

Hawaii 24/7

Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Host Forum

February 19, 2013



The SHYLI Youth Leadership Forum was an auspiciously bright clear day. Hosted Jan. 19 by the Kauhale OIWI o Puukapu at Halau Hoolako Kanu o ka Aina New Century Public Charter School, the forum brought together Hawaii's decision makers from business, government, education and nonprofits with SHYLI youth leaders, their families and schools.

We each shared our mana, love for aina, kuleana for our future in the spirit of aloha. We built bridges from our collective past to our future. We shared our legacy from our leaders of today, who passed the torch to our leaders for tomorrow.

SHYLI youth Makana Tavares respected Hawaiian protocol by leading attendees with an Oli and greeting them with Ti-leaf leis.

Betsy Boland welcomed everyone to KANU, sharing how the school incorporates sustainable practices including architecture, energy, gardening, and recycling.

Makana then invited Nane Alejandrez, Barrios Unidos and Stone Soup Leadership Institute board member to share his experiences with SHYLI youth at the 8th Annual Youth Leadership Summit on Martha's Vineyard.

To honor our Hawaiian leaders, we invited them to share their thoughts about sustainability and commitment to our youth including County of Hawaii Business Manager Wally Lau, Office of Hawaiian Affairs Trustee Bob Lindsey Jr. and David Fuertes, Ka Hana Noeau, Partners in Development. Messages were presented from Mayor Billy Kenoi, Governor Neil Abercrombie, Senator Mazie Hirono and Hawaii County Councilwoman Karen Eoff.

The forum was dedicated to SHYLI Advisory Member and Co-Founder Guy Toyama. Josue Cruz, Stone Soup Leadership Institute gave a moving speech and Ian Kitajima, Oceanit launched the Guy Toyama SHYLI Scholarship Fund. Guy's beloved Rika attended with her friend, Fumiko.

"In our communities we need people like Guy... people who believe in the power of youth to face and resolve the challenges of our times. What we really need are role models, people who inspire our desire to be better human beings. What truly makes us great is our will to make changes and our desire to accomplish them," Cruz said.

Rika Toyama also gave thanks.

"Thank you for the invite for the wonderful forum. I was very impressed and touched by every speaker's story & speeches about Guy. Guy's parents enjoyed watching them on YouTube. I'm so grateful for your kindness and dedication to Guy. I hope SHYLI and the Stone Soup Leadership Institute will continuously grow and the earth will become a sustainable planet full of love. Mahalo," she said.

SHYLI youth leaders inspired forum participants with their hopes and dreams in their presentations on the progress with their Sustainability-In-Action Projects. Our goal of the forum was to inspire many more youth to join them in building a more sustainable Hawaii island.

Trevor Tanaka is working with Rep. Denny Coffman on a Sustainable Education Resolution No. 15 that he crafted that would require Hawaii public high schools to incorporate sustainable education in their science curriculum.

Trevor is seeking additional legislative and community support for the Resolution in hopes it will be introduced during the current legislative session.

Makana's Cultural Sustainability-In-Action Project is restoring kinship with Hawaiian cultural roots as a step towards becoming more self-sufficient.

"I'm creating an exhibit for my senior project, which will allow students a forum so they can express their voices while expanding their perspectives and increasing their pride in our collective heritage. It incorporates peace poems by our middle school students, which focuses on their dreams for what they wish to see in the world. We will leave a legacy, as it will become part of KANU school building," Makana said.

Following their presentations, SHYLI youth invited participants to select a Small Group Session to brainstorm ideas about how to implement and expand their Sustainability-In-Action Projects. Great ideas were nurtured.

Participants reflected on how today's economic development initiatives should include youth leaders, since they are planning our collective future.

Any youth interested in making a difference for sustainability in Hawai'i would benefit from the high quality of the mentorship, training and support they can receive by participating in SHYLI. Listening to the experiences and projects of these young people caused me to feel great emotion and pride in what they will accomplish.

Opening Remarks by Kynan Kawai

Lately we've been hearing the word "sustainability". Many people talk about it, but my generation wants to really take action.

David Fuertes, my mentor from Ka Hana No eau, Partners In Development with the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative (SHYLI), are helping us turn our ideas into action. Thanks to David, I learned about sustainability in middle school.

He opened my eyes to see the importance of sustainable agriculture for our community. I also discovered the benefits it represents as a business, for our whole state and country.

I'm also grateful to David for nominating me to serve as a Hawaiian delegate to the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's 8th Annual Youth Leadership Summit for Sustainable Development. It was held last June on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts for Island youth from across the country.

As I prepared for my presentation at the Summit, I discovered just how committed my community of North Kohala is to sustainable agriculture and sustainable business. The North Kohala Community Development Program (CDP) set a goal of producing at least 50% of the food we consume. Before the arrival of foreigners to North Kohala (and all the Hawaiian Islands), we were 100% sustainable!

Our whole population was able to satisfy its needs with the resources on our Island. Today we import 85% of our food – while 80% of the land in North Kohala is actually zoned for agriculture use.

At the Summit I joined the four other delegates from our island and made presentations on different aspects of sustainable initiatives on Hawaii: Sustainable Agriculture, Architecture, Culture, Environment and Education.

This opportunity was a true blessing! Traveling to Martha's Vineyard and sharing my findings with youth from Martha's Vineyard and Vieques, Puerto Rico motivated me to share what I learned to our community members and to involve them into our sustainability in action projects.

