



**HUI HO'OMALU
STATEWIDE
RESOURCE
ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

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Building Connections

A Newsletter for Resource Families



Volume 3, Issue 2

January 2010

'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER

For this edition of 'Ohana Connections Corner I interviewed a youth whom I will call Fila. (She asked that I not use her or her family's real names.) Fila is a 17 year old youth who entered foster care when she was 12 because of sexual abuse. Prior to that time she had been living with her aunt Mary, and Mary's family. It was her auntie's husband who abused her.

Fila had a very difficult time in foster care. Since reconnecting with the rest of her immediate and extended family however, she has made a complete turnaround. Below is a glimpse into her story.

*—Wilma Friesema, OES
EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc.*



Breaking the Cycle

By Wilma Friesema & Fila

Wilma: Fila, how many placements have you been in since you entered foster care?

Fila: 33 total, I think.

Wilma: Why so many? Were you having a hard time in your foster homes?

Fila: Those are tough questions to answer; most foster homes were good, a few were bad. Most foster parents tried to help me but I didn't want their help. I didn't want to listen.

Wilma: Why did you push them away and not listen?

Fila: My social worker wouldn't tell me what was going on. A trial was supposed to happen, but I wasn't told anything. When I was taken into foster care I completely lost contact with my family. I felt scared and angry, but that was too hard to put into words so it came out in my actions. I felt like I had to deal with things on my own so I shut everyone out.

I ran away once when I was 13 so I could see my family. My GAL (Guardian ad Litem) found out that I ran to family and asked the judge to talk to me. The judge told me I needed to finish the sexual abuse treatment program I was in before I could see my family. It all went downhill after that. I ended up in Kahi Mohala Treatment Center. I got into a pattern: Kahi Mohala, foster home, Queen's Hospital Family Treatment Center, Kahi Mohala or another treatment center, then back to a foster home until things blew up again. I was angry and I'd mostly hurt myself, but sometimes I'd lash out at others. That's why I went through so many placements.

Wilma: Was that because of your separation from family?

Fila: That and the abuse itself.



Wilma: Recovering from sexual abuse is hard to do; being separated from your family seems like it made it that much more difficult. What were your thoughts about your family when you were apart?

Fila: I regretted that I had said anything about the abuse and turned my uncle in. I didn't expect the fallout. I really missed everyone. It felt like I was being punished because the trial never happened and I was the one who was taken away. Now I can see I did the right thing, but back then it didn't feel that way.

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The Hui Ho‘omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.

The Building Connections Newsletter is published four times a year to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to resource families, service providers, and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster

www.pidfoundation.org

To be placed on the mailing list or if you would like to receive an electronic copy, please call 441-1125 (O‘ahu), 888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

Partners in Development Foundation
2040 Bachelot St.
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96817-2433

‘OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER (cont.)

Wilma: Let’s talk about the family connections process. When your new social worker approached you about it, what was your reaction?

Fila: I was sixteen at the time, and my therapist was already helping me contact my uncle -- not the one who abused me. I also found my brother on the internet and we were connecting online. But that was it. I have a very big family, but I was still separate from them. I wanted to see more of my family.

Wilma: Who were the people you were most longing to contact?

Fila: My grandmother and auntie, Leilani.

Wilma: I found your auntie Leilani who, to be honest, had a lot of distrust of “the system” when I first contacted her. We were able to work through that and Leilani began to meet with your treatment team and work toward having visits with you. Do you remember what your first contact with auntie Leilani was like?

Fila: I was in the Aloha Care Center at the time and I remember feeling clueless. I didn’t know what to say. I was excited but it also felt awkward. After a little while though, it got easier. It didn’t seem to take too long for us to go from day visits to overnights at my auntie Lielani’s house. Now I live with her full time and my bouncing around days are over. I haven’t returned to the hospital or any treatment program since she took custody of me, which was about five months ago.

Wilma: That’s quite a change! How did you break the cycle?

