

Working to Make Justice Healing and to Increase Peace



Summer Newsletter 2023

Waialua, O'ahu

July 6, 2022

Aloha Friend,

We are delighted to share HFRJ's many accomplishments since December 2022 with you today!

HFRJ's wonderful results include the ongoing Higher & Continuing Education Pilot and the Huikahi Restorative Reentry Circle program at the women's prison, and the Kalihi Leadership Academy for 12- 18 year old students. We have also been busy organizing the international *Justice Innovations Summit* at

the University of Hawai'i, to take place on February 16–19, 2024, with our amazing co-hosts, sponsors and presenters. To learn more about these exciting achievements, please read on!

We continue to remain inspired and to move forward with our mission to restore, heal and give hope. Thank you for your friendship and encouragement. If you are able to support our work with a donation, we would be most grateful. We hope your summer is great!

Imua,
Leela and Lorenn

Justice Innovations Conference, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa February 16–19, 2024

JUSTICE INNOVATIONS SUMMIT



Honolulu, Hawai'i



February 16th-19th, 2024

HFRJ is organizing this February 16–19, 2024 event for people from all over the world to learn about justice innovations to help build collaborations to create positive systemic and institutional change. Co-hosts are the Nepal Forum for Restorative Justice in Kathmandu, the University of Hawai'i's Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, William S. Richardson School of Law and College of Social Sciences. We especially hope Hawai'i policy makers can learn more about helpful alternatives to the traditional criminal legal system.

Our partners and sponsors include: The Ahimsa Collective, New York University Center on Violence and Recovery, The Zehr Institute, IIRP, and Duke University Divinity School. Presenters include: Dorothy Roberts, Mimi Kim, Shadd Maruna, Tshepo Madlingozi along with many other well respected national and international justice advocates, researchers, and practitioners. There is a call for presentations and registration is discounted until August 15th. The event will be as engaging and as participatory as possible using more panels instead of single speakers, and workshops that include participant activities. The summit will be held at the University of Hawai'i campus in Honolulu.

**Higher & Continuing
Education Program for
Incarcerated Women**



To date 24 women who are in the Higher & Continuing Education Program for Incarcerated Women at Hawai'i's Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) have passed the GED. Despite all the interruptions of the program including Covid and construction at the prison, 23 women passed the GED examination with the help of peer tutors within approximately 12 (unconsecutive) full months. This is the highest number

of people passing the GED in this time frame at any prison in the state (previously WCCC averaged two women earning GEDs). The program has experienced some setbacks from the state's department of public safety, but we're hoping progress continues regardless.

Most of women who pass the GED, enroll next in Windward Community College courses provided at the prison through its Pu'uhonua Program, and most of the women being released are pursuing college too. We are confident that the women's educational success will lead to more opportunities for them to exercise agency in their lives, which will lead to further peace and well-being. The women's positive and unique contributions can strengthen our community.

A celebration was held in June at WCCC for the women who passed the GED this year and for those who earned Certificates in Psycho-Social Developmental Studies from Windward Community College. Lt. Governor Sylvia Luke, former Governor Linda Lingle, Representative Linda Ichiyama, former Farrington High School principal and state Board of Education chair Catherine Payne, WCCC warden Ione Guillonta, along with other wonderful community members, attended.

Through the hard work of the Women's Prison Project, and the legislative Women's Caucus, the program was funded by the state legislature. The funds have gone directly to the state's prison administration who we are hopeful will spend it fulfilling the methodology of this program, which applies cooperative student focused learning, and not autocratic teacher focused approaches. We extend much gratitude to all who help provide this program ☐☐

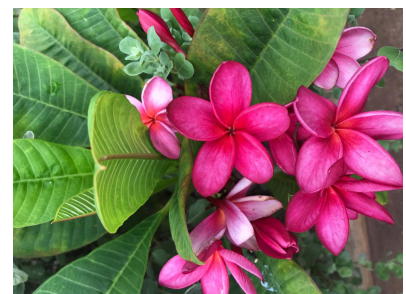
Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope.

Hope breeds peace 🕊 ☐

~Confucius

Scholarships for formerly incarcerated women

Thanks to generous donors ☐ four women who are full-time University of Hawai'i system students were awarded \$1000 scholarships. Another 5 who are either in school now or preparing to go in the fall, received different levels of assistance. We hope to give more in December.

