



## **Nā Kama a Hāloa Network Story**

### **‘Ōlelo No‘eau:**

*He hi‘i ua milimili ‘ia i ke alo,  
ua hā‘awe ‘ia ma ke kua,  
ua lei ‘ia ma ka ‘āī.*

*A beloved one, caressed in the arms,  
carried on the back,  
whose arms have gone about the neck  
as a lei.*

Said of a beloved child.

**Network Working Goal:** By the year 2023, each Native Hawaiian child and youth (0-26) affected by the foster care system is connected to and can sustain a lasting network of healthy, supportive, and enriching relationships.

**April 2017:** EPIC ‘Ohana convened representatives of Kamehameha Schools (KS), Lili‘uokalani Trust (LT), Child Welfare Services (CWS), Casey Family Programs, and the Jim Casey Initiative of the Annie E Casey Foundation to discuss work to improve outcomes for Native Hawaiian children and families with child welfare involvement. We recognized that all of those engaged wanted to help these families but that our efforts were not aligned.

**June – October 2017:** EPIC identified permanent relationships for children and youth as a potential focus, identified CoCreative Consulting to facilitate the process, and enlisted CWS, KS and LT to participate in a collaborative/collective impact effort.

**November 2017:** A Design Team was started. Edralyn Caberto (LT), Venus Rosete-Medeiros and Stacy Ferreira (KS), Laurie Tochiki and Jeanne Hamilton (EPIC) participated in an initial training with CoCreative and drafted a working goal for the effort.

**January – August 2018:** Ray Nishimiya and Noe Realin from CWS joined the Design Team. Design Team members refined the working goal and identified “critical shifts.” A critical shift defines a problem space. A critical shift

- forces stakeholders to agree on the problem before jumping to potential solutions,
- provides a strategic way to identify the most critical leverage points to maximize impact,

- provides a clear problem-solving space to focus the development of solutions,
- helps avoid favored solutions by focusing on the needs first, and
- provides a basis to evaluate possible solutions over time and avoid solutions that aren't paying off.

Design Team members interviewed nearly 40 stakeholders in CWS, Family Court, contracted child welfare service providers, birth parents, resource caregivers, and young people transitioning from foster care. Interviews were conducted on O'ahu and in East Hawai'i. Design Team also identified and invited people to participate in the network convening.

**September 2018:** First network convening. Participants connected with one another, revised the working goal, reviewed the insights from interviews with systems leaders and families and youth with child welfare experience, and selected the six critical shifts to start on. These were around safety and well-being, youth voice and family voice, Native Hawaiian values, agencies staffing and training, resource caregivers, and sibling connections. Work groups developed concepts to address these shifts.

Current State	Future State
<b>Native Hawaiian Values</b>	
Many Native Hawaiians involved in the child welfare system and in the general population are disconnected from Native Hawaiian values.	Our community embraces shared kuleana for the wellbeing of Native Hawaiian families and children in the foster care system by embracing and practicing values that eliminate ethnic disparities and disproportionality.
<b>Youth Voice/Family Voice</b>	
Youth voice is supported to make systemic change.	Youth voice AND family voice contribute to systems change and to their personal and familial efficacy.
<b>Sibling Connections</b>	
Sibling connections and relationships are fit in when schedules permit.	Sibling relationships are honored and prioritized as critical, lifelong relationships.
<b>Resource Caregivers</b>	
The system lacks an adequate number of Resource Care Givers, and RCG's have insufficient support for working with children with high needs and developing relationships with extended/bio families.	We have enough RCG's who are continually trained, supported, and mentored to support and nurture the children/youth and connect to bio parents, siblings and extended 'ohana.

**October 2018 – February 2019:** Initiative teams refined concepts developed in the Sept. 2018 convening. The Design Team added Chiemi Davis (LT) and shepherded the initiative teams to develop their work effectively and strategically.

**February 25-26, 2019:** The second network session was convened. Members of LT's Waianae Kīpuka led a session around the experiences of the Native Hawaiian people after contact with Europeans, traumatic impact on the population, Native Hawaiian values and gender roles. Two birth parents spoke about what helps and what doesn't help birth parents in child welfare. The network reviewed the working goal. Initiative teams further developed their work addressing these areas:

- Native Hawaiian values (developing a training for greater understanding of Native Hawaiian experiences and values affecting families today),
- birth family experience and voice (specifics under consideration),
- sibling connections (empathy training, app to assist with sibling connections, sibling connector), and
- kinship navigation for resource caregivers.

**March – August, 2019:** Initiative teams developed concepts and prototypes with the goal that some teams will be ready to pilot projects beginning in October 2019. Edralyn and Stacy stepped off the design team, and Elladine Olevao, Child Welfare Services Branch Administrators, and Georgi DeCosta joined.

**April 2, 2019:** Launch of Hilo initiative team.

**September 5-6, 2019:** Network session #3 was held on September 5-6, 2019, in Honolulu. We viewed "Then There Were None," heard updates from hui/initiative teams and provided feedback, learned about CWS's work in the Program Improvement Plan and other community updates, selected an 'ōlelo no'eau, planned next steps and discussed who else should be involved.

