



Susie News

Winter 2009

The Official Newsletter of the Susannah Wesley Community Center

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Hui Kokua at Kuhio Park Terrace (Emergency Food Pantry)

In the past 12 months, there has been a 25 percent increase in requests for food at the emergency food pantry operated by SWCC at Kuhio Park Terrace. More than 300 individuals registered for emergency food supplies. It is estimated that each individual request for food constitutes three additional persons who will be fed by the food received from Hui Kokua. This translates into approximately 900 persons who had to rely on our emergency food pantry for sustenance last year. From January to June 2009 alone, we gave out more than 3,000 lbs. of food to people in need from our community. We have also noticed an increase in requests for food from newly unemployed people as well as people who are employed but find themselves unable to make ends meet at the end of the month.

"For many years Harris United Methodist Church has been a strong supporter of SWCC's Emergency Food Bank through the weekly contributions made by church members to the "Food Box." The food collection box sits under the last pew of the church beckoning people to drop a can or two of non-perishable food each week. Then a staff person from SWCC picks up the food items and delivers them to Kuhio Park Terrace for distribution to people in need. It is heartening to see an increase in donations this past year in keeping with the increased need for basic necessities in the Kalihi community. I hope that everyone continues to faithfully support this vital mission project," said Muriel Onishi, a former SWCC Board Member and long time member of Harris UMC.

As the economic crisis continues, we are seeing a significant increase in the need for basic food supplies. In order to meet this growing need, we were able to open another emergency food pantry located at the Center itself with funding assistance from Aloha United Way. Now more than ever, Hui Kokua will be a crucial source of stability in our community. With continued generous donations from supporters like you, we remain determined and committed to provide this necessary service to those who need it the most.

We are deeply grateful to the following organizations who donated food on a consistent basis this year to keep the shelves of Hui Kokua from going bare: Kailua United Methodist Church, St. Peter and St. Paul Church, Kalihi Union Church, Harris United Methodist Church, Kilo-hana United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, Hawaii Foodbank (USDA Food Distribution), United Methodist Women Hawaii District Annual Meeting and Pan Pacific South East Asia Women's Association of Hawaii, as well as the many individuals who have donated food and funds. Your unending support and commitment to this important effort is immeasurable. Mahalo nui loa.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2009 COMMUNITY BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA GRADUATES!

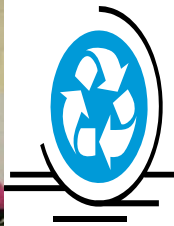
- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Jaylord Bamba | Ariel Oria |
| Shenalyn Borromeo | Louis Pagaduan |
| Michelle Clemente | Shanna Ramel |
| Makanalei Kamealoha | Taylor Reid |
| Jean-Rose Madamba | Janiece Unutoa |



This year ten students successfully completed the requirements to obtain a Community Based High School Diploma based out of SWCC. Pictured above are some of the graduates at their graduation ceremony on October 22, 2009, along with members of the Pan Pacific Asian Women's Association of Hawaii, a group that has supported this program from many years.

SWCC RECEIVES \$5,000 FROM BANK OF HAWAII CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

On December 11, 2009, SWCC received a \$5,000 grant from the Bank of Hawaii Charitable Foundation to support important community programs and services such as CBASE and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for the youths and immigrant adults in our community. Thank you, BOH!



Ron Higashi and Board President, Lily Bloom Domingo, accepts the \$5,000 check from BOH Kalihi Branch Manager Chantell Smeisser and BOH Business Banking Officer Warren Altona.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SOCIAL SERVICES: *Adult Bilingual Mental Health Services*

Imagine that you are an immigrant to Hawaii, speak limited English and struggle with mental illness. What do you do? As one of the few social service agencies in Oahu that provides bilingual case coordination for adults with mental illness, SWCC is referred customers who have such challenges and struggles by various state mental health agencies. Our nine bilingual care coordinators work with over 158 consumers to assist them in living their daily lives with as much dignity and independence as possible.

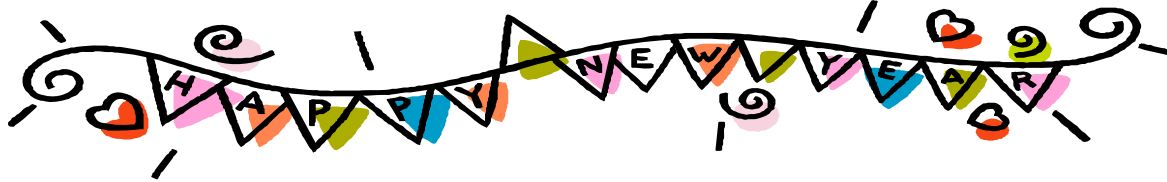
Our care coordinators work with consumers to understand the importance of taking their medication on schedule. Care coordinators provide transportation to and from doctors' appointments and even to the hospital when needed. Care coordinators help consumers to carefully manage their disability funds and pay bills on time. The work of the care coordinators is to help consumers be able to retain a semblance of self-determination and autonomy as individuals despite their many life challenges. Our consumers are treated with compassion and integrity.

There is no "silver bullet" solution in working with persons with mental illness. It is just hard consistent work dealing with the many ups and downs associated with such an illness. The relationship between our staff care coordinator and the consumer is crucial. When the consumer establishes a strong and stable connection with his/her care coordinator, things settle down and stabilize enough for the consumer to be able to make choices and decisions to improve his/her own quality of life. Our staff care coordinators provide continuity and consistency for consumers whose lives are chaotic and unstable.

The economic crisis has especially impacted these consumers.

