



The Rotary Club of Hanalei Bay

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GROWING OUR OWN TEACHERS SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The Growing Our Own Teachers Scholarship service project was inspired by a guest speaker, Dr. Kani Blackwell from the University of Hawaii Manoa's (UHM) Teacher Education Program. On November 30, 2006 Kani spoke at our regular lunch meeting about the need for teachers nationwide, but specifically about the need for teachers on Kauai and the other neighboring islands of Hawaii. She passionately stressed the desirability of 'growing and supporting' our future teachers who had grown up on Kauai and knew the culture, our children, and our schools. Most of our local teacher candidates have families of their own and/or need to work fulltime while attending school. The UHM Teacher Education program is designed to allow the students to stay on-island for their coursework but requires that during their last 16 week semester, the teacher candidates need to give up their outside employment to practice teaching fulltime in the classroom, an unpaid position. Dr. Blackwell feared that because they had to give up their outside income, many of the 12 teacher candidates facing their final practice teaching semester would not be able to pay the approx. \$4,000 cost of tuition and would have to drop out of the program. The Rotary Club of Hanalei Bay addressed this critical problem by establishing The Growing Our Own Teachers Scholarship fund in February 2007, to pay the tuition for each promising future teacher during their last semester. Our goal was \$50,000 by Dec. 2007. Through the generosity and support of our fellow Rotary clubs, individual, corporate and foundation contributions from the Kauai community and many fundraising activities and dollars given by our club members, we raised over \$55,000 within 10 months. On December 13, at a Scholarship presentations luncheon in the ballroom of the Princeville Hotel, over 100 attendees witnessed Rotarians presenting \$4,000 tuition checks to each of our 12 future teachers who will all graduate in May 2008. The significance of this project is that over the next generation, these outstanding local teachers will make a difference in the quality of educational enrichment for thousands of young students in our 9 elementary schools on Kauai.

1) The critical need for qualified teachers in Hawaii is well documented. Teachers who relocate from the mainland often leave after a short time due to social and cultural differences. For a local person living in Hawaii, the cost of becoming a teacher makes it impossible for many qualified would-be-teachers to ever reach the classroom. The Growing Our Own Teachers Initiative helps qualified local teacher candidates with financial aid during their last semester when they need it the most. This monetary assistance allows them to complete their certification and graduate to become local teachers that stay in the community and provide years of service to our children.

2) Recognizing this critical need, the 48 members of our club enthusiastically supported the project by getting involved to achieve an ambitious goal. 36 of our members actively participated in its many fundraising and administrative functions and 23 of these members gave monetary donations as well.

3) We raised over \$54,000 for the project in 2007. This is the largest amount of money our club has ever raised in a single year.

4) The purpose of our project was to help alleviate the teacher shortage in our local schools. Our message was clear and was quickly embraced by the community. Multiple media outlets provided extensive coverage and the project greatly enhanced the image of Rotary in our community.

5) Other committed Rotary Clubs can replicate this project and achieve similar results. With the support of PDG Claude Thompson this year, the Rotary Club of Hanalei Bay will help the Maui and Big Island Rotary Clubs start Growing Our Own Teacher Projects in their communities.

6) This service project was started from 'scratch' on Feb.8, 2007. To date we have awarded \$4,000 to each of 12 future teachers and \$500 honorariums to 7 teachers who graduated from the Teachers Education Program last year and are already teaching in our Kauai schools.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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