

NORTH KOHALA COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

Empowering a thriving North Kohala

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 2025

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In the past year, the North Kohala Community Resource Center continued the important work of elevating the best parts of our Kohala community. NKCRC sponsored projects served our community through food distribution, historic preservation, athletics, performing arts and much more, all while bringing our community closer together. To make this all happen, the North Kohala Community Resource Center secured grant funding, and provided administrative support to project coordinators so they can focus on what they do best: making a difference in Kohala.

We are very grateful for the countless hours our staff and volunteer project coordinators

dedicate to teaching our keiki and caring for our kupuna. It is inspiring to see the community's "can do" attitude shown every day in the Resource Center's work.

Despite our successes, the challenges of fundraising for essential community-level work remain significant. Increasing donor skepticism toward non-profit work and federal budget cuts have already negatively impacted our projects.

I firmly believe the antidote to skepticism and frustration during difficult times is to come together and support one another. That's why I'm asking you to take a few minutes and read and learn about the wonderful work our projects are doing in this



annual report. Next, please consider donating to NKCRC and our sponsored projects so we can continue to meet our community's needs and promote a thriving North Kohala.

Mahalo,
Nathan

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As I complete my first year as Executive Director of NKCRC, I am grateful for the trust and support of our board, staff, and community. This year has been one of growth, connection, and renewed commitment to our mission.

A key milestone was reopening our building's restrooms to the public after their closure due to COVID. With

increased visitors to Hawi, this has provided a much-needed resource for the community.

We also strengthened our leadership team with Kathy Matsuda's promotion to Director of Kohala Resilience and Outreach and the addition of Kimilee Vakauta as Kohala Resilience Hub Coordinator.

Their roles will enhance our ability to support local families.

This year, we conducted strategic planning and updated our mission to "Empower a thriving North Kohala." This reaffirms our commitment to uplifting and supporting our community, ensuring NKCRC continues to serve as a trusted resource. Our new goals focus on expanding resources, increasing community engagement, and strengthening

partnerships to create a more resilient and self-sustaining Kohala.

Beyond North Kohala, I have also taken on a leadership role with the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawai'i (JCCIH) to build stronger ties between Hilo and our supporters across the island. This connection allows us to expand resources and partnerships that benefit NKCRC and the broader Hawai'i Island community.

I sincerely thank our board and staff for their trust in me. Their dedication, passion, and belief in our mission make everything we do possible. Leading NKCRC is an honor, and I'm excited for what's ahead.

Mahalo for your support.
Leelen Park

KOHALA RESILIENCE HUB

2024 Highlights:

Health & Wellness: Our regular group keeps the community informed and active, organizing events that boost well-being.

Youth & Education: We hosted a fantastic Ohana Fun Day with over 30 vendors, a Keiki Day Camp filled with learning, and a Resilience Academy training for teens.

Community Support: We distributed 200 food bags through Kaukau 4 Keiki, formed a certified Chainsaw Team for emergencies, provided COVID-19 tests and Narcan, and held a women's self-defense class.

Fun Events: We celebrated Grandparent's Day, Halloween Spooktacular, and Christmas with a Toy Drive @ Santa's Workshop.

A huge mahalo to everyone who's supported us! I'm especially grateful to work alongside Kimilee Vakauta, our amazing Kohala Resilience Hub Coordinator.

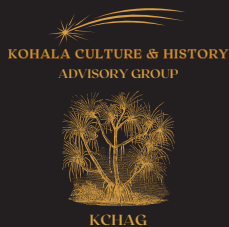
Swing by the Resource Center sometime to chat and hear about what's coming up.

Mahalo, Kathy Matsuda,

Director of Kohala Resilience Hub & Outreach



NEW PROJECTS 2024



KOHALA CULTURE AND HISTORY ADVISORY GROUP

KCHAG was established in August of 2023 to advise the North Kohala Community Development Plan Advisory Group's planning process and serve as a communication hub and support for the County and other culture and history groups in North Kohala. Our mission is to protect, preserve, and perpetuate historic and cultural resources in North Kohala for today and future generations.



