



HAWAII COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Three Hawai'i public schools honored with awards for outstanding beautification efforts by the Cooke Foundation

Schools on Hawai'i Island, Maui, and O'ahu awarded a total of \$15,000

HONOLULU, HAWAII — The Hawai'i Community Foundation, on behalf of the Cooke Foundation, is pleased to announce the recipients of the Cooke Beautification Award for Public Schools. Founded in 1920, the Cooke Foundation supports community endeavors that make a difference in the betterment and welfare of the people of Hawai'i.

The \$5,000 Cooke Beautification Awards are typically presented every two years to recognize local public and charter schools for completed beautification projects that better their school environment and significantly enhance the school's overall appearance and ambiance. The awards represent the work of the entire community, as the planning and execution of the project must engage students in a meaningful way, and parents, faculty, staff and community members should be involved. The award monies may be used in any way the schools choose.

Since 2008, the Cooke Foundation has awarded a total of \$130,000 to 26 public schools across the state. Due to the Cooke Foundation's Centennial Anniversary in 2020 and the shutdown of in-person school during the pandemic, this is the first time the Awards have been given since 2017.

"It is such an inspiration to see the creative hearts and minds of students at work producing beautiful and inviting spaces in which to learn and play," said Greg Wrenn, president of the Cooke Foundation and coordinator of the Beautification Award program. "It has always been our premise that a beautiful environment at school is conducive to learning and encourages respect for one's school, respect for others and respect for oneself. We are so proud to support these schools in a small way and recognize the students and their communities for their hard work and impressive achievements."

The recipients of the Cooke Beautification Award for Public Schools for 2023 are:

Lihikai Elementary School (Maui): Honored for the creation of a new mural, "Papaku Hanai a Mālama (Foundation for Infinite Potential)." Painted onto the facade of its centrally located Administration Building, the mural symbolically reflects the six tenets of the Department of Education's Nā Hopena A'ō (HĀ) framework, which are the core values and beliefs of the statewide education system. The mural depicts belonging, responsibility, excellence, aloha, total well-being, and Hawai'i through vibrant colors and rich imagery. Students, faculty, and staff have already shared inspiration and teachable moments through this focal work of art.

"Hā offers a much-needed vehicle for all of us, especially our keiki, to discover, reconnect and develop our inner journey so we can find our way again to a gentler and kinder way of being. This is the essence of who we are meant to be as people of Hawai'i ... it is the promise of living Aloha," said Barbara Oura Tavares, principal of Lihikai Elementary School.

President Abraham Lincoln Elementary School (O'ahu): Honored for engaging its community in overall beautification efforts. The school partnered with its Family Empowerment Committee, a group of faculty and staff members, to plan its annual Campus Beautification Project. Thirty-five families, 15 staff members, and dozens of students and community partners participated in the one-day painting, landscaping, cleaning, and organizing event. Students not only took pride in beautifying their school but also increased literacy and numeracy skills by reading the agenda and task assignments and accounting for supplies and funding. The community-building project encouraged increased health and wellness, social emotional learning, and family engagement among all participants.

"At Lincoln Elementary School, we would like our students to develop appropriately, achieve their potential, and grow their sense of belonging," said Jacqueline Ornellas, principal of Lincoln Elementary School. "In order to support our students, we must provide them with an environment conducive for learning and growth. We believe that students' learning improves, behavior problems decrease, and camaraderie among peers increases from an environment that is clean, safe, and refreshed. There is nothing like a clean campus and freshly painted infrastructure for our students to proudly say that Lincoln is their school."

Ka'u High School (Hawai'i Island): Honored for a new mural, "Ka'ū Kū Mākaha (Ka'u Stands Fierce)," created collaboratively by students, professional artists, cultural practitioners, kūpuna and teachers. The project's original goal was to create a meaningful art opportunity for students as they transitioned back to in-person learning after virtual classes during the pandemic. It became so much more, as students engaged with community leaders and professional artists to learn the mele and mo'olelo 'āina of Ka'u, then turned these into the dynamic mural that now welcomes students and community members. The students also participated in the blessing of the mural, including offering an oli they had learned during the cultural workshops while wearing kīhei they made.

"Having this beautiful mural created by our students will be a lasting reminder of the special place that we call home," said Aina Akamu, program director of Ka'u High School. "As we celebrate 142 years as a school, our mural honors the generations of people who came before and will inspire many future generations of Ka'ū."

All public and charter schools in the state are eligible to apply. Schools can visit www.cookefoundationlimited.org to learn more about the next cycle of awards.

*****MEDIA ASSETS*****

Images for grantees can be found at the following [link](#).

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About the Cooke Foundation, Limited

Established in 1920, the Cooke Foundation, Limited supports worthy endeavors in the community that the family feels will make a significant difference in the betterment and welfare of the people of Hawai'i. In 2022, the Foundation awarded grants totaling over \$1.5 million to Hawai'i nonprofit organizations in the Arts, Culture, and Humanities, Human Services, Environment, and Education sectors. The Hawai'i Community Foundation is the Cooke Foundation's grants administrator. For more information about the Cooke Foundation, please visit www.cookefoundationlimited.org.

About the Hawai'i Community Foundation

The vision of the Hawai'i Community Foundation is to create an equitable and vibrant Hawai'i in which all our Island communities thrive. With our more-than-105-year history, our trusted expertise, and the generous support of donors, we are working to address the root causes of our state's most difficult challenges, including expanding access to affordable housing, conserving fresh water resources, and ensuring the healthy development of Hawai'i's young children. We focus our efforts through the CHANGE Framework, which identifies six essential sectors affecting the overall well-being of these islands and its people. HCF works in communities across Hawai'i, with offices and staff located statewide. In 2022, HCF stewarded more than 1,100 funds, established by individuals, businesses, and organizations who share our passion for a better Hawai'i. We distributed over \$87 million in grants to the community from funds at HCF, contracts, and private foundations statewide, including scholarships assisting more than 1,000 Hawai'i students. To join us in our efforts, please visit hawaiicommunityfoundation.org and follow our social media channels on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Youtube](#).