

Kaimukī Students Take Action To Beat The Heat

Summer heat on O'ahu is no laughing matter. Some escape the unbearableness in air conditioned spaces, while others, like a group of Kaimukī High School students, aim to create solutions to this weathered issue.

Through Trees for Honolulu's Future's Climate Champions program, students got the chance to investigate and address high temperatures on campus. The initiative blends hands-on science, climate resilience planning and implementation.

"Planting Native Hawaiian trees was pretty new to me because I never planted a tree before," states Marbert Unge-ni, a Kaimukī High School senior. "But, it was a fun experience because I got to learn the

different kinds of native trees and also how to plant them."

As part of Earth Day 2025, students planted seven new trees to provide shade in the hottest parts of the campus.

During the summer, two paid student interns watered and monitored the trees and learned how to best care for them. The students then held a presentation on their experiences with tree care at the beginning of the new school year.

"We're not just cooling campuses," states Daniel Dinell, TFHF president. "We're growing a generation of leaders who see themselves as part of the climate solution."

That's confirmed by Hilton Edwards, a senior at the school, who spent



(Above) Kaimukī High School students and community partners plant native milo trees to help cool down the campus. (Right) Students collect canopy measurements for the school's tree inventory. **PHOTOS COURTESY TREES FOR HONOLULU'S FUTURE**

the summer watering the trees, noting, "It's not that hard when you start small to make a big difference, and I'm proud that we got to help take care of trees."

Ugeni adds, "I was taught that trees help fight climate change because it keeps the earth's atmosphere cool. I learned that planting trees in hot areas



is most effective because trees cool it down. Climate change is a huge problem that shouldn't be overlooked, and I didn't know that it could be as simple as planting a tree."

Climate resiliency work isn't unfamiliar to Kaimukī High School. There also

is year-round work in sustainability through the W.O.R.M.S Club — which now sells lettuce grown by its club members.

For more info about the Climate Champion Program, visit resilientoahu.org/climate-champions or treesforhonolulu.org.