

MĀNOA HERITAGE CENTER

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER



Aloha kākou, dear friends,

This year began with a powerful milestone: our Visioning Wrap-Up in January brought together board members, staff, and community voices to imagine the future of Kūali'i—not only as a historic home, but as a vibrant space for learning, connection, and cultural stewardship. That day affirmed what we've long known: the spirit of this place continues to spark bold ideas and shared purpose.

Now, we move from vision to action. We're excited to announce the formation of two new working groups—the Facilities Committee and the Kūali'i Project Committee. These dedicated teams will help guide the thoughtful care and transformation of Kūali'i, from structural restoration to the visitor experience and beyond. As one participant shared during the Visioning Wrap-Up, "Kūali'i holds stories that deserve to be heard, honored, and shared." That spirit guides us as we move forward.

This process will take time, but each step brings us closer to creating something truly meaningful and enduring. As we look ahead, we're energized by what's to come—and grateful to have you with us. Please enjoy this issue of our newsletter and get a glimpse of the meaningful work underway at MHC.

With gratitude and aloha,
Lisa Solomine
Executive Director, Mānoa Heritage Center

Ka'aha'aina Connections:

MHC's First Artist-in-Residence Al Lagunero

Last November, MHC, in partnership with the Hawai'i Triennial 2025 (HT25), hosted Kanaka 'Ōiwi painter Al Lagunero as its first artist-in-residence. During his time here he created works for his series titled "Keauhou: A New Time," inspired by his great grandmother Ka'aha'aina-a-ka-haku Naihe, a traditional Hawaiian healer from Hawai'i Island. In 1874, her skills helped to save the life of Charles Montague Cooke, Jr. (Monte) who was born prematurely. Monte went on to become a renowned malacologist studying kähuli, Hawai'i's native snails, at Bishop Museum and built Kūali'i, former home of the Cooke family and part of the current site of Mānoa Heritage Center. Ka'aha'aina's healing practice continues to reverberate through Lagunero's art. Her impact on the Cooke family and the place they stewarded are the focus of his new body of work, Keahou: A New Time, that was on display at the Honolulu Museum of Art through May 4th, 2025.



Al Lagunero letting the creativity flow as he works on the Hogan lānai.
 Photo courtesy: MHC



Al Lagunero's "Ka'aha'ainaakahaku." Photo courtesy: Duarte Studios

Great School Year

It has been a banner year for our school tour program, with over 5,200 students visiting during the SY 24-25. Students have benefited from our expanded curriculum activities to scaffold learning around core topics (Native plants, Kilo, Nohona Hawai'i, Mo'olelo) to make activities age-appropriate for PK-Gr. 12 learners. Thanks to the vision of our co-founders, Sam and Mary Cooke, there is no cost to participate in our school tour programming, and we can also provide bus transportation. If you are interested in volunteering as a school tour docent, please contact jenny.ingle@manoaheritagecenter.org or if you are interested in donating to Mānoa Heritage Center's school tour program, please contact emily@manoaheritagecenter.org



A big mahalo to 3 donors whose gifts paid for school bus transportation to MHC in 2025: A gift in memory of former docent Karen Stockton, and gifts from Mark & Mary Anne Burak, and Jacquelyn & John Wesolosky.

Welcome New Board Members



This year we are excited to welcome new Board members: McKibbin Mist, Glenn E. Mason, Edi Cooke, Noelle M.K.Y. Kahanu, Jon Lee, and Aloha McGuffie. (Pictured from left: McKibbin Mist, Aloha McGuffie, and Glenn Mason)



Mentorship in Mānoa

This past school year, Assets High School Sophomore and MHC's latest student mentee Curtis Harada spent an entire school day every week integrating into a variety of MHC programs. From reimagining overgrown garden beds, to leading young learners in their exploration of Verma the Worm, to meeting international students studying abroad, he dipped his toes into a bit of everything MHC has to offer!

Curtis had the opportunity to explore different possible career paths and gained real-world job and life experiences in his year with us. His mentor for his time at MHC, Botanical Educator Kanoa Nakamura, was very impressed by his ability to adapt to challenging tasks and assist in creative solutions to address problems in the garden.

MHC's entire staff, along with those who were fortunate enough to spend time working alongside our mentee, are grateful for the relationship we've formed with Assets High School, and look forward to future collaborations! Acknowledgements are due to Curtis for all his hard work. Totalling over a hundred hours of volunteer service in under a year is a feat not many teens can boast, so mahalo nui Curtis!

