

## Farm to School/School Garden Networks

*Nancy Redfeather, Kōhala Center*

Farm to School/School Garden Networks have sprouted and grown on 5 Islands in Hawai'i. In this past year, Network Coordinators and Partners created a Statewide Hui and Strategic Plan for 2012-2013 aligning their vision, goals, work plan, policy development, and professional training needs. The vision of the statewide Hui is to assist in the transformation of agricultural education by building Pre- K-12 programs that will renew our relationship to food, farming, and a local agricultural economy, and raise student health and academic achievement. Ultimately these educational programs will help create a new 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 are challenged, as well as their connections to nature and land stewardship that are currently not academic priorities. With growing interest in building a local food movement rising from communities all over Hawai'i, it is time to work together to support change. State agencies, institutions, and non-profits have begun to work together to plan and implement systemic change that will improve the lives of our children and future generations. The newly created Farm to School and School Garden Task Force recently met with the assistance and support of the Department of Health's "Healthy Hawai'i Initiative" creating 4 working groups, and a work plan and timeline for 2012-2013. A Statewide Survey of all School Garden Networks is currently underway and a Summary of the metrics is expected to be completed by the fall of 2012. Currently statewide, according to a recent HDOH survey, 66% of all schools have school learning gardens.

Here on Hawai'i Island, 60 our to 75 schools public/private/charter K-12 have started planning, building, or expanding school learning gardens. In 2008 school gardens on Hawai'i Island were planted on 1/2 an acre combined. Today we have over 16 acres of food crops planted on school grounds. From just a few hundred pounds of food harvested in 2008, by the end of this past school year, school learning gardens had grown and harvested over 30,000 pounds of food and were serving over 4,000 students on Hawai'i Island alone. This food was eaten by the children and youth, sent home to families, sold in Student Farmer's Markets, donated to Food Banks, and were used for school events. What a child grows, they will eat. School Learning Gardens are paving the way for change to occur in school lunch programs, and in community food systems statewide. With enough support from state and local agencies, institutions, organizations, and community these programs can continue to develop in every school that has interest.

The following organizations and Networks form the Hawai'i Farm to School and School Garden Hui (HFSSGH)

- ▶ Kaua'i School Garden Network - Mālama Kaua'i - Colleen Carroll - [colleen@malamakauai.org](mailto:colleen@malamakauai.org)

- ▶ Kaua'i Farm to Pre-School Network - Tiana Kamen - [tiana@farmtokeiki.org](mailto:tiana@farmtokeiki.org)
- ▶ O'ahu School Garden Network - Grow Hawai'i - Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools - Leyla Cabugos - [leyla@hais.org](mailto:leyla@hais.org)
- ▶ Kokua Hawai'i Foundation - 'Aina in Schools - Lydi Morgan-Bernal - [lydi@kokuahawaiifoundation.org](mailto:lydi@kokuahawaiifoundation.org)
- ▶ Maui School Garden Network - Lehn Huff - [msgn@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:msgn@hawaii.rr.com)
- ▶ Moloka'i School Garden Network - Emilia Noordhoek - Sustainable Molokai - [emillia@sustainablemolokai.org](mailto:emillia@sustainablemolokai.org)
- ▶ Hawai'i Island School Garden Network - The Kohala Center - Nancy Redfeather - [nredfeather@kohalacenter.org](mailto:nredfeather@kohalacenter.org)
- ▶ Hoa 'Aina O Makaha - Gigi Cocquio - [lcocquio@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:lcocquio@hawaii.rr.com)
- ▶ Healthy Hawai'i Initiative - Department of Health - Jennifer Ryan School Coordinator - [jennifer.ryan@doh.hawaii.gov](mailto:jennifer.ryan@doh.hawaii.gov)
- ▶ Ma'o Organic Farms - Kukui Mauna Kea Forth - [kukui@maoorganicfarms.org](mailto:kukui@maoorganicfarms.org)
- ▶ CTAHR Master Gardeners - Anna Yorba - [asyorba@gmail.com](mailto:asyorba@gmail.com)
- ▶ Department of Education School Food Supervisor/State Lead National Farm to School Network - Dexter Kishida - [dexter@kokuahawaiifoundation.org](mailto:dexter@kokuahawaiifoundation.org)

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