Fila: I don’t know; I just feel more settled inside. Now I’m doing what I’m supposed to do. I’m focusing on graduating and I’m staying out of trouble. It feels pretty good. I guess I feel more secure. Since moving in with auntie I get along better with people too. In the past when other kids bugged me I’d either beat them up or cuss them out. I had a short fuse. Now, I don’t get as ticked off as before. It’s like I can look back and say that was the old way I was. I’m in a new life now and my auntie and family are helping me stay on track. They’re depending on me to succeed.

Wilma: Was it at all hard to reconnect with your family?

Fila: At first I was afraid that I wouldn’t be protected, but now I know I’ll really be ok. Also, everyone else in the family knew what to do and how to act with each other, but I didn’t. It took me a while to feel like I fit in. The hardest part was returning home and seeing my grandmother. It was a shock. She had changed so much. She was in a wheelchair and couldn’t even feed herself. The whole family was taking care of her.

About three months after I moved in with auntie my grandmother died. I’m glad I had a little time with her, and that I was able to be with my family when she left us. It would have been awful if I had never seen her again.

Wilma: I’m so sorry about your loss. Before we close, is there anything else you’d want to share?

Fila: If you’re a foster youth it’s really important to keep in touch with your family – it’s your right. Even if you can’t go back to live with family, at least stay in touch with them. They’re so important!



For more information about ‘Ohana Connections work contact Wilma Friesema at EPIC ‘Ohana Conferencing, Inc. at 748-7921



Opportunities for Youth

By Jennifer O'Donnell, Facilitator/Coordinator
EPIC Youth Circle Program

Senior year in High School is a memorable time in the lives of young people, but for youth in foster care it can be a stressful time of transition. Resource families can be the supportive launching pad that helps youth overcome past trauma and face the future with hope and confidence. There is an array of supports that youth and their families can use to ensure a successful transition out of foster care and into life as an independent adult.

At EPIC, we work to facilitate Youth Circles for teens 16 and older who are “aging out” of foster care. The Youth Circle is voluntary, so the youth chooses if they want to participate. EPIC and the youth invite supporters, often a mix of family, resource caregivers, legal guardians, social workers, teachers, mentors, GALs or others. The Youth Circle takes a few hours and is an opportunity for youth to discuss their accomplishments, goals, and strengths with the people who matter most to them. The team brainstorms options for housing, education, employment, financial resources, documents, transportation, and health of the youth. The youth then gets to choose their preferred plans and presents to the group their top choices for where they would like to live, complete their education and find employment. Senior year is an ideal time for the youth to benefit from the support, positive encouragement, and options a Youth Circle can provide.



Many youth indicate lofty career goals and a desire to attend college after high school graduation. When evaluating the Youth Circle, they frequently cite the information about college planning, scholarships, and grants as one of the greatest benefits of a Youth Circle. Resource caregivers should be aware of the four big sources of college funding that most youth in foster care should apply for during and immediately after their senior year of high school:

