

Hawaii Tribune Herald

Features

Motto: Recycle, reuse, keep it green!

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Awards go to isle residents 'getting with the program'

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Recycle Hawai'i and Earth-Friendly Schools Hawai'i recently recognized the 2009 recipients of the Keeping It Green Hawai'i awards.

Keeping It Green is a program that highlights projects and activities of schools, organizations, businesses and government agencies that promote recycling, resource awareness and sustainable practices on the island of Hawaii.

The objective of the program is to recognize the positive "green projects" that are being implemented on the island of Hawaii.

"This recognition can help motivate others on the island to create events, activities and projects that care for our environment and address local and global issues such as the energy crisis, climate change, the loss of natural habitat and the preservation and perpetuation of indigenous peoples' cultures," said Paul J. Buklarewicz, executive director of Recycle Hawai'i.

The awardees for 2009 are Bond Memorial Library, Goodwill Industries of Hawai'i Inc., Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, Jack's Diving Locker, Malama o Puna, Peck Tunes LLC and White Sands Construction, Inc. Participating schools this year are Ka 'Umeke Ka'eo Public Charter School, Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Pu'ohala, Kua o Ka La Public Charter School, Keaau High School and Waimea Country School.

To be recognized for the Keeping It Green Hawai'i award, you must meet at least three of the following criteria: Practice the "3 Rs": reduce, reuse, recycle; protect the native Hawaiian forest; promote organic farming; develop alternative energy; support sustainable industry and green building practices; implement energy and resource conservation practices; create open space "greenways"; support youth programs implementing service learning projects designed to protect natural resources; educate the community about climate change and envision solutions; honor and respect native Hawaiian gathering rights and cultural practices.

"Recycle Hawai'i was pleased to work with Earth-Friendly Schools Hawai'i again this year in recognizing some of the great work that is being done in our community to address issues concerning the environment and sustainability," said Buklarewicz.

"We see a continually growing interest by Hawaii schools, community organizations and businesses to promote green practices and sustainability. We will be compiling and sharing action plans to serve as models in taking eco-responsibility at businesses, homes and other places in our community. Look for updates on our <http://www.recyclehawaii.org> Web site, he said.

"Twelve new schools and organizations have been added to the program since its inception in 2008, with a total of two dozen groups being recognized for their sustainability efforts on Hawaii Island. A new round of awardees will be announced by June, 2010."

Top-ranking models for the program this year include Waimea Country School's "Green Plan" that involves faculty, staff and students in actively promoting the 3-Rs, including Level 1 (kindergarten) students collecting food waste at the end of every school day to be added to their worm bin and composting unit. The resulting compost is used in their on-campus garden, where the children plant everything from carrots to sweet potatoes, thereby learning that composting is an important part of the cycle.

Bond Memorial Library in Kapaau, in addition to implementing the 3Rs for more earth-friendly library operations, has focused on educational programs promoting sustainable agriculture in North Kohala and plans to install photovoltaic panels, state-of-the-art windmills and water catchment qualifying for the LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Silver Award for the construction of the new North Kohala Public Library.

Librarian Janet Lam noted that during July and August, the Friends of Bond Memorial Library are working the HI5 redemptions at the Ka'auhuhu transfer station in Hawi as a fundraising effort.



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Recycle Hawai'i and Earth-Friendly Schools Hawai'i recently recognized the 2009 recipients of the Keeping It Green Hawai'i awards. Above, Ellisa Sumitami recycles at Good Will Industries Inc. in Hilo - Paul Buklarewicz/Recycle Hawai'i Photo

Goodwill Industries of Hawaii Inc. not only became one of the most recent state-certified redemption centers for HI5 beverage containers, but also has a "Keeping It Green Hawaii" Committee that plans and implements a comprehensive 3R program at its Hilo-based operations. Committee members include JoYi Rhyss, Ronnie Relles, Rob Guzman, Gret Dicey and Betty Williams.

Malama o Puna, headquartered in Pahoehoe, is a co-sponsor of the annual Puna Sustainability Expo, and is one of the few organizations that can cite examples of all of the "Keeping It Green Hawaii" criteria. President Rene Siracusa invites everyone to visit their Web site for more information on this grassroots organization's efforts at <http://www.malamaopuna.org>.

The Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce had more than 2,700 visitors to its first 'E Malama 'aina Festival, with bigger plans for its second event to be held Nov. 7 in Hilo.

Jack's Diving Locker in Kailua-Kona reported more than a dozen "Keeping It Green Hawaii" practices and plans, including using biodegradable products for cleaning their boats, and installing solar-powered attic fans for more efficient office air conditioning. White Sands Construction Inc. has been working closely with Recycle Hawaii in diverting leftover useable construction materials from island landfills.

For more information about Keeping It Green Hawaii, visit <http://www.recyclehawaii.org> or call 969-2012.

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