

Hawaii 24/7

SHYLI Passes the Torch

April 29, 2013



On April 15, youth leaders celebrated a year full of accomplishments at the Sustainable Hawaii Youth Leadership Initiative's Graduation.

They inspired everyone with their life-changing experiences. They also passed the torch to the new youth who were nominated by their communities to serve as SHYLI delegates for the coming year.

To honor the Hawaiian heritage, Keahi Delovio led us in a chant at graduation, which was held at Kanu o ka Aina New Century Public Charter School in Waimea.

Kynan Kawai spoke of how his SHYLI Sustainability-In-Action Project became his Senior Legacy Project at Kamehameha High School in Hilo. By helping to develop SHYLI's Youth Leadership Forum, Kynan learned to build public-private partnerships and engage adults to work with youth to overcome challenges and realize their dreams.

Nominated by David Fuertes, Ka Hana Noeau, Partners in Development, Kynan is committed to North Kohala Community Development Program (CDP)'s to reach 50 percent food self-sufficiency by 2050. After pursuing business at Northern Arizona University, Kynan will return to help his community in sustainable agriculture.

Allie Kitchens spoke of her two Job Shadow Day experiences -- one with Holly Algood at the Algood Barn in Hawi, the other with Stephen Green Architects in Waimea, where she learned about the importance of developing architectural models.

Nominated by Jenny White's Environmental Club at Kealakehe High School, Allie is pursuing her architectural dream next year at either Philadelphia University or Cal Poly Tech.

Nominated by Betsy Boland at Kanu o ka Aina New Century Public Charter, Makana Tavares recently traveled to the island of Lanai to share her Cultural Sustainability Project and inspire young people to join SHYLI. Makana is pursuing her dreams at an East Coast College — Harvard, Brown, Williams or Columbia University.

Trevor Tanaka shared how his journey from the Youth Leadership Summit gave him the tools to pursue his Sustainable Education Resolution, which became his senior project at Konawaena High School. It's been an amazing learning experience with trips to the Hawaii Capitol to make presentations to government leaders.

Thanks to support from Rep. Denny Coffman and Sen. Jill Tokuda Trevor's Resolution was just adopted by the Legislature in record time! Thanks to Trevor every public school in Hawaii will offer at least one course in sustainability. This will have far-reaching implications for future students and for the future of his Island.

Nominated by Nancy Redfeather at The Kohala Center, Trevor will pursue his dream of biomedical engineering at either Loyola Marymount or Chapman University.

"Trevor serves as a great example to both his classmates and to our fellow citizens of Hawaii as to the power and importance of one's voice, Coffman said. "It has been a pleasure getting to know him, and if the passion and work ethic I've seen thus far are any testament, I am sure his future will shine bright."

The new youth nominees eagerly picked up the "torch" and embraced the challenge by sharing their own dreams for their lives, their island and the world.

Nominated by the North Hawaii Drug Free Coalition, Keahi is a junior at Kealahou High school who aspires to become a pediatrician. Her dream is "become sustainable and learn to work hard for a better future, for our keiki."

"I was amazed at these young people and their desires/goals for what they would like to achieve," said Keahi's mother Makana-Tammy Delovio. "What a wonderful organization! If you get a chance go & like their Facebook page & check out what they're doing in our communities!"

Nominated by Dr. Ming Wei Koh at Hawaii Preparatory Academy, Mickie wants to combine science and technology for new discoveries.

Her dream for Hawaii is "to boost geothermal, OTEC, wind, and solar power, so there would be multiple sources of energy — (making use of our advantages to the fullest, and not dwell on the disadvantages)."

"The SHYLI Leadership presents an excellent opportunity for our youth to grow," says Deanna Kackley, Program Manager, North Hawaii Drug Free Coalition, Five Mountains Hawaii. "We appreciate your projects on our beloved Hawaii Island."

Nominated by Honokaa High School, KaMele is passionate about environmental sciences. Sherry aspires to biomedical engineering. They will work as a team, addressing issues facing their community. While they are concerned about sustainability -- they are equally concerned about the future of the Island's youth.

“A major challenge facing young people in Hawaii is apathy towards education,” Sherry said. “There are so many students who do not care about getting good grades in school. Some drop out of high school, but more choose not to go to college. Without many students obtaining degrees, Hawaii will suffer without professionals who can help the people living here.”

Nominated by the Hilo Girl Scouts, Bethany C. is a freshman at Hawaii Academy of Arts and Science is working with the Hilo Improvement Program and Let’s Grow Hilo to create a “From the Garden to the Table” cookbook to incorporate WIC friendly and local edible gardens ingredients.

“I believe that SHYLI will help me connect me with those who will help me to have an influence in Hawaii,” Bethany C. said.

A freshman at Waieka High School, Bethany A. aspires to become a doctor or nurse.

“Young people need more clarity and inspiration about what jobs are out there and what they need to do to get there,” she said.

“At the SHYLI graduation I was very impressed with the graduates, who were articulate and accomplished, true leaders,” Anne Anderson, Girl Scouts of Hilo. “They were inspiring. Each graduate shared his action project, what he learned and what he was able to accomplish in moving Hawaii toward sustainability. Seeing our future leaders gives me hope for what lies ahead for Hawaii.”

Nominated by Patti Cook at Waimea Middle School, Alex is the first in his family to attend high school.

“My parents sacrificed their education and childhood in order to support their families,” Alex said. “My father only made it to 6th grade, and my mother to the 5th grade. They worked very hard to achieve the things they have in life. People should not have to sacrifice their childhood and education in order to survive. There should be no reason that a child goes hungry or is made fun of for being different or poor. My dream for the world is to let people know that regardless of their situation, regardless of where they come from, someone cares and wants them to succeed, and that they have to ability to do so.”

Now a junior at Hawaii Preparatory Academy, Alex wants to “be the spark that lights the flame in people’s hearts. Then I know that together we will be able to achieve great things.”

At the summit, these youth delegates will work alongside youth leaders from other islands to envision their sustainability-in-action projects to benefit their communities. Since cultural sustainability is an important component of the summit, they will share what they have learned about Hawaiian culture and history -- through hula dance, chanting, values like kuliana (responsibility), as well as planting local foods like kalo/taro, and events like ipukuku and makaniki games, studying ahupuaa as a sustainable way of living and service projects like Ke Ala Kahawai O Waimea Trail Cleaning and Habitat for Humanity Home-Building in Hawaiian Homes.

SHYLI invites everyone to help support these young people to realize their dreams. Each island community is responsible for sponsoring their youth delegation.

Sponsors are invited to provide financial contributions. Sponsor proposal and recognition package is available upon request. Individuals are invited to donate frequent flier miles.

Find out more:

Sustainable Hawai'i Youth Leadership Initiative shyli.org