1. The **Pell Grant** from the Federal Government – seniors who plan on attending college in the Fall should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Youth in foster care, legal guardianship, or adopted after the age of 13 qualify based on their individual incomes and do not have to list income of parents or caregivers. The full Pell Grant is over \$5,000 per year to pay for tuition, books, and other needs of the student. Students who apply early have the best chance of being awarded funding in time to pay for Fall courses. New applications are online in January and should be completed before April, if possible. Youth can send the FAFSA information to multiple schools if they are unsure where they will attend.
2. There is also the Victoria S. and Bradley L. **Geist Foundation Scholarship** (applications can be found at www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org), which awards up to \$1,000 each semester to youth who “age out” of foster care. This award can be received each year and increases if the student shows good grades. June 1st is the deadline to apply for Fall scholarship awards.
3. The Department of Human Services (DHS) also provides support in the form of **Higher Education Board Allowance - \$529** every month for former foster youth who “age out” of foster care or legal guardianship, complete high school, and enroll in college. Former foster youth have from the time they turn 18 until the age of 22 to decide to enroll in college and take advantage of higher education. Applicants must provide DHS with proof of their paid registration from the school. Once awarded, students who maintain a 2.0 or higher Grade Point Average and show progress toward a degree may re-apply for up to five years.
4. The DHS Higher Education application also offers former foster youth the chance to apply for **Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)**. Federal funds are awarded to states to cover ETV grants to former foster youth who are college students. Youth who were adopted from foster care after age 16 are also eligible to apply. The ETV grant is designed to fill in the gap, if the student is awarded the Pell Grant and scholarships, but can still demonstrate a financial need for tuition, supplies, books, uniforms, tools, a computer, childcare costs, or other items that support the student’s successful completion of their degree. ETV grants generally range from about \$2,000 to a maximum of \$5,000 per year. Students must submit a detailed budget and turn in receipts and grades at the end of each semester.



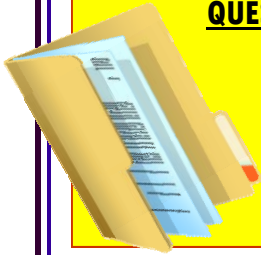
Continued on page 5

Opportunities for Youth (cont.)

Together these four sources of college funding total over \$15,000 per year. The cost of tuition at a local community college is currently \$79 per credit hour, or about \$1,896 per academic year for a full time student. Even after paying for books and supplies, a youth could have significant funds left over to assist with their rent or other costs of living. Students who aspire to attend college on the mainland should plan to apply for as many scholarships as possible and pool them together to cover the costs. Native Hawaiian students can apply for Alu Like and Kamehameha Scholarships. With a tight job market for recent high school grads, many former foster youth can do better financially in the short term and long term by choosing to pursue college rather than searching for full time work right out of high school.

QUESTION: How do you get a high school senior to complete all these applications correctly and before the deadlines?

ANSWER: Come to the *Better Start Workshop!*
February 5, 2010 (Friday) at 5:30 pm
Leeward Community College



There is a collaboration of local agencies that put on the **Better Start Workshop Series** for youth and their resource caregivers. The staff at Leeward Community College has again generously offered their computer lab for the youth to complete their FAFSA. Save the date on the early evening of *Friday, February 5th 2010 for the Better Start Workshop*. We will serve pizza at 5:30, then offer a two hour workshop where foster youth can complete the FAFSA and get a head start on their college and scholarship applications. Staff from Hale Kipa Independent Living Program (ILP), EPIC Youth Circle Program, Family Programs Hawai'i and Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition will be on hand to assist the foster youth. Youth who desire more than just one evening of help can participate in an Independent Living Program. DHS social workers can refer foster youth to be assigned to an ILP case manager who meets with them regularly and helps them follow through with their goals. THE Collaboration is also offering a **Resource Caregiver Workshop** the same evening as Better Start so resource caregivers can enjoy pizza with the teens and then stay for valuable information on how to help older foster youth grow up to be successful adults.

If you are interested in registering a youth for the Better Start Workshop or are interested in attending the caregiver training, you may contact Jennifer Cilfone at Family Programs Hawaii to RSVP: at 521-9531, ext. 297 or email at JCilfone@FamilyProgramsHi.org

Care to Share



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

"Care to Share" is a way for people to share their gently used items with resource families (foster, adoptive, or guardianship) who need your support.

Do you have something that a family could use? Do you care to share? Then here's a great opportunity to help children in foster care and their generous resource families.

Examples of items requested include: dressers, bunk beds, luggage with wheels, baby gates, basketball hoop, high chair, and smoke detectors.

Examples of items currently available include: children's toys, Cinderella suitcase, children's books, baby walker, toddler potty, and infant/children's clothing in specific sizes.