Community Spotlight

Filipino medicine practitioner and longtime MHC volunteer Nicolita "Nicki" Garces shows up and shows out for the Elpidio & Nobuko Acopan Garden located below the Visitor Education Hale. The garden was named after Elpidio Acopan and his wife, Nobuko. Elpidio was a former



Volunteer Nicki Garces celebrated her birthday with friends, caring for and replanting the Acopan garden.

sakada (Filipino plantation worker) who became the first independent Filipino farmer in Manoa. Nicki uses the herbs she tends in various community workshops throughout the year. In 2025 these already include the La'akea Healing Center's New Year Wellness and Metaphysics Fair, Caregivers Appreciation Day, and Kabataan: Filipino For Kids Spring FUN Session. Nicki is an outstanding example of community wellness, showing us what's possible when passion meets practice. If getting involved in the Acopan Garden sounds like your cup of tea, work days are Saturdays, whenever there is an on-site workshop occurring. If you're interested in seeing what the Acopan Garden may have to offer you, contact garden@manoaheritagecenter.org for more information!

Mānoa Through Time Launches in April

On April 12, Mānoa Heritage Center introduced the first of its new Mānoa Through Time public tour series. This pilot program offers a deeper exploration of Mānoa's layered history, cultures, and storied landscape. Led by archaeologist and historian Ena Sroat, the inaugural tour focused on Kūka'ō'ō Heiau and the Landscape of Ancient O'ahu, blending archaeology, geology, mo'olelo, and Hawaiian worldview. Participants walked through Kūali'i, Kūka'ō'ō Heiau, and native gardens, uncovering the spiritual, political, and ecological significance of this ahupua'a over generations. Stories of Pele, Kamapua'a, the pueo of Mānoa, and ali'i such as Mā'ilikūkahi, Kākuhihewa, and Kūali'i brought the valley's past vividly to life. Each Mānoa Through Time program concludes with Hawaiian herbal tea grown on-site and a chocolate truffle from local Chocolatier, Choco Le'a, shared in conversation with the presenter. This series invites guests to connect more deeply with place through immersive, reflective, and authentically place-based experiences. Our next program will be held July 12 (see right). Additional information and dates will be posted on our website.



Upcoming Events

Public tours are offered 2-3 times per week. Check our website and social media for more information.

Summer Hula Camp

Summer Hula Camp with Kumu Kilohana Silve of Hālau Hula o Mānoa is back! Integrating ma ka hana ka 'ike hands-on activities in addition to sharing mo'olelo and teaching new hula, this year's theme is Aloha kekahi i kekahi.

Mon. June 2 - Tues. June 10

**Summer Hula Camp (skips Fri. June 6)
6 half-days, 9 am - 12 pm**

\$85 per person, open to all ages;
no prior experience required

'Āina Kumu Wai:

A Watershed Workshop for Educators

Join MHC's Education Team for a 2-day exploratory workshop focused on the diverse and fascinating subjects related to our watershed. Connect with other passionate educators from across the island to develop a place-based understanding of what it means to be a responsible steward of our 'āina.

Thurs. June 12 - Fri. June 13

(attendance both days is required)

8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Educators can receive a \$250 stipend with full participation; open to all educators of all disciplines

Palm Husk Vessels Workshop

Transform a natural resource into a beautiful vessel!

Sat. June 21

1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

\$30 per person

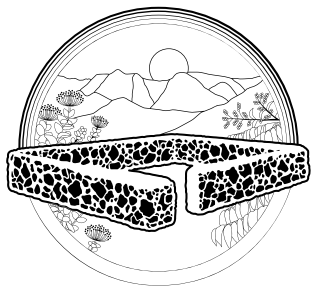
Kūka'ō'ō Heiau and the Ancient Landscape of O'ahu

Join us for a special Mānoa Through Time Tour with archaeologist and historian Ena Sroat. This immersive experience explores Kūka'ō'ō Heiau within the broader context of Mānoa's unique topography and ancient O'ahu's political and cultural history, including mo'olelo/stories.

Sat. July 12

9:00 am - 11:00 am

\$60 per person,
including light refreshments



MĀNOA HERITAGE CENTER

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Ūe ka lani ola ka honua

When the sky weeps, the earth lives

'Ōlelo No'eau #2888



Maiapilo, 'Ilima, 'A'ali'i, 'Ōhai, and 'Uhi'uhi keiki stretch towards the sunlight on our newest propagation table!

Plant Giveaway

Beating Around the Bushes with Kanoa

For our program participants, leaving with seeds or a potted plant is always a possibility! MHC garden stewards continuously propagate and donate plants from our collection throughout the year. Since the start of the year, over 100 plants have been gifted to guests and partner organizations, hoping recipients will pay it forward.

Every week our garden team, along with volunteers, care for a variety of keiki plants that will fill our community spaces with flora that have long since adapted to our climate in Hawai'i. Native plants not only require less water than many introduced ornamentals, but they also provide the grower with abundant lei making materials!

While endemic, indigenous, and Polynesian-Introduced species make up most of our collection at MHC, culturally appropriate and utilizable plants also make an appearance in select gardens! If you're interested in volunteering in our gardens, contact garden@manoaheritagecenter.org for more details!

Visit us at www.manoaheritagecenter.org

