

Stella and Roberto Rainville  
celebrating their son, DeMarques',  
high school graduation



## Employee K-12 and College Scholarships: Investing in Our Shared Future

A familiar face is returning to the beach club this summer with another year of study under his belt thanks to the generosity of the Kūki'o Community Fund Employee and Dependent Scholarship. DeMarques Ballesteros, seasonal food and beverage employee and son of Stella Rainville, longtime pastry cook, just completed his second year pursuing a bachelor of science in entrepreneurial studies at Grand Canyon University. "Over the past two years, and with the introduction of the COVID-19 pandemic, my college experience has been eventful, including moving home early my freshman year and starting blended learning my sophomore year. Luckily, my school has done a very good job keeping campus life safe and fun."

DeMarques knew at a young age how special a place Kūki'o is, "Kūki'o has been my life for quite some time. My biological father worked in security here in my younger years, too. The Kūki'o Community Fund has been able to help my family to take away a lot of stress from tuition costs and allows me to have time to focus more on my studies."



In his younger years, the Kūki'o K-12 scholarship provided DeMarques and his family the opportunity to pursue a private education that would have otherwise been out of reach, "They knew they were going to have to sacrifice a lot for me to attend that school and they did it willingly." This switch led DeMarques to join extracurricular activities throughout his high school career that ranged from sports, performing arts, and student leadership, laying a foundation for educational success, "All of these things were able to help me develop the leadership and communication skills that I use now."

DeMarques' mom, Stella, began working at Kūki'o in November of 2016 during her last year of Culinary school at Pālanui, "As a teen mom, I didn't have the opportunity to go to college right after graduating high school, but eventually found a passion in baking and decided to get a degree 20 years later now that my boys are grown."

Stella and the entire family are incredibly grateful to the generosity of the Kūki'o membership, "The Kūki'o Community Fund has definitely impacted our family in a good way. It has taken a huge financial burden off us. We've been blessed by the fund through DeMarques' high school years and now with college. I would like to personally thank the members of Kūki'o for investing in future generations with their generosity. It truly has been a blessing for us and for many other families."

Since 2017, 15 Kūki'o employees and dependents have received \$116,000 in Kūki'o Community Fund Scholarships to pursue college degrees and training.

Your generosity made this and many more successful educational opportunities possible. Thank you, Kūki'o!

The Kūki'o Community Fund was established at the Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) in 2001 as a way for Kūki'o members to connect with the surrounding Hawai'i Island community through meaningful charitable giving opportunities. **We focus on the young people of Hawai'i Island because their success has a ripple effect on the entire community. By supporting education and youth development, the Kūki'o Community Fund increases the success of local youth in school, in work, and in life.**

Thanks to contributions from Kūki'o members, the Hawai'i Island community has benefited from over \$5.8 million through grants from our Kūki'o Community Fund. Currently, grants are used to support exceptional organizations that provide youth development programs on Hawai'i Island and to boost education success through Career Connected Learning, the Elama Program at Pālanui, college scholarships for Kūki'o employees, and K-12 scholarships for dependents of Kūki'o employees.

Kūki'o members and local community leaders volunteer their wisdom, time and funds to lead the growth and oversee the grants of our fund. The committee is led and facilitated by HCF's Hawai'i Island-based staff who provide a local, professionally-managed, and cost effective mechanism for the fund's grantmaking and operations.

Learn more at <https://www.hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/strengthening/kukiofund>