

Working together to ensure that every individual has the help they need to achieve and maintain a foundation for lasting recovery and well-being

There is a reason that the word “FAMILY” appears in all three agencies’ mission statements. We believe that recovery is a family process and that with our help individuals can rebuild not only themselves but also restore their families.

With Mother’s Day in May and Father’s Day in June, we wanted to share a few stories with you....



Malama Family Recovery Center

My children would not have me today if I hadn’t had such an amazing group of healing people around me...

When talking about being a mother now that she is sober, Kema says she “is completely present and is not blocked off emotionally from my children. My whole being is receptive to their desires, hurts, boo-boos, prayers.” When Kema entered Malama Family Recovery Center in 2011, her two children, Neveah and Anthoneil, then 3 and 2 years old, were in Foster Care. She did not trust herself, which left her wondering how she could even raise her kids. Being at Malama changed everything because it provided “a home where I could get the love that I couldn’t give myself at that time,” which then provided a foundation for her to go through the everyday motions of being a mother and staying strong for herself and her children.

Kema says that knowing that if she worked hard at recovery she could eventually get her children back gave her tremendous hope and inspiration. “When my kids visited me at Malama, it was magical. They were tangible. I knew that was how things were supposed to be from then on.” Kema says that Malama made it possible for her and her children to bond and heal together

in a safe environment, especially when Neveah came and lived with her in the Therapeutic Living Program. Kema vividly remembers seeing a change in Neveah, who often had screaming fits because she feared that she would be separated from her mother. “I was able to sit down with Neveah and honestly tell her that it was going to be okay and that she didn’t have to leave mommy, that mommy was here now.” Laughing, Kema says that now Neveah is the one who will say, “Mommy, it is going to be okay.” Now raising her two kids alone and managing her own business, Dance Studio 808, Kema is able to use tools she learned at Malama and apply them in everyday situations. When Anthoneil is defiant and acts out, instead of “letting him run all over me without placing boundaries or having consequences,” she “creates a safe place for him to think about his behavior, take responsibility for what he did and think about what he can do differently next time.”

To Kema, Mother’s Day is “an acknowledgement of self-sacrifice, unconditional love and the bonding of unity between a mother and a child.” She says that, quite simply, she “rose from the ashes” and that she would not have the relationship she has with her



Kema with her children Anthoneil, on the left, and Neveah, on the right

children now if she had not been able to heal – “there’s no me, there’s nothing without my having healed.”

One of her most emotional memories comes from when she and her children moved into their own apartment after Kema left Malama. Neveah’s simple request to have butterflies hanging in her bedroom meant to Kema that “we now had our own safety, security and stability that no one could take away from us.”

I missed a lot of moments that I can't get back. Now that I'm sober and clean I am so much more active in their lives...

When looking back at her relationship with her children before going to Malama, Christine says that she was “physically there but not mentally or emotionally.” She admits that “before, my kids weren’t important. It’s the truth and it shocks me to think I was like that.” When Christine entered Malama Family Recovery Center in 2009, three of her children, ages 2, 4 and 10 at the time, were placed in Foster Care. “At the time I felt like I didn’t even have the right to even hold or touch my children and that I was an outsider around them.” Christine says that as she began to heal she realized what she was missing and she devoted herself to getting better so she could be there for her kids. “At Malama I had to work to be able to see my kids. The staff wanted me to be with my kids, but they made me earn that privilege.”

A turning point in her recovery was when, after a particularly frustrating day, “I still desperately wanted to stay in treatment.



Christine with her children (in clock-wise order) Vika, Omaha and Precious

It wasn't just about me anymore. I was now thinking about the consequences of my actions and how they would impact my kids.” She says she was finally thinking about what kind of life she wanted

for her children and where she needed to be in order to make that happen. She could then talk with her counselors about what kind of person she wanted to be and needed to be in order to give her children the life they deserved.

Now, as a single mother raising three kids and working full-time, Christine says that her relationship with her children is still mending, but that “we are a good team” and that she loves being there for them as their interests develop. To her, the best part of being a mother is being there for all “the hugs and kisses, the silly moments and the craziness of everyday life.” She says that Mother’s Day represents “taking the good and the bad, creating new memories, learning instead of regretting and teaching our kids to do better.” She feels that in order to teach you have to be a good role model.

Reflecting on her past, Christine says that “going through Malama made me realize I am stronger than I thought I was. I fought for myself and my kids. If I hadn’t gotten better my kids would have been adopted, and to me, I achieved the unachievable.”



Aloha House

Today my sons and I are thriving, and that is truly a miracle. I am so blessed that I can now give my boys a life

Brett says that when he entered Aloha House a few years ago he was homeless and at a point where he could not stop drinking. His two sons, 9 and 5 years old at the time, were living with their mother and then spent time in Foster Care. Before entering treatment he would miss family outings because he wanted to drink and he still doesn’t remember a lot from those days. He says that it took being in a controlled environment for “the light to come on for me and for me to realize that I needed to focus on changing myself and not the world and that I simply could not see my kids if I was not sober.” He says that “if it weren’t for Aloha House I wouldn’t have made it one day” and that treatment changed “the way I think and choose to live.”

Now Brett is raising his two boys, 7 and 11, as a single parent, as their mother passed away a few months ago. He says he is now there for his kids “100% with a good head on my shoulders. I am now the ‘mommy’ and ‘daddy’ and am excited about the future because when the time comes that I have been sober for 3-5 years, my boys will be young teens and will need a role model around.”

“I consider myself not just a dad, but a father, and I am proud of that. I like the word ‘father’ because to me it means someone who is always there for you, whether it is to play catch or to help with homework. All I care about is their happiness.”

