



Stacy Evensen
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Building a future in an uncertain present





Budget cuts, program closings, shrinking staff. These are the symptoms of a shrinking economy as felt by the social services. For organizations that have already optimized their infrastructure to do the most good with the least resources, it is natural to meet these new challenges with frustration. People who work hard are now working even harder to keep services flowing, as the funding for providing those services is curtailed. What's a youth services agency to do?

It's the nonprofit's quandary: if they succeed in providing the same level of service with less resources, have they admitted there was waste before the cuts? On the other hand, how can they turn away people who need help?

For those who work daily in the social services, the answers to these questions are obvious. Agencies that provide services to less fortunate families of our community are virtually always running short. Short of time, short of money, short of facilities. There is never enough to do all they might want to do to

rescue every child from the cycle of poverty, to divert every teen from rotating in and out of the system, to instill hope in every young person who's seen the face of hopelessness.

In a recession, these agencies run shorter. It's an unfortunate confluence of events: at the same time people need nonprofit services more than ever, and as government increasingly turns to nonprofits to handle social problems, funding cuts make the mission that much more difficult. Something has to give.

For many agencies, the first reaction is to protect programs by cutting infrastructure. Unfortunately, while these cuts help in the short term by keeping services flowing, they can be ruinous for the organization down the road. To keep itself healthy, the nonprofit agency has to avoid what a recent study by the Stanford University business school calls "the cycle of starvation of non-profits."

The first step in the cycle is funders' unrealistic expectations about how much it costs to run a nonprofit. At the second step, nonprofits feel pressure to conform to funders' unrealistic expectations. At the third step, nonprofits re-

spond to this pressure in two ways: They spend too little on overhead, and they under-report their expenditures on tax forms and in fundraising materials. This underspending and underreporting in turn perpetuates funders' unrealistic expectations. Over time, funders expect grantees to do more and more with less and less—a cycle that slowly starves nonprofits.¹

The answer, suggests the authors, is for organizations to get realistic about the costs of infrastructure and to make sure funders understand these costs. Funders must be weaned from inflated expectations, and must be sensitive to the stress that shortages of resources place on the organization. Everyone has to hold fast to the core values and mission of the agency and stay willing to do what it takes to reach realistic goals.

Individuals Need Futures, Too

Researchers of higher education have recently noticed a curious phenomenon: In the midst of this economic downturn, enrollment in community and trade colleges has

¹ Ann Goggins Gregory and Don Haward, "The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2009: 50.

increased dramatically. Why? Certainly the cost of higher education has to be a burden for individuals and families that are under-earning. A decline in college admissions, especially at colleges that serve the less wealthy, would make sense. Instead, the downturn that has caused layoffs and reduced hours has simultaneously provided the motivation to invest in new skills to go forward. People recognize that the recovery they hope for is, to some degree, in their own hands.

In “tough economic times,” savvy nonprofit administrators take the same position, looking and working for a positive future even as they deal with bad news. They actively seek positive messages and look for constructive steps they can take right now, rather than wait for things to get better. Youth services agencies, after all, are about hope, fresh starts, and new beginnings.

Constructive steps include building organizational capacity. As opposed to programmatic services, organizational capacity is the capability to improve the performance of the organization individual by individual in order to improve the overall quality of services. When

the organization’s overriding concern is “doors open and lights on,” it is difficult to find energy to invest in capacity building. But like that trade school freshman who plans for better days even while life is hard, nonprofits must look past the present difficulties.

The results of such a strategy are felt immediately. Concentrating on core competencies for staff and getting back to basics puts the focus on the organization’s people. It gives the organization the opportunity to make sure that its mission hasn’t drifted. While the investment hasn’t gone straight to programs, clients still benefit with the improvement in the overall quality of services. And the staff themselves benefit, enriched with a new sense of purpose and a firm belief in their ability to affect change.

Still, part of the mix for most agencies will almost certainly include budget cuts. Even then, the organization must evaluate strategically what effect each cut will have on its long-term mission and performance. In the best of times there is a tense balance between expenses for infrastructure and those for direct mission-related work. In tough times, the tension is even

greater. If the nonprofit cuts too deeply into programs, they risk fulfilling their mission. If they radically cut infrastructure in order to preserve program funding, they may weaken their management and technology to the point of collapse. At which point, the mission fails anyway.

