2017

IMPACT REPORT

Q1

FIRST QUARTER

People, Place, Promise

COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA

The founding college of the University of Hawai'i, established 1907

Q1

College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
People, Place, Promise

Help for the Love of It

"This issue is dedicated to CTAHR's volunteer collaborators, whose support so greatly enhances the work of the college."

For the second year in a row, the first quarter's *Impact Report* is dedicated to stories about CTAHR's volunteer collaborators, whose support so greatly enhances the work of the college, especially its Extension component. This issue features one of the largest and most enthusiastic groups of volunteers, parents and community members associated with 4-H clubs and activities, including Junior Master Gardeners, who supplement the work of the few dedicated agents to keep the keiki healthy, learning, and engaged. It also pays tribute to two special groups of volunteers, current students who help to better the campus and community through their service and former faculty members who continue to lend their skills and experience to CTAHR's projects and larger mission. The Student Organic Farm Training (SOFT) club helps to teach young children the joys and benefits of gardening and contributes to sustainability on the Mānoa campus; faculty volunteers at Poamoho Research Station contribute to the projects of the researchers and Extension agents there; and retired Extension agent Norman Bezona offers education and outreach from a privately owned but publicly accessible section of cloud forest on the Big Island. Mahalo nui loa to our volunteers!

Aloha,

Rachel Novotny, Ph.D.
Interim Dean and Director for Research
and Cooperative Extension

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4-H, for Hawai‘i

"It's not just livestock," State 4-H coordinator Jeff Goodwin emphasizes, for perhaps the thousandth time during his career. 4-H includes a variety of activities to increase youths' health, well-being, leadership skills, and community engagement, and it continues to add to its repertoire, incorporating STEM-focused activities such as rocketry. Rearing and showing cows, pigs, chickens, and goats is still an important part of the venerable organization. But even here, the focus is not just on the animals but also on the skills, from time-management to recordkeeping to simple patience and respect, that the kids who raise them learn.

500-plus volunteers support 4-H and the children it it, devoting more than 40,000 hours annually.

New to his position—he just came to Hawai‘i last year from Colorado—Dr. Goodwin identifies the greatest challenge here as growing what's still perceived as primarily a rural organization in urban Honolulu. He's done it in the city of Denver, though, and he's ready to do it again.

He's getting plenty of help, including the 500-plus volunteers who support the program and the children in it. Some fifty or sixty 4-H community clubs are active throughout the Islands, as well as around 100 military clubs, at least one on every base throughout the state and elsewhere in the Pacific. Upwards of 3,200 youth in the state ages 5 to 19 participate. And with only four dedicated faculty agents in the college, the work 4-H does would be literally impossible without these volunteers, who contribute more than 40,000 hours annually, at a value of almost $1 million, to the program.

Many of the volunteers begin because their own children are involved with the program but continue on after they graduate. Others join because of their own positive memories of 4-H as kids. "We have lots of multi-generation 4-H families," Dr. Goodwin concurs. Older youth participants also volunteer to mentor the younger members.

All the volunteers are supervised by the agents and Dr. Goodwin, but there's room for personal initiative, too: they lead activities that interest them. They go through orientation training and periodic supplemental training to gain new skills and knowledge, from fiscal issues to how to keep learning fun.

Not to mention Dr. Goodwin's newest introduction to the Island clubs: shooting sports, such as drilling and marksmanship. One of the most popular activities on the Mainland, it should considerably boost youth engagement here. And not to worry, he reassures: the volunteers will get plenty of training before guiding that activity.

Dr. Goodwin jumps in to referee a game of "Cow Wrestling."

The Gathering Place

Everyone else is doing all the work. This is the refrain of the retired faculty volunteers at Poamoho Research Station: they're just hanging out, at most doing what they're told. All the others are worthy of praise—farm manager Susan Migita, Extension agents Jari Sugano and Jensen Uyeda for their projects and for managing the volunteer programs, fellow helpers. But the volunteers themselves are self-deprecating: "My wife kicks me out of the house in the morning." "Gotta keep busy till time to go to the bar."

But the truth is, these volunteers bring a wealth of scholarly and technical knowledge and decades of hands-on experience when they arrive for their weekly or even daily shifts, and they're invaluable to the station and its activities.

The multi-variety avocado orchard at Poamoho is planned, planted, and tended by the volunteer corps.

Some explain more seriously why they volunteer. It allows emeritus Extension agent Steve Fukuda to do meaningful work without getting tied up in bureaucratic or institutional constraints. He doesn't have to write reports or pursue grants; he can just do the work that needs doing. His latest project is constructing clean-propagation boxes to grow banana.

Dr. Ken Takeda says he's healthier now than he was when he was retired fifteen years ago; volunteering keeps him in great shape. A retired horticulturist, he continues to put that experience to work by grafting and pruning in the diverse avocado orchard he and George Kibota have planted and tend. Now 87, Mr. Kibota also keeps fit with volunteer duties, lugging buckets of fruit and clambering into the bed of a pick-up with the agility of a man forty years younger.

