



NEWS RELEASE
September 19, 2011

CONTACTS:

Margot Schrire, University of Hawai'i Foundation
(808) 956-6774 or Margot.Schrire@uhfoundation.org

**OKEANOS FOUNDATION SUPPORTS WAYFINDING & YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AT 'IMILOA**

"The only way to grow something is to cultivate, nurture and care for it, this is what is happening to the opio (youth) who are fortunate enough to be in the 'Aukai 'Imiloa program.

I believe this approach will have deeper, longer lasting impacts for the youth and that these positive experiences will remain with them for the rest of their lives. One can only imagine what the compounded impacts of these experiences over a lifetime will produce."

*From parent of an 8th grader and 'Aukai 'Imiloa pilot program participant,
Anuenue School Pūlolo, O'ahu*

Hilo - UH Hilo's 'Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai'i recently received a \$10,000 gift from Okeanos Foundation and its founder Dieter Paulmann. The gift will help 'Imiloa create youth development programs using traditional means of wayfinding and navigation to inspire and engage tomorrow's explorers in modern science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

The donation will support the continued growth and advancement of 'Imiloa's dynamic voyaging program for youth in grades 8-12 called 'Aukai 'Imiloa (Oceanic Explorers). The program, which piloted in 2010, is an ocean-related immersion program for students in grades 8-12 that focuses on wayfinding and navigation through academic and experiential activities. Centered on a theme of exploration, *Aukai 'Imiloa* gives students an opportunity to learn about navigation through hands-on workshops, specialized training sessions, and sailing aboard deep-sea voyaging canoes.

"This innovative approach to informal science education using a dynamic and interactive voyaging program exemplifies how UH Hilo can inspire learning, discovery and creativity inside

and outside the classroom,” said UH Hilo Chancellor Don Straney. He continued, “As they do in formal academic environments; values, language and critical thinking skills all come together to ignite creativity and inspire young minds aboard a voyaging canoe. The ‘Aukai ‘Imiloa program is reflective of the unique educational learning environment and high quality learning experiences UH Hilo students can look forward to as they are challenged to reach their highest level of academic achievement.” Straney concluded, "Students learn from many sources and, at UH Hilo, they are invited to explore, investigate and discover, cultivate and innovate on the living laboratory that is Hawai’i Island.”

The youth development program supports ‘Imiloa’s work to engage youth in science, technology, engineering and math in culturally relevant and meaningful ways with the goal of inspiring a sustainable and healthy future for the local community through future leaders and innovators. Students learn teamwork and gain confidence through encouragement and positive mentoring, helping to build the necessary habits that foster friendship and the healthy relationships essential for survival aboard a canoe or living within a community. Training activities get students onto the water and are designed to instill responsibility, connection and stewardship of the communities they live in.

Math and science in the context of wayfinding are taught and other concepts incorporated include seamanship, knot tying, developing a reference course line based on wind or waves, crew mechanics, canoe engineering, and astronomy in the context of traditional navigation.

“We are very appreciative of the Okeanos Foundation’s investment and support of ‘Aukai ‘Imiloa. This is a truly unique program because of its approach - it engages students by connecting them to the science, math, and technology that will make them successful wayfinders and navigators while also providing valuable lessons in leadership and stewardship in an environment that will stimulate them intellectually and challenge them physically,” said Chad “Kalepa” Baybayan, ‘Imiloa’s Associate Director and Navigator-in-Residence. “As kids learn about voyaging on canoes, we encourage them to make connections to modern voyages of exploration in space and through this they are able to come to know the common spirit that all explorers share.”

For more information or to support youth development programs at ‘Imiloa, please contact ‘Imiloa’s Development Office at (808) 969-9732 or nverissimo@imiloahawaii.org

To see photos - link to photos on UHF website



The University of Hawai‘i Foundation, a nonprofit organization, raises private funds to support the University of Hawai‘i System. Our mission is to unite our donors’ passions with the University of Hawai‘i’s aspirations to benefit the people of Hawai‘i and beyond. We do this by raising private philanthropic support, managing private investments and nurturing donor and alumni relationships. www.uhfoundation.org

The University of Hawai‘i at Hilo is a comprehensive university with five degree-granting colleges, six master’s programs and three doctoral programs. UH Hilo strives to integrate culture and science, offer hands-on learning opportunities to its students and use the Island of Hawai‘i as a natural learning laboratory. Enrollment has doubled since 1980 to nearly 4,000 students coming from all fifty states and more than 40 countries. Please visit www.uhh.hawaii.edu.

‘Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai‘i is a world-class informal science education center located on the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo campus. ‘Imiloa is a place of life-long learning where the power of Hawai‘i’s cultural traditions, its legacy of exploration and the wonders of astronomy come together to provide inspiration and hope for generations. The Center’s interactive exhibits, 3D full dome planetarium, native landscape, and programs and events engage children, families and the local community in the wonders of science and technology found in Hawai‘i. It is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (closed Mondays). For more information, visit the website at www.imiloahawaii.org or call (808) 969-9703.