Many have been laid off from their jobs and are unable to find even part-time work. Some consumers had been on the wait list for five to six years to qualify for Section 8 housing but the program was terminated due to a lack of funding. Consumers cannot take English Speaking Language classes (ESL) because now they must pay \$40 for the required textbooks, which previously were free. Consumers who are struggling with severe behavioral disorders are experiencing greater levels of anxiety and stress due to the cut-backs in palliative services, as well as crucial staff, at the state Adult Mental Health Division. Most of all, many consumers who are limited English speaking are unable to access needed resources. Our consumers are dealing with greater difficulties and challenges, while facing significantly diminished resources and services. In the midst of this, our staff care coordinators remain determined to provide our consumers the stability and guidance that is necessary for them to maintain a decent quality of life.

This work we do at SWCC is not glamorous. It is not easily defined, let alone recognized. But we believe it is at the heart of our mission: to nurture hope and ensure wellness for all the members of our community. Even in times like these, with the continued compassion and generosity of SWCC supporters like you, we remain fully committed to working for the well-being of our consumers.



Here is my year end gift to support the vital work of the Susannah Wesley Community Center.

Name: _____
Mr./Mrs./Ms. First Last

Address: _____
Street City State Zip Code

Phone: _____ Email: _____

My Donation (check one): \$30 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 Other \$ _____

Signature _____ Date _____



Clip and mail form and check to:

**Susannah Wesley Community Center
1117 Kaili Street
Honolulu, HI 96819-3432
(808)847-1535**

Susannah Wesley Community Center is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Your donation is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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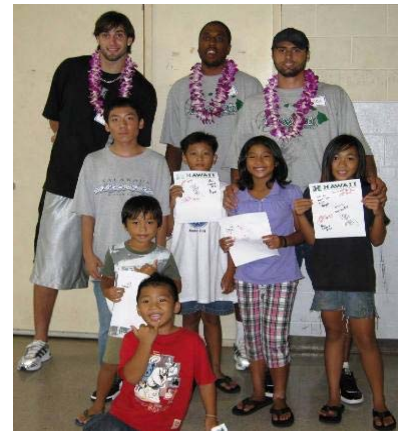
NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENTS

Once again SWCC was chosen as the organization from Hawaii to decorate the ornaments for our state Christmas tree at this year's National Christmas Tree display in Washington, D.C. With input from our clients, the staff created over 50 ornaments to help decorate the trees honoring the 56 states, territories and districts that make up our nation. In addition, one special ornament was chosen for the tree at the White House Visitor's Center.

"This project was a very enjoyable and fun experience," said Erin Rutherford, a social work intern who helped decorate the ornaments. "Staff showed such creativity when making their ornaments that it made me feel very lucky to be working alongside them. It was also exciting to be a part of a project where your agency's work is representing the entire state. No other agency was given the opportunity to design the ornaments that represented Hawaii. I feel privileged that I could be a part of something so exclusive. What a great way to help get SWCC into the public spotlight!"

This story even made the news on two local TV channels: KHON and KITV. You can view the Channel 4 video clip at <http://www.kitv.com/video/21648730/index.html>.

UH basketball players came to the Center to talk story, sign autographs and shoot some hoops with SWCC youths.



NEW PROGRAM: *Hawaii Student Athlete Mentoring Project*

SWCC has launched a new project called the *University of Hawaii Student Athlete Mentoring Project*. The project aims to motivate and inspire our youths to start thinking about their future by having them interact with student athletes from the University of Hawaii. The first session in October brought together several UH men's basketball players with our youths. The players came to our Center and spoke to youths about the importance of school and life as a college athlete. Afterwards, the players did a shoot around with the youths and signed autographs. In the upcoming months, we plan to visit the different athletic complexes at the University, have athletes from other sports continue to visit our Center and even attend some of the upcoming sports events. For more information about the project, please call Kris Kiyono at 847-1535.



Left & Right Photos: Attendees enjoy the music of local band Ten Feet at the Lights on After School Concert.



LIGHTS ON AFTER SCHOOL CONCERT

All the lights were on at SWCC for the "Lights on After School Concert" on October 22, 2009. SWCC joined with other organizations across the United States to support the 10th annual nationwide Lights on Afterschool Initiative to raise awareness about the importance of after-school programs for children and youth and the need for continued funding of such programs.

The SWCC Lights on Afterschool Concert featured the popular local band, Ten Feet, who graciously donated their time and talent to this event. The evening also included performances by Soulvibe, a band made up of six students from Farrington High School, singer Arshiel Calatrava, a freshman at Farrington High School and the YMCA B-Boys from Kalihi YMCA.

Organizations from the community that support and provide afterschool programs in Kalihi were invited to set up informational booths for the concert attendees to learn about the various services and resources available. More than 150 children, youths and their families attended the event, sending a strong message to the wider community, policy makers and elected leaders for the need for quality after-school programs in our state. Mahalo nui loa to all who came out to support the event. It was a terrific turnout!

HALLOWEEN FUN

The recreation room of SWCC was transformed into a Haunted Maze for Halloween. The brave kids in our Drop-in program had no idea what the staff had in store for them. Even curious parents and other staff found themselves getting spooked in the Haunted Maze. Everyone enjoyed it, but the staff enjoyed putting it together even more. If you missed it this year, check us out in 2010! That is if you dare. BOOOOAHAAAAH!



"I survived the haunted maze!"

FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

A big mahalo to all the donors who gave to the *Foodland Give Aloha Program* in October. SWCC received over \$1,191 in donations to support our mission!



"Susie News" is the official publication of the Susannah Wesley Community Center and is printed four times a year. Susannah Wesley Community Center is an accredited, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) social services agency and a National Mission Agency of the United Methodist Church.

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