



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & NUTRITION NEWS



HAWAI'I PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION (PAN) NEWSLETTER

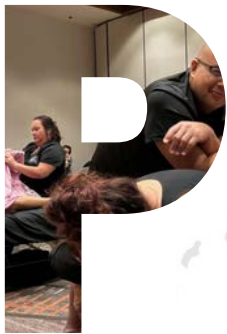
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This quarterly newsletter is brought to you by the Hawai'i State Department of Health, Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division, Primary Prevention Branch.

# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity

### HEAL GOES TO CENTRAL CALIFORNIA!



The Hawai'i Public Health Institute's (HIPHI) Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition coordinators, county planners, and engineers participated in a California Central Coast Mobile Tour in April 2024. The journey spanned from San Jose to Santa Barbara, allowing them to explore the built environment, housing infrastructure, and active living facilities of several key cities in Central California. The group learned from local experts about their innovative approaches to fostering happy, healthy, active communities and shared their unique perspectives.

The Mobile Workshop commenced in San Jose with a visit to the mixed-use community Rivermark Plaza. This community features a variety of housing styles, open green space with playground equipment, and a school. It is also within walking distance of various retail shops and restaurants.



The group visited Santa Cruz to discuss economic development and revitalization of downtown areas. They took a 10+ mile bike ride to gain a different perspective on street use by non-motorized vehicles. Monterey showed the usefulness of a multi-use path parallel to the main street, providing a safe space for cyclists and walkers to navigate the street. They also viewed an example of a public space restoration project and a community park, allowing community members to enjoy outdoor activities in a safe and family-friendly way. Finally, they arrived in San Luis Obispo just in time for a weekly downtown farmers' market, complete with entertainment, EBT purchases, and a bicycle valet. These successful elements inspired those working to improve food access in Hawai'i.

*RoAnn Vilorio, Patti Hatzistavrakis, Leigh Ann Lopez*  
*Hawai'i Public Health Institute*

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## ➤ Physical Activity

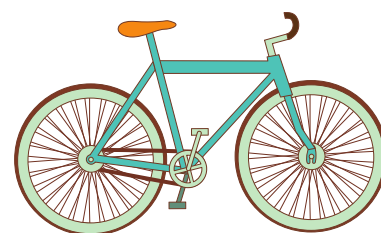
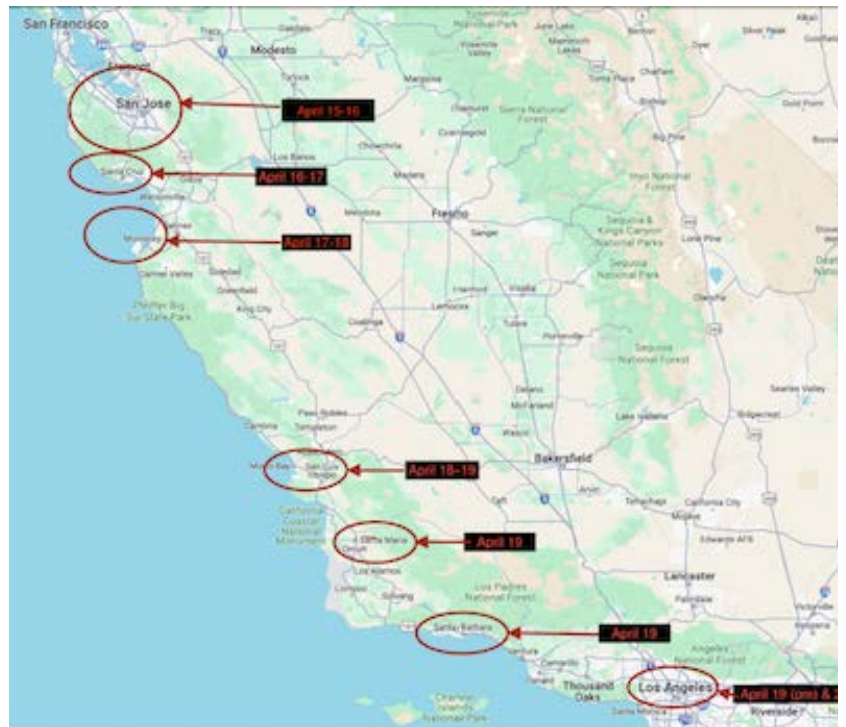
### HEAL GOES TO CENTRAL CALIFORNIA!



Santa Maria was the next stop on the journey. Staff from Bici Centro, a bicycle shop that invests in bike education and skill-building for the area's youth, spoke about their bicycle education program. They plan to expand the curriculum by partnering with Physical Education teachers. Bici Centro also offers in-shop positions to youth interested in building skills as bike mechanics. These two opportunities have proven beneficial to the young people and the greater community.

The Mobile Tour concluded in beautiful Santa Barbara with a visit to the main street, which was closed to vehicular traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic. The community is determining the future of this bikeable and walkable main street and whether to make it a permanent part of the street system.