For an up-to-date list of items by island, check out Care to Share at www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org, under "Resources"

For information, contact the Warm Line:
545-1130 (O'ahu) ★ 1-866-545-0882 (Toll-free for Neighbor Islands)
E-mail: WarmLine@FamilyProgramsHi.org



Family Programs Hawaii's 11th Annual Holiday Party

By Eva Chau, Resource Family Support Services Program Manager
Family Programs Hawaii

This year's 2009 Annual Holiday Party was full of fun, festivities, and most of all, FAMILIES! Open to all adoptive, guardianship, and resource families, the event took place on Saturday, December 5th, 2009 at the Neil Blaisdell Center Exhibition Hall. Sponsored by Family Programs Hawaii in collaboration with the Department of Human Services and Rotary Club of Honolulu, over 2000 people attended the event complete with activities for the whole family, entertainment, a turkey lunch, and gifts for all the children. From the looks on the children's faces, it was obvious that a great time was had by all.

Emcees Linda Coble and Marty Oliphant introduced entertainers such as Michael Leong, the UH Trombone Carolers, Po'okela, J-Soul, Manuia, Hi-Town Players, and B.E.T. Also making a special appearance this year was the Dream Girls! Fashion Show. Dream Girls is a program open to foster, adoptive, and guardianship youth and teaches girls to have a positive attitude, exhibit confidence, and prepare for their futures.

Volunteers stepped up and provided activities throughout the day, including photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus by the Junior League of Honolulu, makeovers by Avon, face painting by Little Learner's Preschool, cotton candy by Locations Foundation, Sharky the mascot by Hawaii Pacific University, goodie bag decorating by Child and Family Service, ring toss by Hui Ho'omalua and Kōkua 'Ohana, tattoos and bean bag toss by It Takes An 'Ohana, Hawaiian crafts by Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center, Keiki ID and PAL football toss by Honolulu Police Department, bird photos by Bruce the Bird Guy, hand massages by Mary Kay, popcorn and inflatable baseball game by A&B Party Rentals, ukulele lessons by Music is Good Medicine, Christmas cards by American Mother's Inc. Hawaii Association, holiday gift tags by



Creative Memories Consultant Kathleen, holiday coloring and stamping by Aloha Independent Living Hawaii, and trivia and prizes by Family Programs Hawaii. An additional 500+ volunteers helped make this event possible over the course of the last several weeks. We thank all of you for the precious work that you do and the difference you are making in the lives of Hawaii's children.

If you missed this year's event, look out for it next year on our website, www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org. See you all next year!!

"For the Sake of the Child"

Come and join us for an evening of interactive exploration on the challenges and benefits of birth parents and resource families working together. Guest resource caregivers, foster youth, and birth parents will share their personal experiences.



See Calendar of Events on
pg 7 for dates & times

Facilitated by: Family Programs Hawaii Social Worker
Cheryl Ogawa Ho, LSW, ACSW

**This FREE training is open to all resource,
adoptive, guardianship & kinship families**

For more information or to RSVP, contact the Warm Line at
1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free) ★ 545-1130 (O'ahu)

Dinner will be provided!

**Childcare for ages 3-12
will be provided!**

Sponsored by the Department of Human Services, Family Programs Hawaii, and Foster Care Training Committee



The Recipe Corner

Food can serve many purposes. Not only does it nourish the body but it can also nourish the soul by bringing people together to help prepare and then eat one food. Do you have a favorite recipe that you would like to share? Send it over for all of us to enjoy!



~ Chili with Beans ~

Submitted by Judith Wilhoite, It Takes An 'Ohana

Pressure cook **1¼ cups rinsed and sorted pinto or red kidney beans** (save 1 cup of the cooking liquid for later). Soak **1 cup TVP*** in 7/8 cup boiling water. Stir well. Add **½ tsp garlic powder, ½ tsp chili powder, 1 tsp salt**. Stir well, let soak for 10 minutes. Dice **1 onion** and **1 clove garlic** then sauté in **2 Tbsp oil**. Add the TVP mixture and brown for a few minutes.