Finding Our Future

With all this in mind, Hale Kipa has embarked on a new initiative to invest in the future even while struggling to meet the commitments of the present. The organization has added a development specialist to help grow existing sources of revenue and identify and develop new revenue opportunities. The idea that funders must thoroughly understand the costs of doing business is core to the emerging development strategy. At the same time, the agency has begun a long-term investment in professional development and training to give staff the skills they need to succeed in a changing environment.

Nonetheless, Hale Kipa has not been able to avoid some reductions in personnel, and a couple of programs became impossible to maintain due to specific funding cuts. (see Program Notes, page 12.)

In making these cuts, Hale Kipa has been careful to explain to staff, to funders, and to key constituents why they are necessary, and how the agency is making sure essential services are not being compromised. When difficult cuts are handled forthrightly and with compassion, con-

fidence is preserved in the agency's ability to go forward with its mission to serve at-risk youth.

There are no easy paths for nonprofits in the present economic environment, any more than there are shortcuts for youth that find themselves in dire situations.

But just as there are coping tools for youth to call upon in tough times, there are ways to minimize risks in the form of capacity building. When living through crisis, both individuals and organizations have to face this fact: invest in the future or there may not be one when the time comes.

Hau'oli Mau Loa

In 1990, a German transplant to the islands named Helga Glaesel-Hollenback who, in her words, "found great happiness on the islands of Hawai'i" sought "to return the generosity of the islands" through philanthropy. The Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation she founded has searched out programs and organizations that provide opportunities for our community's least fortunate members. Its dual focus in Hawai'i has been its children, to support agencies that provide hope for their future; and its environment, aiding programs that enhance stewardship and protection of the Islands.

To direct their considerable resources towards the greatest need, Hau'oli Mau Loa commissioned a wide ranging study in 2008. It found that 29% of children in Hawai'i live in low income families; that Hawai'i ranks 4th in the nation in homelessness and that 29% of them are under the age of 18. (On the neighbor islands, that number is even higher with 48% under the age of 18 on Kauai.) Hawai'i was also far above the national average in children in out-of-home placement (shelter and foster care) at 9.2 per 1000.¹

So began a new initiative to fund programs that significantly contribute to the positive growth and development of children and youth in Hawai'i. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation made a substantial grant to Hale Kipa, specifically to build organizational capacity. It couldn't have come at a better time. With the retrenchment as a result of funding cuts already underway, the initiative has given Hale Kipa another way to strengthen itself internally, to enrich its core competencies and maintain its infrastructure through professional development and fundraising. With this boost, Hale Kipa will be well positioned for much needed expansion during the next economic upswing.

¹ Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation, "Strategic Directions for the Children of Hawai'i," Summer 2008, 19-17, 54.



Even though my mom made some wrong choices in her life, she is making up for all the lost years with her children.
Dezandria, age 18

Project Focus

A few years back, a couple of Hawai'i businesswomen with a successful family portrait business had a great idea: since many of Hawai'i's less fortunate families couldn't afford their services, they would photograph these kids for free. It wasn't long before they had an even better idea: teach the kids themselves to use the camera as a way to increase their self-esteem, their self-awareness.

Those thoughts blossomed

into Project Focus, and some of the inspiring results are the photographs throughout this report. Each year Project Focus has chosen one agency from which to invite participants to their program. This year, Hale Kipa's youth got the opportunity to collaborate with professional photographers and show their work around the island. The project asked youth to designate a person who had positively affected their lives. For some it

My foster mom helps me through hard times by cheering me up, being there for me, and always loving me till the very end.

Devron, age 14



was a family member—a parent, sibling or cousin. Others chose a friend or mentor. At least two participants singled out their Hale Kipa counselor. They wrote a few lines about that significant other, and photographed them for a public exposition. Then the youth photographers themselves were photographed by the professionals.

At stake was far more than the ability to use a camera. Many of these kids have suffered losses so profound that there was only one thing left to be afraid of: success. Hale Kipa CEO Punky Pletan-Cross describes a meeting with “a young woman some years ago who said to me that

she didn’t fear failure because she lives with it every day. But success scares the heck out of her because she knows that once she has done it, she will have to do it again and again.” In spite of these challenges, and of seemingly insurmountable battles with the bureaucracy that had to grant permission to let the kids participate, Project Focus was a smashing success. Most participants saw the project

through, and showed their work with pride at the public opening. Macy’s chipped in with generous sponsorship and a shopping spree for each of the participants.