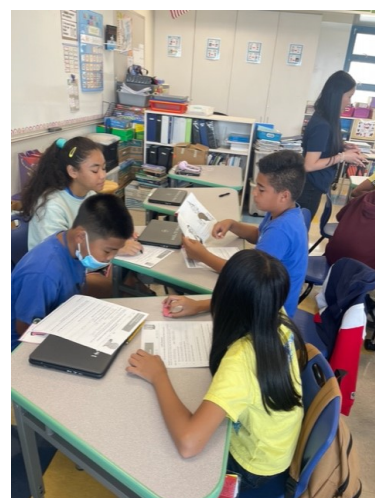


Keiki Protection Project Waipahu High School Students Teach Reading & Conflict Management to Elementary Students

Althea Valenzuela, a junior at Waipahu High School, led a group of her peers on a mission to inspire a love for reading and peaceful behavior to elementary school students. The secondary students used HFRJ's cooperative learning for literacy and non-violence program that is based on literacy and service-based violence prevention, which can empower students with the skills needed to create peace.

In March and April, the secondary students visited Waipahu and Honowai Elementary Schools to teach 4th and 6th graders about conflict management. The students were engaged and eagerly read the books donated by HFRJ. At the end of the project, the secondary students donated the books to the schools for continued use. To reinforce the lessons on conflict management, the students completed reading comprehension worksheets and participated in an art contest. The art contest showcased the students' artistic skills and understanding of the conflict management concept.

The Waipahu High School students expressed their gratitude to Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice for donating the books. Overall, the project was a great success and exemplified the power of community collaborations and education.



Love is the Key ♥

Trinidad & Tobago Prison Commissioner Deoersad Ramoutar's Journey of Compassion

Loren had the opportunity to interview Deoersad Ramoutar in Trinidad on December 16, 2022. He is the acting Commissioner of Prisons in Trinidad and Tobago who is driven by compassion. Commissioner Ramoutar believes that **love ♥ is what prisons need most**. He underwent a remarkable transformation from working initially as a prison guard to becoming Acting Commissioner of prisons after 30 years. While working as a

guard, he was motivated by a former incarcerated man to attend college, and become a social worker. He applies a humanistic approach to prison management, emphasizing the importance of love, respect, and rehabilitation. He is a restorative justice facilitator and through various initiatives, Commissioner Ramoutar seeks to empower the incarcerated and facilitate their reintegration into society. From providing educational opportunities to implementing emotional healing programs, he strives to restore their self-esteem and strengthen family connections. He recognizes the value for both the incarcerated and his staff, to be motivated and to have positive purpose.



Deoersad Ramoutar



Trinidad & Tobago Prison System Mission



Please Don't Embed Restorative Justice in Government

Leela and Lorenn wrote an opinion piece published in the Honolulu Star Advertiser about a bill in the state legislature that would have integrated RJ into prosecutors' offices. Modern RJ developed in

the 1970s– 1980s from a grassroots community movement in response to government's failures. Unfortunately, government continues to suffer from strategies that harm people including trying to address social and public health

problems with punitive solutions. HFRJ also does not support embedding RJ in government because of political and for credibility reasons. For example, government supervisors could prevent certain people from obtaining restorative services for political reasons. Or those who receive restorative services from government sources may already distrust law enforcement and government staff, as opposed to community-based providers, whose work is understood to be driven by more compassionate values. Fortunately, the bill was not passed out of the senate legislature. We hope our policy makers attend the Summit in February to learn more about RJ and other justice innovations.

Meet Matt Mattice with the Judiciary History Center

Matt Mattice, a former president of Hawai'i Friends of Restorative Justice, has been working as the Executive Director of the King Kamehameha V Judiciary History Center for the past 31 years. The Center is located in the historic Ali'iolani Hale building in Honolulu. It was founded in 2000 to educate the public about the history of Hawaii's legal system and the role it has played in the state's development.



As Executive Director, Matt is responsible for the management and development of the center, including the planning and implementation of educational programs and exhibits. Under his leadership, the center has become a significant educational and cultural institution in Hawai'i. Matt has an in-depth knowledge of Hawai'i's history and culture and has been dedicated to sharing this knowledge with the public. He has developed and executed numerous exhibits and educational programs that focus on Hawai'i's legal system and the important role it has played in shaping the state.

One of the most successful programs developed under Matt's leadership is the K-12 educational program that provides educational tools and programs for students and teachers that focus on Hawaii's history and legal system. Through these programs, students gain a deeper understanding of Hawai'i's history and culture and how they have shaped the state. Matt has also collaborated with numerous other cultural and educational organizations in Hawai'i to raise awareness about the state's history and culture.