KOHALA INDEPENDENT FILM PROJECT seeks to empower independent filmmaking in Kohala and, in doing so, present authentic Hawaiian stories to its communities. KIFP aims to harness the artistic potential of filmmaking to express culture, foster community, and stimulate the economy through storytelling. They plan to complete the film "Kealoha Disappears" by 2025 and are currently working on an additional project.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ABROAD

This program allows high school students to travel to other countries with their classmates. Students visit historical and cultural sites around the world, participating in unforgettable experiences. They hope to start fundraising soon to cover at least half the travel costs of some students.

PROJECT UPDATES



AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROUP met monthly with over 30 community members attending at least one meeting. Out of these monthly meetings, the Kohala Community Land Trust was born. The goal of the Land Trust is to remove land and property from the speculative real estate market to be held in a trust for the benefit of North Kohala residents for generations to come. More info available at www.kohalacommunitylandtrust.org.

KOHALA FITNESS CENTER purchased a new commercial recumbent stationary bicycle and received a donation of six workout machines from the Mauna Lani gym. Their goal for 2025 is to make the space more available for the community with extended hours based on what the Hisaoka Gym staff can provide.

ENGINEERING RESOURCES assisted the Māhukona Crane Restoration Project with a topographical survey, site inspection, and an assessment of the harbor structure. This project also upgraded two legacy residential wastewater systems.

E ULU PU ANA

In 2024, the educational cooperative supported the academic journey of 35 ohana, provided over 500 hours of academic support in ELA, math, and sciences and over 300 hours of Ha'awina Hawai'i support including 'Oleo Hawai'i classes, ukulele lessons, hula classes, and huaka'i around the island to a variety of culturally significant sites, events, and organizations: Imiloa, Kiholo, Pu'ukohola, Volcanoes National Park, Aha 'Aina o Niuli'i Lo'i restoration, Merrie Monarch, Hoemana Paddling, etc. They hope to raise enough funds in 2025 to buy a 15-passenger van.





HEALTH AS A PRIORITY delivers crucial public health services to underserved communities, primarily funded by their chief clinical officer, Dr. Colson. To ensure financial sustainability Dr. Colson has undertaken international locum work in 2024. They've acquired land and developed plans for a new clinic in East Hawaii but require additional funding to complete the project. This new facility will enable them to serve patients from Kohala to Kea'au, significantly broadening their impact and fulfilling their mission of accessible healthcare.

NORTH KOHALA STUDENT CULTURAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM served nearly 660 students by giving them field trips to cultural sites and live shows at Kahilu Theatre. NKSCEP donated much-needed supplies and program funding to teachers in Kohala Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, including: art supplies, books, STEM and math programming, culinary equipment, furniture, and more.

KOHALA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT had a productive 2024. They delivered more than 100 hours of after-school instruction, capturing 22 kupuna interviews. "This is Kohala" garnered over 15,000 views on PBS, and two student films will be featured in the Hawaii International Film Festival Opio Fest Student Showcase in April 2025. They also secured two National Endowment for the Humanities grants for 2025, one for a documentary on food's cultural impact, "A Taste of Kohala," and another to document stories of climate change in Kohala.



DISCOVERY GARDEN AT KES served 400 K to 5th-grade students, offering hands-on outdoor education and inspiration, inviting youth to explore and enrich their connection to the natural world. They fed every class and sent them home with food for their families, which students helped plant, tend, and harvest. They also completed fencing the entire three-acre farm, which is now pig free, allowing them to increase production. In 2025, KES Garden will participate in a pilot snack cart program with the Kohala Food Hub in the fall.

KOHALA COMMUNITY PLAN conducted a workshop with the CDP Advisory Group to mobilize community input into the draft General Plan and submitted comments to the General Plan regarding land use maps. They engaged with all community plan sub-groups to identify and define goal

REMEMBER THROUGH MUSIC donated seven MP3 Player programs to kupuna. They do need a computer to load music to the MP3 players and will continue to fundraise.

The **2025 KOHALA REUNION** will be from July 4 - 6, 2025. This year's theme is "Kohala Aina Momona" which emphasizes the rich, abundant land we have to feed our people. As usual, it will be an eventful gathering full of entertainment.





KOHALA KAMEHAMEHA DAY CELEBRATION is preparing for a wonderful celebration on June 11, 2025. The ho'olaule'a will take place at Kamehameha Park.

