

## Hawai'i School Garden Hui

*Nancy Redfeather, Kōhala Center*

Hawai'i now has a School Garden Network on every island, and Network Coordinators are working together to align vision, goals, curriculum, professional training and policy at both the state and local levels. The vision of the State School Garden Hui is to assist in the transformation of agricultural education by building K-12 programs that will renew our relationship to food, farming, and a local agricultural economy, shift student health measures, and raise academic achievement. Ultimately these educational programs will create a green jobs initiative, and grow youth that are ready to carry on the building of a sustainable and ecological food system statewide. Today, the average age of Hawaii's farmer is 59, our children's health and academic achievement continues to decline, as does our connection to land and nature. With the growing interest in a local food movement rising from communities all over Hawai'i, it is time to work together to embrace change. State agencies, institutions, and non-profits are beginning to work together to plan and implement systemic change that will work to improve the lives of our children and our children's children.

Here on Hawai'i Island 50 out of 75 schools public/private/charter K-12 have started planning, building, or expanding garden programs within their schools. In 2008 school gardens on Hawai'i Island had planted 1/2 acre, today we have over 15 1/2 acres planted. From just a few hundred pounds harvested in 2008, by the end of the last school year, gardens had grown and harvested almost 30,000 pounds of food serving over 4,000 students. This food was eaten by the children and youth, sent home to families, sold in Student Farmer's Markets, donated to Food Banks, and used for school events. What a child grows they will eat. School Garden Programs are paving the way for change to occur in school lunch programs, and in community food systems statewide.



The following organizations and Networks form the Hawai'i School Garden Hui:

- Kaua'i School Garden Network - Malama Kaua'i - Tiana Kamen ([tiana@malamakauai.org](mailto:tiana@malamakauai.org))
- O'ahu School Garden Network - 'Aina in the Schools ([aina@kokuahawaiifoundation.org](mailto:aina@kokuahawaiifoundation.org))
- Maui/Moloka'i/Lana'i School Garden Network - Lehn Huff ([MSGN@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:MSGN@hawaii.rr.com))
- Hawai'i Island School Garden Network - The Kohala Center - Nancy Redfeather ([nredfeather@kohalacenter.org](mailto:nredfeather@kohalacenter.org)), Donna Mitts ([dmitts@kohalacenter.org](mailto:dmitts@kohalacenter.org))
- Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools - Jenna Ishii ([jenna@hais.org](mailto:jenna@hais.org))
- Hoa 'Aina O Mākaha - Gigi Cocquio ([lcocquio@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:lcocquio@hawaii.rr.com))
- Ma'o Organic Farms - Kukui Maunakea-Forth ([kukui@maoorganicfarms.org](mailto:kukui@maoorganicfarms.org))

[School Gardens](#) by Lisa Marie Dahm, West Hawaii Today, Nov 28, 2010.

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