I know this is a big goal, but not an impossible one! This Youth Leadership Forum is the first step. This is our chance to present our beliefs and action steps towards creating a more sustainable Island. We hope to inspire many more Hawaiian youth to join with us as well as our leaders to support our Sustainability-In-Action Projects.

I've taken this very seriously, because it's something really important for my future, your future, and our future. That's why I invited people like you to be here with us to join in this special occasion.

We are here to celebrate the lives of people like Guy Toyama who contributed so much to our Island. We are here to join forces to make Hawaii a more sustainable place and to guarantee this paradise to the ones after us.

The experience of creating this Youth Leadership Forum has changed my life. I have grown so much. For the last few months I've been learning how to develop public-private partnerships and invite people to sponsor us so we can realize this dream.

I feel so great when I'm able to honor at Senator Inouye and meet people like Danny Akaka Jr., Barry Taniguichi, or Monty Richards.

I feel inspired to stay focused on our dream. I don't want to stop for even one minute. I'm convinced that initiatives like these need to be replicated, in our country and on the whole planet.

Thank you for coming to our Youth Leadership Forum.

Thank you for supporting the youth of Hawaii. Thank you for making the effort to demonstrate that you care about your future, our future. If no one takes a step forward, there will be no tomorrow.

We are the beginning.

We are the change.

We are the future.

We are the hope of the humanity!

Thank you.

—

Josue Cruz Speech - Dedication to Guy Toyama

There are some essential things in the life of a human being, to consider this one as a full life. Family, friends, joyfulness, sadness, passion- and the happiness for what we do to contribute to the society where we live, are some examples of these essentials.

Guy Toyama is one of those persons that you can tell since the very first you met him that he lived and enjoyed the things he did in live.

Although I did not spend many time with him, that little time I could spend at his side, was a first class one. An experience that transformed my way of seeing the way we should produce energy.

That we need to produce energy in a way that do not dehumanize us, neither take us to the caves era, but harmonize our technological progress with our need to sustain resources and take them into a good and dynamic interaction with the environment that surround us, so we can ensure our existence as a society in this singular planet.

Obviously, I didn't come here today to speak about geothermal energy or solar or bio-fuel made out of corn, no, definitely no. I came to tell you that in our communities we are needing people like Guy, that we need people who believe in the power of the youth that is emerging to face and resolve the challenges that shows up, that we need people able to share what they know without pretend having the monopoly of knowledge, that our world will not be saved with more technologies, that what we really need are role models, role models that inspire our desire for being better human beings without pretending humiliate the others, that what we need are people that show us that our greatness does not lies in the cumulus of material wealth or academic knowledge that we might have, instead, what truly make us big is our will to make changes and our desire to perpetuate our accomplishments to overcome one of the major fears of humanity, our finite existence.

I thank today for having the honor of knowing somebody like Guy. I can assure you that he planted on me his seed of the desire to accomplish a better world for everyone.

I know that in some years I will be in a position from which I will be able to promote reforms that will change the path of my community and I can guarantee that in many of them will be that innovative scientific knowledge that Guy taught me, but also will be present the eagerness for preserve our planet for those ones that are coming after us.

Let's plant!

Let's plant as Guy did it!

I invite each one of you to help organizations like Stone Soup and the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative to spread the water that very soon will make all those young seeds grow!

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Message from the Governor

Aloha and congratulations to all who have made the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative's Youth Leadership Forum possible.

On behalf of the people of the State of Hawaii, I commend this year's delegates for their innovative and exciting contributions to our efforts in directing our State toward sustainable development. I am proud of your tireless dedication to the future of our State.

As the Governor of the State of Hawaii, I pledge my continued support of initiatives that move us toward energy efficiency and sustainable long-term development.

Congratulations to the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative for your decades of outstanding service and best wishes for continued success

Sincerely,

Neil Abercrombie

Governor, State of Hawaii

—

Mayor's Message

On behalf of the people of the County of Hawaii, it is a pleasure to extend a warm welcome to the organizers, participants and supporters of the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative's (SHYLI) Youth Leadership Forum.

We commend this year's delegates Kynan Kawai, Allie Kitchens, Manoa Johansen, Trevor Tanaka and Makana Tavares for their exceptional contributions to sustainable initiatives in Hawaii.

These future leaders will be of great value to our island communities as we seek ways to preserve and integrate our unique culture with a complex modern world.

It is particularly important for our isolated island communities to embrace the concept of sustainability, since it is through sustainability that we can insulate ourselves from worldwide events over which we have no control.

Our island communities' isolation can also be utilized as an asset, as we are particularly suited to be a world model for the development of sustainable agriculture, building, business, culture, and energy.

We extend a warm Aloha to all the delegates and wish them great success as they embark on this journey toward a more secure future for their islands and the rest of the world.

Aloha,

Mayor Billy Kenoi

—

SHYLI Youth Leaders

<https://youtu.be/hNzjsGTUgU?si=LqyGgP8gpGwqjS2A>

Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative's mission is to train the next generation of leaders to build a more sustainable Island and world. SHYLI is a project of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute, a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 1997 on the Island of Martha's Vineyard.

The Institute has a deep commitment and strong track record to develop culturally sensitive transformational educational leadership tools to train multicultural youth from islands to build more sustainable communities.

The Institute's book and educational curriculum Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes inspires empathetic storytelling and vision sharing of a more humane, just, equitable and sustainable world.

Find out more:

Sustainable Hawai'i Youth Leadership Initiative shyli.org