



## THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I

DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

MICHAEL A. DAHILIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

### News Release

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### Groundbreaking held for new 'Ohana Zone Project in Līhu'e

LĪHU'E – The County of Kaua'i Housing Agency, Office of the Mayor, and Women in Need held a ceremony Thursday to mark the groundbreaking of Kealaula on Pua Loke – the County's upcoming permanent supportive housing facility for families.

"There are so many families on Kaua'i who are really trying to change their lives, but they haven't been given the right resources or opportunities to be successful in the long run," said Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami. "Kealaula is the County's highly-anticipated 'Ohana Zone project that provides a sustainable solution for these struggling families looking for permanent supportive housing."

"Through the 'Ohana Zone program, we will be able to offer immediate housing for families experiencing homelessness along with supportive social services to help them transition to stable lives and permanent homes," said Housing Director Adam Roversi. "This is a huge step forward in our mission to quickly address our island's current and future housing needs."

The project is located on a portion of the state's existing Pua Loke Arboretum site in Līhu'e. When completed, Kealaula will consist of 12 single-story duplex buildings, each containing two one-bedroom units with its own bathroom and kitchen, totaling 22 units and one community building.



Construction of Kealaula will begin this month and is estimated to complete by September 2020.

The project is part of the 2018 Act 209 'Ohana Zone Pilot Program which earmarked \$30 million in state funding to establish 'Ohana Zones on O'ahu, Hawai'i, Maui and Kaua'i. Funding for Kaua'i's 'Ohana Zone project consists of \$2 million appropriated from the state for construction costs, and \$2.3 million from the state Department of Human Services to provide two years of services at the housing facility. The balance of \$1.5 million for construction expenses will be funded through the County's Housing Agency. The construction contract was awarded to Shioi Construction in the amount of approximately \$3.5 million.

"I would like to thank Gov. David Ige, Sen. President Ron Kouchi, Rep. James Tokioka and our entire legislative representatives, along with the surrounding community of Pua Loke, for prioritizing these affordable housing opportunities throughout our state and here on Kaua'i, so that this important project could become a reality," said Mayor Kawakami.

The County selected Women in Need as its partner in Kaua'i's 'Ohana Zone project. Women in Need is an established Hawai'i non-profit that operates existing transitional housing facilities on both Kaua'i and O'ahu, and will manage the facility and provide necessary social services touching on substance abuse, re-entry from incarceration, domestic violence, parenting life skills and employment services.

"Women in Need is so excited to be working in partnership with the County in providing a permanent housing solution with Kealaula," said Kimberly Cummings, clinical director for Women in Need. "Kealaula will be able to service a larger need of our community's houseless initiatives, with compassion and sincerity of a new hope. Women In Need wants to thank all those involved in their efforts of bringing this vision to fruition."

### **About 'Ohana Zones**

Act 209 defines 'Ohana Zones as a place that has a program to address basic needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, and where wrap-around services, social and health

care services, transportation, and other services may be offered with the goals of alleviating poverty and transitioning individuals experiencing homelessness into affordable housing.

Under Act 209, 'Ohana Zones must be situated on public lands owned by the State or Counties, with priority given to sites that have existing facilities and infrastructure. In cooperation with the State, the County selected a portion of the existing Pua Loke Arboretum site as the location for its 'Ohana Zone. This parcel has been transferred to County control via Executive Order. Although the site does not have existing building structures, it has sufficient water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure for development. It is also located in close proximity to social services, employment opportunities, government services, medical services, and public transportation, and is immediately adjacent to the existing emergency homeless shelter operated by Kaua'i Economic Opportunity.



**From left to right:** Conrad Murashige of Shioi Construction, Councilmember Mason Chock, Council Chair Arryl Kaneshiro, Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami, Keith Perry of the Office of the Mayor, County Housing Director Adam Roversi, Kimberly Cummings of Women in Need, Mary Scott-Lau of Women in Need, Governor Ige's Kaua'i Liaison Carrice Gardner, Gary Mackler of Hawai'i Housing Finance & Development Corporation, and Leialoha Sanchez of the County Housing Agency.





**Above:** Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami



**Above:** County Housing Director Adam Roversi



**Above:** Kimberly Cummings of Women in Need



**Above:** Council Chair Arryl Kaneshiro

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