Teaching RJ at Brigham Young University in Kahuku

Loren and Megan Kouwenhoven, HFRJ's wonderful winter/spring intern from the KU Leuven University in Belgium (who kindly continues to assist us from Europe), were invited as guest speakers by David Whippy – an assistant professor of Intercultural Peacebuilding at BYU-Hawai'i and the Director of the David O. McKay

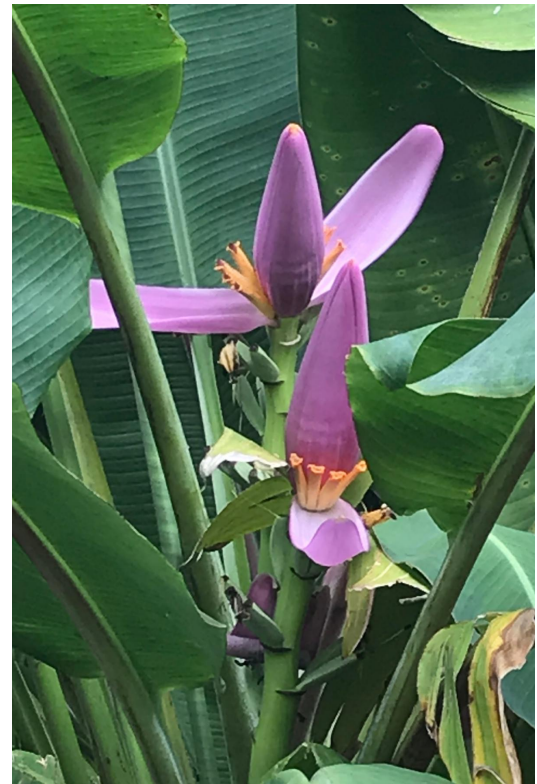


Center for Intercultural Understanding at Brigham Young University (BYU) in Hawai'i. An interactive lesson was provided for students and a talk for a larger audience at BYU was provided. The Jigsaw method developed by Elliot Aronson was used for the class activity, which was engaging and well received.

Loren and Megan were treated to lunch with David and a group of students in BYU's beautifully renovated cafeteria. They ended their day at the Polynesian Cultural Center, where many BYU students work to share their culture from the many different Polynesian Islands to the Center's visitors.



David Whippy, Loren & Megan



Meeting Up with Edgy Lee

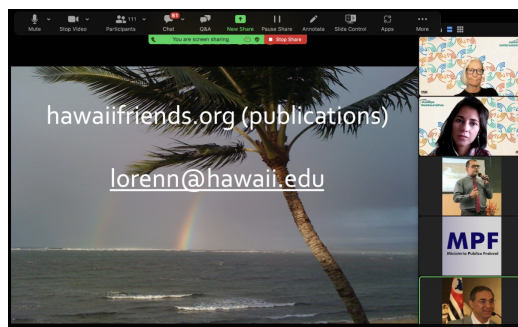


Loren and Megan met with Edgy Lee and her intern from Norway, Elise Drag, at La Mariana restaurant, Sand Island Harbor, Honolulu. Edgy is a well-known social justice advocate and independent Hawai'i filmmaker. Her early career included on-camera work as a model, in TV

commercials, series, and films. Her documentaries include *Papakolea – Story of Hawaiian Land*; *Paniolo O Hawai'i – Cowboys of the Far West*; *Waikiki – In the Wake of Dreams*; and *The Hawaiians – Reflecting Spirit* among others. The films were made in the hope of bringing a deeper awareness of the Hawaiian culture to inspire others and correct stereotypes of Native Hawaiians.

Iceland's Humane Corrections System

In June Lorenn visited Iceland's Hólmsheiði prison outside of Reykjavik, where she met with Erla Kristin Arnadottir, the Head of Sentence Management for Iceland's prison system, and colleagues. Ms. Arnadottir provided a presentation on Iceland's reentry strategies for those coming out of prison and back into the community. Iceland focuses on *keeping people out of prison* and using more social workers instead of law enforcement to do this. The Icelandic people understand social problems are best dealt with by social solutions instead of criminal and legal interventions. We hope Ms. Arnadottir and her colleagues can attend the Feburary Justice Innovations Summit to share their knowlege, or kuleana as described in Hawaiian, with an international audience.



Brazilian Prosecutors & Judges

HFRJ's huikahi reentry planning circle and its work with the Hawai'i's federal District Court was the topic of a two hour presentation in June for over 100 Brazilian federal prosecutors & judges. The participant's questions, comments, and request for more information indicated a broad interest in HFRJ's work.

Kalihi Leadership Academy

HFRJ deeply appreciates the Chamber of Commerce Public Health Fund, Hawai'i Afterschool Alliance, Department of Health, Okumura Fund, Rotary Club, Attitudinal Healing, Hawai'i Community Foundation, Women's Fund, Lisa Jensen, and all the wonderful volunteers for supporting Kalihi Leadership Academy (KLA).

Lisa, formerly on HFRJ's board and a teacher, lives in the Kalihi area and saw a need for this program. It provides Kalihi students with mentors, resources, and





HFRJ is a nonprofit agency run by volunteers. HFRJ is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations are tax-deductible and letters of confirmation will be issued for each gift.

Mahalo nui loa ♥

Donate!

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Contact Our Team

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If you have any questions or comments about our work please email Lorenn Walker, director HFRJ at lorenn@hawaiiifriends.org

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