**December 2019 Status:** Hui (previously called initiative teams) continued to develop and pilot work.

- Hui Makua: Developing proposal to the Geist Foundation to pilot Native Hawaiian parent partners (peer support) through EPIC. Piloting parent partner presentations to workers in child welfare sector and parent partner participation in CWS committees.
- Hui Kauhale: CWS committed to include the Native Hawaiian lens in the new hire training. The Hui explored different approaches on how this might be done.
- Hui Pilina: Developing sibling connections training and handouts and beginning to deliver trainings. CWS contract funding to support a video of the training for online viewing.
- Fostering Strong Communities: CWS Licensing, LT and KS explore partnerships to support licensing fairs for resource caregivers.

- Hui Hilo: Exploring ways to recruit and support resource caregivers and to enroll children and youth in foster care into the KS Ho'oulu Registry.

**Network Session #4:** When the pandemic upended the world in March of 2020, we shifted to virtual work and meetings. We rescheduled for Network Session #4 to a virtual one on April 22-23. We explored that which has come before, that which is currently happening, that which is yet to come. We learned about Uluhaimalama Gardens, a symbol of hope and Hawaiian resistance; the impact and adjustments to the pandemic in Hawaii's child welfare sector; the hale logo; envisioning our future; hui updates of curriculum development, changes in the licensing process for resource caregivers and work in Hilo, developing parent partner work, and trainings to support sibling connections while in foster care. We also explored the proposed Pono Practice training.

**Network Session #5:** In August, 2020, we gathered virtually and did a deep dive into pu'uhonua, a temporary place of refuge and safety, forgiveness and healing, and imagined if workers and families could all view child welfare as a pu'uhonua. Toni Bissen from the Pū'ā Foundation spoke about their work to address the consequences of the 1893 overthrow by addressing the overrepresentation of Native Hawaiians in the criminal justice system. Pū'ā works with women on the journey from trauma to transformation, from incarceration to independence. We explored how the concept of pu'uhonua might inform work in the child welfare sector. The hui provided updates on trainings developed for resource caregivers and in development for CWS and service providers, trainings on sibling connections, registration of eligible foster children into the KS Ho'oulu database and improving CWS-RCG communications in Hawai'i Island; ongoing development of parent partner work; ways to support relationships of caregivers and birth parents.

**Network Session #6:** In December 2020, we gathered virtually and did a deep dive into 'ohana, kūlana and kuleana in our families and in our workspaces. We discussed the patterns in our collaborative work of diverging & converging and of checking back. Current parent partners described how they work with parents and its impact. Hui updates included ongoing development of training to embed Native Hawaiian history, worldview and culture into the child welfare sector, ongoing openness to and resources for the parent partner program, developing collateral for sibling connections, and ways to support birth parent and resource caregiver relationship-building, and young adult participation in caregiver recruitment.

#### **December 2020 Status:**

- Hui Makua: Supporting EPIC's development of the parent partner program. EPIC received a three-year grant from the Geist Foundation to pilot Native Hawaiian parent partners (peer support). Hui representatives

- are in discussion with the Pū‘ā Foundation about paths to develop the infrastructure for Native Hawaiians to work as peer supporters in the child welfare and criminal justice systems in Hawai‘i. Parent partners provided guidance in CWS’s planning for Family First programs.
- Hui Kauhale: Hui members provided a training for current resource caregivers and developed a module from the Native Hawaiian perspective to be included in the revamped HANAI training process for new resource caregivers. The Hui continued to iterate on powerful ways to incorporate the Native Hawaiian lens into child welfare.
  - Hui Pilina: Virtually trained hundreds of stakeholders in child welfare about the importance and value of maintaining sibling connections for children in foster care. Produced a video of the training for online viewing.
  - Fostering Strong Communities: Licensing fairs were placed on hold during the pandemic, and the Hui turned its attention to how we could support the CWS shift to resource caregivers and birth parents building relationships to support children in foster care and family connections. The HMSA Foundation awarded a grant to develop a video to shift hearts and minds in the sector to support this approach.
  - Hui Hilo: The Hui produced a post card to facilitate resource caregivers to contact CWS in East Hawai‘i; funding from Casey Family Programs supported the design and distribution of the card and a KTA gift card to resource caregivers. Plans to host a resource caregiver fair were placed on hold. Young adults participated in virtual events to recruit caregivers. Kamehameha Schools provided funding to support an in-person resource caregiver fair and efforts to register children and youth into the Ho‘oulu database.

**Network Session #7:** We met virtually in May, 2021. Ekela Kaniaupio-Crozier, Hālau ‘o Kapikohānaiāmālama Interim Learning Designer & Facilitator at KS-Maui, described a training process that she and Anu Getgen are developing to support KS-Maui staff to connect with Native Hawaiian history, worldview and culture with their na‘au to embed the Hawaiian approach to education in the school. We discussed how this might be adapted to the child welfare sector to contribute to the healing and growth of Native Hawaiian families. Hui updates included the development of Hawaiian Culture Based Engagement training, parent partners and advisory council, creation of a video to support co-parenting by birth parents and resource caregivers, and exploration of ways to embed system supports for sibling connections while in foster care.