NKCERT has grown to 21 members and is one of the largest community emergency response teams on the Big Island. They are keeping active via monthly meetings and collaborating with Civil Defense on broader training initiatives.

GIVE & GROW DISCOVERY hosted adventure camps and Friday nature school in 2024, as well as putting on their already famous Moonlit Quest. In 2025, the school will offer its first theatre program called Theatre For All, which provides kids 8-14 a chance to shine, on stage. Their 2025 camps were made possible through a generous donation from the Kukio Fund.

KOHALA CARES is dedicated to serving the community by consistently providing 150-250 grocery bags to those in need every Tuesday at St. Augustine's Church. Looking ahead to 2025, they plan to expand their services by offering a monthly community meal at the same location.

KOHALA RIDE WILD CLUB successfully executed a community-focused Fall Festival and expanded program outreach, educating over 50 children. They also facilitated a neighborhood Christmas parade. 2025 initiatives include a Fall Festival and a Rodeo Show.



RYUKYUKOKU MATSURI DAIKO KOHALA held fifteen performances in 2024 and also visited Oahu and Kauai. They hope to raise more funds in 2025, which will enable them to attend even more events. Their current enrollment is at 19, nearly returning to pre-pandemic levels.

KOHALA RADIO held a successful fundraiser in 2024. Roughly twenty dedicated volunteer DJ's continue to provide programming from 8am - 10pm each day on 96.1 FM.

KOHALA UNUPA'A provides Kohala students with opportunities to engage in scientific inquiry and apply place-based environmental management practices. Kohala Unupa'a continued their after-school environmental action projects and are looking forward to their annual Summer Camps.

LIO LAPA'AU maintained its commitment to providing therapeutic horsemanship instruction and horseback riding lessons to youth and adolescents with special needs. Furthermore, the organization has integrated the 4H horsemanship curriculum into its existing lesson structure.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dennis Matsuda

Kathleen Matsuda

Desiree Medeiros

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Amy Meyer-Sullivan

Nani Svendsen

IN 2024 NKCRC RAISED
\$341,711.10

FOR 35 COMMUNITY PROJECTS.
GREAT WORK TEAM!

Your support makes the valuable work of the Resource Center in our North Kohala community possible. To donate head over to www.northkohala.org/donate or write a check to NKCRC, P.O. Box 519, Hawi, HI 96719



MAHALO TO OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS FOR 2024

He 'ōpū hālau - A house-like stomach. A heart as big as a house. Said of a person who is kind, gracious, and hospitable. *'Ōlelo No'eau (869) Pukui, Mary Kawena, 'Ōlelo No'eau Hawai'i*

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Aloha Man
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Arakaki Store
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Big Island Toyota
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Body Glove Cruises
Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope
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Hilton Grand Vacations
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Kahua Pa'a Mua, Inc
Kapaau Veterinary Center
KARES
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Merriman's Restaurant
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Morgan Stanley Gift Fund
Na Kupuna o Kohala
Nanea Golf
North Kohala Golf Park
North Kohala National Guard Alumni

Ocean Sports
One Project
PayPal Giving Fund
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Pllates of Hawaii
Pua Ka Ilima Sailing Charter
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Raise Your Vibration
Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund
Richard Foundation
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Takata Store, Inc.
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The Benevity Community Impact Fund
The Denver Foundation
The Fairmont Orchid
The Fish Hopper Restaurant
The Village Course at Waikoloa
The William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill
Foundation, Inc.
Tommy Bahama
Touching The Earth Land Co.
Vanguard Charitable
Vibrant Hawai'i
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Waikoloa Beach Resort Golf
Waikoloa Marriott
Waimea Coffee Company
Watterson Painting
Whale Crossing B&B Rental



KOHALA FOOD & MUSIC FESTIVAL

AUG 2, 2025
@KAMEHAMEHA
PARK
ENTERTAINMENT BY:
KALA'E + KALENA
KŪ MA'EMA'E
& MORE

details to follow

SUMMER GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING WORKSHOP

This summer we're offering a five-part series including Project Planning, Building Budgets, Finding Funders, Writing Successful Proposals, and a Master Proposal Review. Workshops are free to organizers of sponsored projects and will be held during the month of June at the Center. For more information or to register for classes, please contact us.

NORTH KOHALA COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

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