What shines through the photographs is the resiliency of each of the youth, despite the difficulty they have had in their young lives. “When we heard their stories, the same theme recurred over and over,” recalls Laurie Callies, one of Project Focus’ founders along with Lisa Uesugi. “They would seem to say, ‘I don’t have anyone I can count on, but I am going to keep moving forward.’ They know what it takes to have to make things work in their lives. They know how to make their lives work.”



My sister Palani and I have had our ups and downs, but she learned to trust me and built a really close bond with me.

Brittany, age 17

Program Notes

Fiscal Year '09 was a bumpy ride, as we knew it would be. But the bad news wasn't as bad as it might have been, and there was enough good news to put it all in perspective. In all, Hale Kipa did all we could to demonstrate resiliency in our program offerings.

A good example is the Evening Counseling program. This diversion program, created by the Honolulu Police Department and the Office of Youth Services, provides counseling for youth-offenders. When faced with a first time law violation, they can keep the charges out of the prosecutor's office by agreeing to attend and successfully complete the sessions. Faced with budget cuts, the HPD was forced to find a hui of agencies willing to take over. Hale Kipa has joined with the City's Juvenile Justice Center and Susannah Wesley Community Center, helping to keep hundreds of young people from entering the cycle of crime and recidivism.

Then there was a major grant from the Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation for initiatives in professional development and infrastructure. The grant will help us pursue foundational goals for Hale Kipa that will strengthen the organization and position us for the future. (See Hau'oli Mau Loa, page 9.)

Hale Kipa retained The Limtiaco Company, a public relations firm, during FY08 to help build our leadership role in the child welfare community. Though it has come at a time when resources are ever more precious, this investment in vital communications to lawmakers and the com-

munity has proven more important than ever to secure our continued relevance in coming years.

On the minus side, Hale Kipa's Hawai'i Advocate Program (HAP) took a 12% cut, as did all other TANF funded programs in the State.¹ This statewide program helps prevent out-of-home placements of youth by providing comprehensive, community-based care through dedicated counselors and community leaders. In all, HAP was forced to cut five positions but managed to avoid turning away anyone who needed our services.

At the end of the fiscal year, our Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) program closed. In one sense, the program was never a perfect fit for Hale Kipa, as it involved certification from an out-of-state agency. We are confident that the population that would have been served by this specialized program will find places in our Therapeutic Foster Care program. We are more concerned about the closure for budgetary reasons of Hale Kipa's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) group home. Our research and experience has shown that it is most difficult for these youth to fit in traditional group homes. In the next year, we will pay special attention to this population, and do all we can to integrate them with existing programs.

¹ TANF (*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*) is a federal fund that is administered by the State. Rather than cut whole programs, the Department of Human Services asked each TANF funded program to reduce their budgets by 12%.

economic situation deteriorated, however, the campaign was put on hold. In the meantime, Hale Kipa commissioned a feasibility study in keeping with our commitment to the project, and to position ourselves for the next upturn in the economy. The study, performed by accounting firm Eide Bailly, clearly demonstrated the economic feasibility of the plan, and provided welcome encouragement to the capital campaign committee.

Capital Campaign Update

If the economic landscape put a damper on programs at Hale Kipa, it all but halted fundraising for the new campus on Old Fort Weaver Road (OFWR). By the beginning of the fiscal year, the property had been purchased, the facility designed, and we had begun to secure bank funding to initiate construction. As the

Financial Statement

Revenue And Support	2009	2008
Government appropriations and assistance	10,419,722	10,740,322
Contributions (including Foundation Grants)	792,629	983,135
Aloha United Way Allocation	218,263	187,749
Interest Income	27,530	54,938
Realized and unrealized loss on investments	(80,834)	(55,705)
Other Income	89,369	60,504
 Total Revenue and Support	 11,466,679	 11,970,943
 Expenses and Losses		
Program Services	9,890,894	10,266,439
Management and General	894,322	831,958
Fundraising	336,879	191,371
 Total Expenses and Losses	 11,122,095	 11,289,768
 Change in Net Assets	 344,584	 681,175
 Net Assets at Beginning of Year	 3,322,831	 2,641,656
 Net Assets at End of Year	 3,667,415	 3,322,831

Financial Information as of June 30, 2008 and June 30, 2009
 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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