The California Central Coast Mobile Workshop was a valuable learning experience for all participants, providing insights into the practical relationship between the built environment and public health. The trip offered comprehensive insights into mixed-use housing, homelessness, climate change, historical restoration, adaptive reuse, and post-COVID-19 developments. The experiences shared during the tour have inspired actionable next steps for Hawai'i, encouraging community-engaging processes and promoting equity and inclusion. The HEAL team is grateful for this immersive experience and looks forward to applying newfound insights to create positive change in our communities.



*RoAnn Vilorio, Patti Hatzistavarakis, Leigh Ann Lopez*  
*Hawai'i Public Health Institute*

# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity

### PĀ LAUKANAKA SUPPORTS HEALING ON MAUI



In the wake of the devastating wildfires on Maui last August, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Hawai'i has been involved in several community efforts to help those impacted by the tragedy. One unique and valued effort is a grassroots collective to provide and deploy traditional Native Hawaiian healing practices to those impacted by the Maui wildfires. The program connects Hawaiian cultural practitioners specializing in lomilomi (traditional massage) and ho'oponopono (conflict resolution) with those in the community affected by the Maui fires. One of the Native Hawaiian practitioners who has spent their career focused on healthcare innovations and health equity was very pleased to help secure partial funding of this program with a \$25,000 grant from UnitedHealthcare.

**Pā Laukanaka**, a program combining two traditional schools of learning, Pā Iwi Ola and Pā Ho'oponopono, has provided monthly Hawaiian healing sessions to the Lahaina community over the past six months. The sessions, which foster healing, respite, and aloha, have been provided by 10 practitioners each month, with 557 sessions to date, including 490 lomilomi sessions and 67 kūkākūkā (talk story) sessions. The program aims to help Maui residents recover from wildfires.



The community response has been positive, and many families and individuals frequently and regularly use these services. Online appointments have significantly increased and now account for 60% of current appointments, while 40% were walk-ins. In order to ensure a continuum of support for Maui as the community continues to heal, Pā Laukanaka has committed to providing these support services for one year on a regular basis.

The United Health Foundation has made a \$500,000 donation to the Hawai'i Community Foundation and Maui Food Bank following the wildfires. The UnitedHealth Group has also encouraged its employees to participate in the "United for Giving" program, which has contributed \$145,000 to causes focused on wildfire relief. The support was directed to the American Red Cross, Hawai'i Community Foundation, Maui Food Bank, Maui Humane Society, and Maui United Way. The UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Hawai'i is committed to improving the health system and promoting healthier lives.

*Kalani Redmayne, CEO*

*UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Hawai'i*

# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity

### BRIDGING THE GAP: BRINGING BIKE EDUCATION TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

Hawai'i Island HEAL Coalition recently collaborated with People for Active Transportation Hawai'i (PATH) through their Bike Ed program to promote active transportation among Hawai'i Island residents. PATH, a community-based, grassroots 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was established in 1986 to safely connect people and places on Hawai'i Island with pathways and bikeways. PATH has been instrumental in bringing bike education to rural communities across the island by empowering residents of all ages to embrace cycling as a means of transport, recreation, and wellness.



PATH was founded in 1986 in response to a growing need for places to walk, bike, and hike safely and legally in Hawai'i County. PATH has consistently worked towards enhancing the quality of life for Hawai'i Island residents by advocating for safer roads, creating accessible trails, and fostering a culture of physical activity.



PATH has launched its bike education program (Bike Ed), aimed at teaching essential cycling skills, safety practices, and the benefits of biking to individuals. The program is tailored to rural areas with limited infrastructure and resources, ensuring that even the most isolated communities can benefit from comprehensive bike education. Recently, PATH partnered with Hawai'i Island HEAL Coordinators to bring bike education to Kohala Elementary School, specifically for fourth-grade students. The program, led by West Hawai'i Island HEAL Coalition Coordinator Kealoha Madriaga, successfully educated 58 students during the first week of May. PATH's dedicated team of instructors and volunteers provides training on bike maintenance, road safety, and environmental stewardship. They also provide free helmets to children participating in the Bike Ed program, promoting safe cycling habits from an early age and removing financial barriers that might prevent some families from obtaining essential safety gear.

# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity, Cont'd

### BRIDGING THE GAP: BRINGING BIKE EDUCATION TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

The impact of PATH's Bike Ed program is evident in participants' positive feedback and success stories. Many individuals who once viewed biking as an unattainable or unsafe activity now embrace it as a regular part of their lives, enjoying its physical, mental, and environmental benefits. For children, the program fosters a sense of independence and confidence, while adults appreciate the practical advantages of having an alternative mode of transportation.

Looking ahead, PATH's dedication to bridging gaps and bringing bike education to rural communities on Hawai'i Island exemplifies the organization's broader mission of safely connecting people and places on Hawai'i Island with pathways and bikeways. By empowering individuals with the skills and knowledge to embrace cycling and providing free helmets to children, PATH enhances their quality of life and fosters a more connected, resilient community. As PATH continues to grow and evolve, its impact on Hawai'i Island will undoubtedly leave a lasting legacy of positive change.



# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity

### GET FIT KAUAI KALENA PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT STORY

In early 2018, a collaborative effort between Get Fit Kaua'i, HIPHI's HEAL Coalition of Kauai, Georgia Tech, and the Lihue Boys and Girls Club resulted in an 11-week health advocacy class for youth. Ten middle-schoolers from the club assessed their neighborhood and selected Kalena Park as their project site. They advocated for policy changes, leading to a presentation before the Kaua'i County Council and the acquisition of an \$80,000 grant for park renovations



The formation of Get Fit Kaua'i's diverse Kalena Park Community Action Group (KPCAG) brought together both youth and seniors, fostering a strong, health-focused community. Their active involvement set the stage for ongoing civic engagement, demonstrating the impact of youth participation on policy and community improvements.



Get Fit Kaua'i took the lead in revitalizing Kalena Park by collaborating with local organizations and residents. In August 2019, consultant Dr. David Barth engaged with various stakeholders to refine design concepts. His insights contributed to the vision and eventual implementation of the "Līhu'e Loop," a network connecting Kalena Park to other community spaces, promoting walkability and overall health.



# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity, Cont'd

### GET FIT KAUAI KALENA PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT STORY



Through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -Education (SNAP-Ed) funds from the Hawai'i State Department of Health, the Kalena Park Action Group was able to embark on a "quick build" project at the park. A Community Work Day drew over 100 volunteers from the community.



Upon completion of the project, the community experienced a heightened sense of pride. The entire island celebrated this grassroots initiative as a collective achievement in creating a safe recreational space. Community and business groups eagerly hosted events at the park, including fitness in the park, pickleball tournaments and movie nights





# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity, Cont'd

### GET FIT KAUAI KALENA PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT STORY



In 2023, Get Fit Kaua'i, HIPHI's HEAL Coalition of Kaua'i and Na Lei Wili Area Health Education Center (AHEC) secured a Community Development Block Grant from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to advance the Kalena Park improvement project. Utilizing the grant funds, the playground equipment and ground surfacing were replaced. Additionally, the removal of the fence along Malama Street and the installation of cement spheres and wheel stops further heightened the park's amenities. Landscape Structures and Exerplay were the contractors. Other project supporters included the County's Parks and Rec Department and Housing Agency, Pacific Playscapes, Inc., KickAss Concrete, Kaua'i Cares and many other partners and supporters.



BEFORE

AFTER



BEFORE

AFTER



# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## ➤ Physical Activity, Cont'd

### GET FIT KAUAI KALENA PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT STORY



A blessing of the new play structure at Kalena Park by cultural practitioner Sean Chun was held on Thursday, May 9, 2024. The blessing was attended by Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami, Kaua'i County Council members Bernard Carvalho Jr., Dr. Addison Bulosan, and representatives of the many hands that participated in making the structure come to life.



The revitalization of Kalena Park has had a profound impact on the community. What began as a youth-led grassroots initiative to assess neighborhood safety has grown to include numerous local organizations, businesses, and residents. Volunteers have become dedicated advocates for creating a welcoming outdoor space.

The completion of this project has instilled immense community pride, with every aspect having been shaped by local input through surveys and discussions. The anticipation was already high due to earlier upgrades, and finishing these significant tasks has only amplified the community's enthusiasm.

The revamped Kalena Park playground has become a beacon of hope, signaling to the community that their well-being and happiness are valued, ultimately cultivating a safer, healthier, and more cohesive environment for all to thrive. Kalena Park has such a great history, and it is a testament to what can happen when the government and the community come together for a common goal. Stay tuned for the next chapter of the Kalena Park Improvements Project!



# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, & INITIATIVES

## Nutrition



### LAUNCH OF THE MALA LA'AU OPEN HOUSE AT WAILUA HOMESTEADS PARK ON KAUAI

On June 19, 2024, the nonprofit group Understory Alliance with the support from the Get Fit Kaua'i Built Environment Task Force and the County of Kaua'i, launched the first-ever Māla Lā'au Open House at Wailua Homesteads Park!



Māla Lā'au is an ancient Hawaiian land management practice that mimics native Hawaiian forests by interplanting native plants with noninvasive food and culturally appropriate plants. This approach addresses climate equity and environmental justice issues while enhancing community health and sustainability. Nearly fifty community members participated in an event discussing ideas for a new Māla Lā'au at Wailua Homesteads Park. The discussions focused on creating a space rich in native plants for food, lei making, and medicine, culturally appropriate to Kaua'i and Wailua. The County of Kaua'i Planning Department also launched its East Kaua'i Community and Circulation Plan.



The organizing team extends heartfelt thanks to all who joined the open house and contributed their thoughts and mana'o on the Māla Lā'au at Wailua Homesteads Park! The Understory Alliance urges everyone to share their input to help shape this project. Together, we are advancing towards a healthier and more sustainable community!

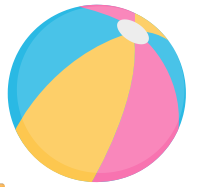




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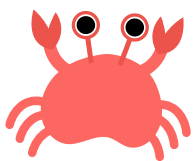


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**Your contributions are appreciated.**



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