Rose Saito, a 4-H Extension agent in Family and Consumer Sciences, chose Poamoho as the place to offer her talents after retiring, setting up and tending a series of exemplary worm bins to use up the excess produce grown in the Station's variety trials and providing vermicompost tea for faculty member Dr. Koon Hui Wang's research. The volunteers help with other projects, too: the variety trials for mamaki, cabbage, and low-chill peaches; the evaluation of citrus; the experiments for getting the prized long white stem on negi green onions.

But perhaps retired soil physicist Dr. S.K. Chong expresses the motivation, and the atmosphere at the station, the best. Having researched at Poamoho as a CTAHR grad student, he always knew he'd return, though it turned out not to be for many years. "It felt like coming home," he says.

Faculty volunteers are caught in a rare moment of inactivity, posed in front of the experiemental dragon fruit plot.

Growing the Future

Not only committed to sustainability but triumphantly sustainable itself, the Sustainable and Organic Farm Training (SOFT) CTAHR student organization is now in its tenth year and still going strong. This group of student volunteers and faculty mentors is dedicated to creating a place for student exploration and leadership in agriculture and highlighting the role of ecological processes in sustainable local food production and community health.

The students create and maintain edible landscapes and coordinate campus food-waste pick-ups from UH Mānoa and Noelani Elementary School for their compost piles. They have plots on the Mānoa campus in the Sustainability Courtyard and alongside the Art Building, including a flourishing banana grove, and they also have a larger garden area at the Magoon Research Facility. The group was recently awarded a Green Project Implementation Award, given to student-led sustainability projects with measurable impacts on campus, in the amount of $10,000 from the Johnson Controls to create a sustainable food system on the UHM campus that repurposes food waste for food production.

SOFT students help educate the keiki on organic farming practices, nutrition, ecology, food safety, and other STEM areas.

Perhaps their most fruitful and popular venture is their volunteer partnership with Noelani's first-grade teachers based at Magoon. They work together to create student gardens that educate the keiki on organic farming practices, nutrition, ecology, food safety, and other STEM areas. Not only do the students get to see the miracle of plants germinating, feel the sun-warmed soil in their hands, and literally eat the fruits of their labors, they're fulfilling science components of the DOE curriculum!

Over the years, SOFT students have shared different types of gardens with the first-graders: one year they grew the ingredients for a bountiful vegetable soup, another year the makings for spaghetti sauce. Once they planted herb gardens with lavender, lemongrass, rosemary, sage, and parsley; another time, they created a version of the Native American planting system of corn, beans, and squash. They've experimented with companion planting, introducing their youthful charges to the concept of plant allies.

The partnership, now in its seventh year, has been so successful that a fourth-grade cohort has been added, and SOFT is committed to teaching them as well. Many of the fourth-graders remember their first experiences with the school gardens they tended three years ago and are excited to learn more and get their hands in the dirt again. There's no better way to nurture the next generation of local farmers—from the ground up!

The SOFT students' partnership with Noelani Elementary School is in its seventh year.

Between the Earth and the Clouds

Everyone's heard of the rainforest…but what about a cloud forest? These tropical or subtropical areas characterized by high humidity and persistent cloud cover provide habitat and protection for a variety of species, including native plants and animals, found nowhere else, and they are essential for supplying rainfall to the watersheds beneath them.

The most accessible cloud forest in Hawai'i is the privately owned 70-acre Kona Cloud Forest Sanctuary on the slopes of Hualalai. This family trust dedicated to "living forest friendly" offers botanical tours, education, and special events to support education, protection, and reforestation of tropical rainforests and cloud forests. Much of its area is covered with native plants, including many rare and endangered species, including huge koa, 'ōhi'a, hapu'u ferns, Hawaiian hawks, and 'i'iwi.

The Sanctuary steward is Emeritus Professor Norman Bezona, who has dedicated more than 50 years of his life to tropical horticulture and, even after retirement, continues to give back to the college, the community, and the cloud forest. After graduating from UH's then-College of Tropical Agriculture in 1960, he did graduate work in Florida and then returned to Ka'ū as a diversified crop horticulturist. He began acquiring forest land in 1982, creating what would become the Sanctuary. His children and grandchildren are also involved, along with his partner Voltaire Moise.

Dr. Norman Bezona has dedicated more than 50 years of his life to tropical horticulture and continues to give back.

Much of the forest surrounding the Kona Cloud Forest Sanctuary is being subdivided, bulldozed, and cleared for private owners, making Norman's work even more crucial. He recently entered into an agreement with Hawaiian Islands Land Trust to preserve 10 acres of the forest through a conservation easement, which prohibits deforestation in perpetuity, and he plans to ultimately put all the land in this trust.

Norman's volunteer outreach also extends beyond the cloud forest; he serves as Hawai'i director for the International Palm Society and advisor to the Hawai'i Chapter of the American Bamboo Society. He has visited many equatorial forest regions worldwide as a consultant and continues to work with organizations on special projects around the world. He writes articles for local publications, including weekly columns for the *Hawaii Tribune-Herald* and *West Hawaii Today*, and works with the community to support tropical forest protection.

At the Sanctuary, Norman Bezona hopes that whether they have come to walk the botanical trails, participate in educational programs, or be guests at special functions, visitors will be imbued with greater respect and appreciation for tropical ecosystems. And if they take him as their inspiration, they will be!

Norman offers community education and outreach at his Cloud Forest Sanctuary.