

HOLEY MOLEY
Waipahu teen gets a hole-in-one during golf tournament.
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VOICE

♦ WEST O'AHU COMMUNITY NEWS ♦

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NEW SCHOOLS
State Rep. Julie Reyes Oda discusses upcoming proposed schools.
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CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Hawaiian leaders gather at Kapolei Hale to celebrate Hawaiian History Month on Sept. 2. Pictured (from left) are opera singer Malia Kaai-Barrett; Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, dean of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Hawai'i'iniūiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge; Mehanaokalā Hind, senior adviser, Hawaiian Council; Malia Nobrega-Olivera, director of strategic partnerships and community engagement, Hawai'i'iniūiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge; state Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole; artists Meleanna Aluli Meyer and Ryan Souza; and Jennifer Santos, executive director, Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts. More on page 7. **PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII'**

Students Add More Shade To Campus

BY WEST O'AHU VOICE STAFF

Summer heat on O'ahu is no laughing matter. Some escape the high temperatures in air conditioned spaces, while others, like a group of Wai'anae High School students, work in earnest to create solutions to this "weather"-ed issue.

Two classes at WHS recently participated in Trees for Honolulu's Future's Climate Champions program. The students investigated and created solutions to address high temperatures on campus.

"Experts in the field shared their knowledge," states Ryan Tong, a geography teacher at WHS involved with the planting, "but it was students who measured temperatures, examined soil health, mapped the campus, and researched native trees to determine which species would be the most successful and beneficial to plant at our school."

In addition to creating a heat map to denote the hottest parts of campus, the students also created a tree inventory of all of 126 trees already planted on the campus. The inventory included details such as how much shade the

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Student-led Tree-planting Initiative Combats School's Hot Spots

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current trees provide (a mere 6.19% compared to the 35% goal set by the City & County of Honolulu) and whether the plants were native (49% of the trees were). A soil report was also created to determine suitable tree types for the campus' soil.

After the extensive research, the students designed a tree-planting proposal and presented it to the school administration, including WHS principal Ray Pikelny-Cook.

Approval in hand, the students planted 14 new trees, such as milo, kamani and kou, which were chosen for their significant shade cover and high salt tolerance, in April.

"Our students saw a problem, and they didn't just complain about it — they became part of the solution," states Pikelny-Cook. "They took the initiative to research, test the soil and lead the planting of new trees, transforming our campus into a cooler, more welcoming place. This project is a powerful example of how student leadership can drive real, positive change and foster a sense of community and pride."

Five paid student interns cared for the trees over the summer. The interns put their learned knowledge of tree care to the test by ensuring the trees received the

proper care for its specific type.

"As someone who has now started getting into protecting the climate and the native plants of Hawai'i, it's really beautiful to see the growth and prosperity of these plants when we work together as an 'ohana to achieve our goal to make a more cooler, more healthier 'āina," states James Perry, a WHS senior.

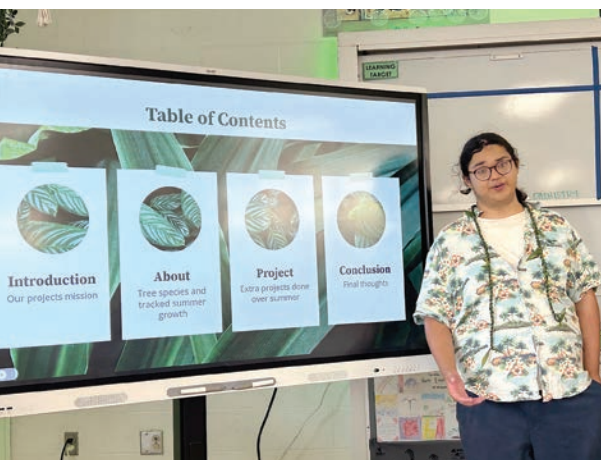
Inspired by the tree-planting project, the students plan to launch a new environmental club to continue climate resilience work year-round.

"We're not just cooling campuses," states Daniel Dinell, Trees for Honolulu's

Future president. "We're growing a generation of leaders who see themselves as part of the climate solution."

The Climate Champions Program was originally funded by a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant through the city's Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency. To continue the program after federal funding cuts, Alaka'i Development, Hawaiian Electric Co. and Kamehameha Schools donated funds.

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



(Top left) Wai'anae High School students (from left) Kaipo Lujan, Wiley Cottrell and Zion Ganaban-Newman build supports for a newly planted tree.

(Top right) Lujan and Ganaban-Newman water a tree.

(Left) WHS senior James Perry presents findings from the school's climate resilience summer internship.

PHOTOS COURTESY TREES FOR HONOLULU'S FUTURE