Bring to a boil the following ingredients:

1 cup water	1 cup bean cooking liquid	1 – 2 Tbsp chili powder	1 tsp salt
1½ cups tomato sauce	Pinch of black or red pepper	1 tsp sugar (opt.)	

Add the cooked beans and the TVP mixture to the tomato base and cook for 5 to 10 minutes. Besides TVP, chili is also good with frozen tofu or chopped leftover pork or beef roast.

*TVP, short for Texturized Vegetable Protein, is a meat substitute that is quick to cook, high in protein and low in fat. You can find it in health food stores and in many grocery stores.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY:

- 8** **Windward Resource Family Support Group.** 6 pm—8:30 pm. Faith Baptist Church. RSVP to Family Programs Hawai'i (FPH) at 521-9531 ext. 245.
- 9** **Hilo Resource Family Support Group.** 12 pm—2:30 pm. Church of the Holy Cross. RSVP to FPH at 935-2876 ext. 235.
- 11** **Waimea Resource Family Support Group.** 5 pm—7:30 pm. Tutu's House (Kamuela Business Center, 64-1032 Mamalahoa Hwy. Suite 304). RSVP to FPH at 1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free).
- 15** **Waianae Resource Family Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Waianae District Park. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245.
- 21** **Maui Resource Family Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP to Kim Bowlin at 250-4457.
- 26** **Hilo, Hawaii Training: "For the Sake of the Child"** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Church of the Holy Cross. RSVP required. (See pg. 6 for details)
- 28** **Halawa Resource Family Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Aliamanu Community Cntr. (182 Kauhini Rd). RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245.

FEBRUARY:

- 2** **Waianae, Oahu Training: "For the Sake of the Child"** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Waianae District Park. RSVP required. (See pg. 6 for details)
- 4** **Līhu'e, Kauai Training: "For the Sake of the Child"** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Līhu'e Lutheran Church. RSVP required. (See pg. 6 for details)
- 5** **FREE Better Start College Prep Workshop & Resource Caregiver Workshop.** Childcare provided. Dinner is at 5:30 pm. Workshops for caregivers & teens: 6pm-8pm. Leeward Community College. Targeted to help High School seniors fill out financial aide forms for college. For more information contact Jennifer at 521-9531 ext. 297.
- 10** **Kona Resource Family Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8:00 pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP to FPH's Warm line: 1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free).
- 12** **Windward Resource Family Support Group.** 6 pm—8:30 pm. Faith Baptist Church. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245.
- 13** **Hilo Resource Family Support Group.** 12 pm—2:30 pm. Church of the Holy Cross. RSVP to FPH at 935-2876 ext. 235.
- 18** **Maui Resource Family Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP to Kim Bowlin at 250-4457.
- 19** **Waianae Resource Family Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Waianae District Park. RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245.
- 25** **Halawa Resource Family Support Group.** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Aliamanu Community Cntr. (182 Kauhini Rd). RSVP to FPH at 521-9531 ext. 245.

MARCH:

- 2** **Wailuku, Maui Training: "For the Sake of the Child"** 5:30 pm—8 pm. Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center. RSVP required. (See pg. 6 for details)
- 8** **Waimea Resource Family Support Group.** 5 pm—7:30 pm. Tutu's House (Kamuela Business Center, 64-1032 Mamalahoa Hwy. Suite 304). RSVP to FPH at 1-866-545-0882 (Toll Free).
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E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the resource family community. Hui Ho'omalu facilitates this committee comprised of adoptive parents, resource caregivers and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's resource families.

RAC Committee Members:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalu
Department of Health
Department of Human Services
EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing
Family Court
Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalu
Resource Caregivers
Adoptive Parents
Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition
Heart Gallery Hawai'i
HOPE INC
It Takes An 'Ohana
Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalu & Kōkua 'Ohana
University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work

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