



 85° Broken Clouds



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Touched by many Angels

Group continues to open hearts, checkbooks to schools

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Photo courtesy Rick Cox

Ke Kula Niihau is a small public charter school in

Posted: Wednesday, June 29, 2016 1:45 am | Updated: 12:41 pm, Wed Jun 29, 2016.

The Garden Island | 1 comment

PRINCEVILLE — The note, just few words, was priceless to Ric Cox and the Aloha Angels.

“My class and I are thankful because you care so much about us that you gave us \$700. That’s a lot of money! I can’t believe you worked so hard to get \$700 and then gave it to us. Thank you!”

That was just one of the many notes received by Aloha Angels since school ended, many of them accompanied by colorful drawings.

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- Yes. A text label, symbol or electronic code readable by smartphone that indicates food contains GMOs and where to get information about the ingredients is fine.
- No. The ingredients should be clearly listed on the label so consumers can easily read them.
- Maybe. Just eat organic and don't worry about it.

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Kekaha, on Kauai's West Side. One of the teachers was the recipient of school supplies for her classroom during the 2015-2016 school year.



“The money our donors give to fund those clubs, and classrooms, is an excellent investment in the future of our keiki and of Kauai,” said Ric Cox, Aloha Angels president.

At the start of the school year, 225 teachers at 12 Kauai public elementary schools and their 5,000 students received \$195,000 from Aloha Angels, a donor advised fund at the Hawaii Community Foundation.

Of that, \$160,000 was earmarked to reimburse teachers for classroom supplies and field trips.

The remaining \$35,000 compensated teachers for mentoring 60 after-school clubs at seven schools. Activities included art, dance, sports, music, reading, crafts and cooking. But the emphasis was on creating closer relationships, Cox said.

Among the most generous donors in 2015-16: the Rotary clubs of Kapaa, Poipu Beach and Hanalei Bay; Hale Uluwehi Charitable Fund; Saltchuk Companies of Hawaii; and Jonathan McRoberts.

Last year, Aloha Angels also awarded grants of \$26,000 to the Kauai chapter of Hawaii Society for Technology in Education, for teacher training; \$25,000 to Junior Achievement Kauai, for classes in financial literacy; \$23,000 to Growing Our Own Teachers on Kauai, to support teacher candidates while they are student teaching; and \$10,000 to other projects.

Total distributed to date: \$279,000.

“Our fundraising goal for the 2016-17 school year is \$500,000,” said Cox, a retiree and a Rotarian. “That’s ambitious, but our inspiration comes from two quotations: ‘Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it, you will land among the stars.’ And ‘If not us, who? If not now, when?’”

“Our best hope of achieving that breathtakingly bold goal is to enlist the support of philanthropic individuals and institutions, on and off Kauai,” he said. “Opening their hearts, and their checkbooks, to nurture Kauai’s keiki is the dream, and the challenge, that gets me going every day.”

Cox said the funds had an impact, and had stacks of letters from students and teachers to prove it. Some of the notes read:

w “I will never forget Aloha Angels.”

w “I felt overwhelmed with happiness from your sweet gesture.”

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w “It matters the world to me that our community values education so highly.”

w “It’s nice to feel that we are loved.”

Students showed improvement in and out of the classroom as a result of the help from Aloha Angels.

“The most difficult student made tremendous gains,” wrote one teacher. “Before, he had no self-control, violent outbursts and the self-concept that no one loved him. Now, he is more confident, is in control of his emotions and takes pride in knowing that he has talent and there are people who care about him.”

Cox said they are off to a terrific start with their annual campaign that begins July 1. Gifts and pledges already total more than \$125,000. Several donors have renewed their commitments without being asked.

“Our ultimate goal,” said Cox, “is to create an endowment that will allow us to give away one million dollars every year, to form a more perfect Kauai.”

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