Growing Deep Roots

In early January, during the annual Spirit and Service Series of chapels, students in K – grade 12 heard an inspiring message about the importance of developing good character and strength. The guest speakers were John Leong ’96 and Julianna Rapu ’97 Leong, co-founders of Kupu, a nonprofit that aims to empower youth through character building, service learning and environmental stewardship. The Leongs spoke about a‘ali‘i, a native plant that uses its energy to send roots deep in the soil rather than to develop a showy canopy. The deep roots enable the plant to withstand strong winds, just as good character can help students withstand difficult times in life. Inspired by the idea of growing deep roots, and challenged by the Leongs to take actions to care for their island environment, students in grades 6 and 12 worked with Gail Peiterson, co-director of Gates Science Workshop, to plant a‘ali‘i seeds. “The planting container chosen for the seedlings was a dibble tube, a specialized tool used by people in environmental restoration work,” said Peiterson. Just as the Leongs encouraged students to develop their own strong value systems, the narrow dibble tube encourages deeper root development in seedlings and helps each plant build the stability that will serve it well as it matures. Nurtured at Rocky Hill, these seedlings will grow in the tubes until next year when sixth-graders will plant them in the Waianae mountains during their Outdoor Education experience at Camp Timberline.

When you plant a seed of love, it is you that blossoms. — Ma Jaya Sati
Wearable Words

As the Punahou chaplains and Luke Center staff wondered how they might deepen the community’s thinking about the annual service theme of Advancing Literacy, a simple bracelet featuring an uplifting word caught Luke Center Assistant Director Terry Yamamoto-Edwards’ eye. With messages in K – 12 chapels about the power of words, Luke Center became a flurry of magazine clippings, re-used tagboard and tape. Students of all ages visited and chose just the right word or phrase, attached it to a strip of paper and made a bracelet to either wear themselves or pass on to someone who could benefit from it. One student in Hawaiian Studies chose ‘olelo no’eau to share with all of her family.

Students also used the bracelets as reminders to bring in books for the Book Drive. Over 100 boxes of gently used books were collected. Recipients of these books included Ala Wai Elementary School, Hawaii Literacy, Read Aloud America, the Women’s Community Correctional Center, Next Step Shelter, Kapi‘olani Medical Center and Shriners Hospitals for Children.

A Friendly Welcome

During all hours of the day, students, faculty, staff and campus visitors walk by the welcoming, always-open doors of the Luke Center for Public Service. Many stop to ask about the work done at the Center and how they can help. Simple craft projects meant to brighten the day for others, like holiday card-making for Hawaii Meals on Wheels and Kapi‘olani Medical Center, have drawn a variety of creative helpers and provide an opportunity for service during the school day. When a group of fourth-graders began regularly volunteering during their recess time, they naturally wondered where their creations were going. They learned that every new patient at the nearby Shriners Hospitals for Children receives a small bag filled with items to make a hospital stay less intimidating. The fourth-graders created personalized welcome tags for the bags, and Luke Center Administrative Coordinator Chandra Hanlin ‘84 Peters arranged for a student field trip to visit the Shriners facility on Punahou Street, meet the staff and hear about the youngsters who would receive their tags. Even though they aren’t old enough to volunteer at the hospital, the students got a deeper understanding about how their recess artwork is serving to provide a friendly welcome to other young people.
An Environmental Mission

Since the opening of Luke Center for Public Service in 2004, part of its mission has been to help people understand issues related to environmental sustainability. Joining the effort this year was Jodi Malinoski. An intern with the Rewarding Internships for Sustainable Employment (RISE) Fellows Program at Kupu, Malinoski worked with the Luke Leader Green Team, students who have taken a special interest in helping Punahou become more environmentally sustainable. She has been a passionate role model for students, sharing stories of her own actions as the Rise Above Plastics coordinator for the O‘ahu chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, and speaking about legislative advocacy on behalf of issues related to protection of the environment. In addition to working with Luke Leaders, Malinoski spent time with Marion Lyman-Mersereau’s ’70 eighth-grade students and Dave Strang’s Academy Marine Biology class. She shepherded the continued collaboration between students and Cafeteria staff about the viability of a campus biocomposter, and has helped Luke Center staff gather valuable data about the progress of the Punahou community as it works toward 2016 Sustainability Goals.
Stepping Toward Sustainability

Every day, myriad actions take place on campus demonstrating individual and collective care for the planet. Students dig in and harvest classroom gardens; custodians clean with environmentally sensitive products; and teachers walk or bike to campus instead of driving. The Luke Center issued a call for photos of these sustainable actions on Earth Day 2015 as a way to collect and document steps toward sustainability. In partnership with Gates Science Workshop, Luke Center sponsored Malama Honua Week, May 11 – 15, offering activities and field trips designed to tell the stories of ways the School is being sustainable and to celebrate the efforts everyone is making, daily choosing ways to make a difference for ku’u home.