

# 'Aha Kūpuna 2018 –Hawaiian Resource Teachers Gathering

**K**ūpuna is a Hawaiian word for older or ancestor. The word itself is rooted in reciprocity and is used to describe those who stand with us, offering knowledge and experience. In the 1970s, Hawaiian cultural educators developed a program that would bring "Kūpuna" into the elementary schools to help ensure that all the children of Hawai'i would be exposed to Hawaiian aloha, values and customs. By the 1990s, schools across the state were engaging a type of resource teachers. For many students, the only Hawaiian-cultural experiences and level of aloha was found in classrooms where these special elders shared history, songs and traditions with their kamaaina students. As time passed, fewer kūpuna were available to enter the classrooms, and younger "Māhū" teachers of the parent generation began filling the role.

Currently, more than 300 cultural resource teachers fill the role of Kūpuna and Māhū in the Kūpuna, and this year from 1 through 7, all of them came to Lāna'i to share in the rich cultural landscape and history of our island home. This worthy third year by the schools, the first in 1990 followed again in 2006, and then June 2018. Organized by Kaunā Ione Okano, Lāna'i's Kūpuna at the School, with the assistance of Susan Fujita, the program introduced participants to the cultural history curriculum being developed with the Lāna'i Culture & Heritage Center and grantee partners, Pūhala Lāna'i Culture & Historic Preservation. She'll helped move the participants across the island with learning visits to Kaunā Ione's Kōhala Initiative, Helepe's, Māhū Kūpuna and Maunali Valley. In Maunali meeting, Ann F's, Maunali Coeds, presented Hawaiian story teller activities, shared traditions of Lāna'i



Group at Maunali Valley - Photograph by J. Catherine Price

and how the Hawaiian history education knowledge of the living, the deceased, Hawaiian kōhala, cultural stories and traditions, and to create a sense of pride, respect, language, and aloha in our learning.

Many helpful hands came together to make the program a great success. Reciprocity and aloha is a real - much appreciation to each of you who helped make the program possible. From great meals, to gift and workshops and field learning opportunities, to ground transportation and lodging, and all of the little or big things that occurred throughout the program, it all Lāna'i a Kūpuna!



Meal time at the Lāna'i Filipino Community Club House. Photograph by April Maly



Maunali Coeds sharing Lani's history through theatrical story telling - Photograph by Gigi Maly



Group of Kūpuna - Photograph by J. Catherine Price



Local youth offer greetings to the Kūpuna participants. Photograph by Gigi Maly