Brett says that now he is able to talk with his kids and express his feelings without pointing a finger, which he feels is huge when you are dealing with young children. He also passes down some of the lessons he learned at Aloha House. “If my kids are stressed or worried about something, I tell them that we should only focus on what we can take care of today and that we need to live in the moment. They are like little sponges and I am blessed to be able to pass this advice on to them.”

Another aspect of Aloha House that Brett now shares with his kids is doing arts and crafts. He appreciates that art allows a

person to get their feelings out without actually having to talk or feel judged. “I know that doing art with my sons has helped them because they have a lot of pent-up emotions from their mom passing away. My sons can be shy when it comes to sharing their feelings, and engaging in these projects lets them process everything and begin to heal.” He says that doing these projects gives his sons a strong feeling of self-accomplishment because when they are finished “they can look at something they did on their own and can be proud of it.”



Collage created on Mother's Day by an AH client; Brett says that making collages with his sons is one of his favorite expressive art activities because when he was in treatment they represented where he was and where he wanted to be – a message that he feels is still fitting to this day for his sons



A recent picture of Brett and his boys



Maui Youth & Family Services

Now I have someone to talk to and turn to if I have problems or need advice. I don't feel like I am alone anymore

16-year-old Sarah* says that before receiving services at Maui Youth & Family Services, she did not have a strong or emotional relationship with her parents, especially with her mom. “I didn't feel like I could go to my parents and it was hard because I did want to be able to talk to my mom about things like boys or school, but I just didn't feel comfortable.” She feels that this made her keep to herself and then eventually turn to drugs and alcohol. Coming to MYFS was an “eye-opener” for her because she realized how truly bad the path was that she was on – “being at MYFS really showed me where my life was headed with the decisions I was making.” She says that this made her “want to turn her life around and make her mom proud” of her. “I wanted to prove to my mom that even I was on that path before, I am not anymore.”

She says that now when she needs to talk to someone she can turn to her mom and get advice, as opposed to closing herself off and “making bad decisions.” She feels that without MYFS her relationship with her mom may have changed, but “definitely not as much as it actually did.” This change was evident during the recent Mother's Day holiday, as Sarah says the day was “better than she ever could have ever expected” because her family “could actually get together and have a good time without it being uncomfortable or awkward.”

*Name changed for confidentiality reasons

We make sure that our foster children know that this is their home too and that from now on they are a part of our ohana

This is a busy time of year for Therapeutic Foster Care parents Kat and Joe, who are scrambling to attend high school graduation ceremonies all over the island for youth they have fostered over the years. Kat and Joe provide much more “than a roof over these teens' heads...we ask them to open up to us and we work hard to make sure that they feel completely welcome and comfortable.” Kat and Joe have regular “family meetings” with their foster children to encourage and teach open communication so the healing and family reunification process can happen. Even just getting the chance to bond with a parent-like figure can have a tremendous impact. Kat recalls a situation where a teenage boy, who had never had a close relationship with his father, developed a strong connection with Joe after only a few weeks of staying at their home. Kat remembers seeing the young man's parents shortly after and their telling her how much he had changed and turned his life around. Kat says that, in addition to teaching teens about how to do everyday tasks such as cooking and doing the laundry, she and Joe try their

hardest to “make [the foster children] feel wanted and like they are getting that ‘normal family experience’.” Special occasions are no exception, as Kat says that she and Joe celebrate the holidays with their foster children “in the same way we would with our own children – we get together with our family and sing and play instruments.” Kat believes that doing it this way makes the foster children “feel loved and included.” This relationship does not end when the teens leave their home. For example, they are still in touch with a young woman who moved to the mainland and recently shared the exciting news that she has a job in her career interest area and is pregnant. “We experience the same anxieties that any parent might have and also have the same feelings of pride and happiness.”



Floral Show ~ Lunch ~ Auction

For information about sponsorships, auction donations, purchasing tickets and more, visit WWW.MYFS.ORG or call 579-8414, Ext. 8102

Maui Youth & Family Services’ signature fundraiser, *Growing Dreams*, is back!

**Saturday, August 17, 2013 - 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
The Grand Wailea Resort & Spa**

This one-of-a-kind event will include a fashion show featuring ensembles augmented with extravagant floral headpieces and other surprise elements created by noted floral designer, Ron Mulray, who will be on hand to dazzle guests as he explains and conducts demonstrations with his creations

This is now a bi-annual event, so don't miss this one or you will have to wait until 2015!

Mahalo to MAUI PETROLEUM for choosing Maui Youth & Family Services as its *Ohana Fuels 2nd Quarter 2013 Beneficiary Organization!*

Please consider purchasing the *Ohana Fuels* gasoline brand between now and June 30th to help our fundraising efforts!

Fuel Up. Do Good.	Ohana FUELS
As part of an ongoing commitment, Ohana Fuels will continue to partner with non-profit organizations that serve the needs of those living in our community by donating a portion of each purchase from every gallon at Ohana Fuels locations.	For the months of April, May and June your purchase supports Maui Youth & Family Services Inc.
For more info: www.ohanafuels.com	 Maui Youth & Family Services, Inc. <small>"Building better lives with Hawaii's families"</small>
Ohana Fuels Maui	
Kahului 85 Wakea Avenue Kahului, Hawaii 96732	Makawao 1100 Makawao Avenue Makawao, Hawaii 96768
Pukalani 3310A Haleakala Highway Pukalani, Hawaii 96768	

Your support makes Mother’s and Father’s Day that much more special for countless individuals and families in this community!

Please visit our websites to learn more about how you can help.

MYFS.ORG

ALOHA-HOUSE.ORG

MALAMAFAMILYRECOVERY.ORG

MAHALO for helping us save lives, restore FAMILIES & help people turn their lives around!

