



Pa'auilo Mauka Kalopa Community Association

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Monthly News & Updates

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May 2020 Newsletter



Finding ways to Do Good or Get Help - Even While Staying Put

By Ruth Bennett, PMKCA Vice President

This article is being released early so that readers can become informed and take actions as soon as possible.

Aloha friends and neighbors,

I recently completed 14 days of mandatory self-quarantine at my home in mauka Pa'auilo, after returning to the islands in late March. While I had been at risk of exposure – and of becoming a carrier of the disease – as I traveled home (three planes, four airports), I am grateful to be well, and to have received the support from friends as I isolated in my home.

I was happy to be home, for sure – but I was also very aware of the many ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has been impacting so many of us, in our neighborhood, on our island, and everywhere in the world. We are all dealing with substantial change – disruptions to our lives that were inconceivable just a few months ago!

These disruptions go against the very fabric of our island life which places so much value on the Hawaiian principles of aloha, kōkua and 'ohana. Every one of us is affected by the requirements for social distancing, but some of us, some members of our communities, face other terrible challenges – loss of employment, loss of business income, the closing of schools, and the loss of access to the places and people that we care about and care for.

As I waited for my quarantine period to end, I thought about the “outside world” that I would join in a few days. How different would it be, for me, a disabled kūpuna woman without local family ties? What are my neighbors and friends going through? How long would we all be coping with this unprecedented disruption of our lives?

The members of PMKCA have been working on ways that we might help, either by creating projects within our community (like the mask-making effort – see a separate article about it), or by supporting the efforts of other organizations who are trying to tackle



the critical needs our communities are facing. PMKCA doesn't want to re-invent the wheels that are already turning, but if there are local challenges that members of our community are facing, we want to help.

On Hawai'i Island, there are two closely-tied organizations which are serving as "hubs" during the COVID-19 outbreak for connecting people in need to the resources that would make a difference in their health and well-being:



Activate Hawai'i Aid:

<https://www.activatehawaiiid.org/>



Vibrant Hawai'i

<https://www.vibranthawaii.org/>

These organizations are focused on the various *immediate* concerns that people have during this pandemic and on providing connections to the other organizations and events that are striving to meet those needs:

- Unemployment – providing help with the process of filing and receiving benefits.
- Food – various organizations distribute meals and food supplies. The Hawai'i Food Basket and the Honoka'a Hongwanji's weekly "Feed the Keiki & Kupuna" (take-away dinner every Friday afternoon) are doubling or tripling the number of people they serve.
- Homelessness – the work of Hope Services and other groups to address the severe impact experienced by our houseless community.
- Keiki – assistance to children and their families when schools and school-related activities are disrupted.
- Kūpuna – assistance to the elderly that addresses their particular needs and keeps them safe.
- Financial – organizations and agencies that can provide financial aid to individuals, households and small businesses.
- Anxiety and Stress – agencies and guides for coping with the personal and family upheaval caused by COVID-19.

Besides these wonderful organizations and the other groups and programs they point to, we in PMKCA are aware of several local concerns that may need our attention and support:

A Potential Neighborhood Errand Service: PMKCA is exploring the need for a locally-based delivery or errand service. We recognize that for some vulnerable members of our community, leaving home to obtain food, medications or other essentials exposes them to greater risk of contagion or other hardships.

As of this writing, we are collecting information on the need and feasibility of such a service. Family, church and other organizational ties within our community may be providing assistance to many, but if we identify a need to fill the gaps and keep vulnerable residents safe and supplied, we would like to implement such a service as soon as

possible.

Supporting Essential Service Providers: We are continuously looking for ways to offer support to the people who keep us safe and maintain the structure of our lives. EMTs, firefighters, police and utility workers easily come to mind, but also consider the veterinarians and staff at the animal shelters around the island. Animals can suffer when their owners' lives are stressed. (The Hawaii Island Humane Society, (www.hihs.org) has opened a "Community Pet Pantry" to help families keep their pets fed.)

Patronizing our Local Businesses: Many local small businesses that serve our community are struggling to remain open so that they can provide income to their families and employees as well as goods and services to the public. PMKCA urges everyone to SAFELY support and patronize our local businesses.

- Restaurants, while unable to seat their patrons, are providing take-out orders.
- Grocery stores are keeping shelves stocked and their clientele safe, and offering other special services.
- Hardware stores are providing materials for home repairs and construction.
- Feed and farm supply stores are meeting the needs of the ranching and farming communities.
- Gas stations and auto repair shops are trying to keep our vehicles running.

"Pay it Forward": Many businesses are closed because their products and services are deemed non-essential or because staying open just isn't feasible. (I need a haircut and "**Anna's Hair Expressions**" in Honoka'a is closed for the time being!) If your financial situation allows you the option, consider making an advance payment to your provider.

Some shops and restaurants also offer gift certificates at their locations or through their websites. Buy a few for yourselves and as gifts to your friends. (**Café Il Mondo** and **Gramma's Kitchen** are two examples – they invite you to stop by for take-out and/or a few gift certificates!) While the certificates from local businesses might not be exchanged for goods or services or great food for a while, the income will be appreciated now.

Also, consider making a donation to an organization that you see is making a difference in your life or the lives of your neighbors. If your "stimulus payment" isn't required to maintain yourself and your family during this crisis, consider donating part of it to another family or organization.

Reaching Out to Our Neighbors: Now is the time to check on the welfare of the people around us. While we must take necessary precautions to avoid transmitting or contracting COVID-19, we can get to know the concerns and needs of our neighbors and offer our help. We may all be living in a different world for some time. When we talk story in a happier future about our lives now, let's tell stories of good will and care.

If Mister Rodgers were among us today, he would appreciate the Hawaiian tradition of kōkua. "**Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.**"

Let's live kōkua, now, more than ever.

Next Meetings

Here's a lineup of the next few PMKCA meetings:

Thu, Jul 9, 2020 7PM PMKCA Board of Directors Meeting
Hawaiian Vanilla Co (TBD)

Sat, Jul 25, 2020 11AM PMKCA Annual Potluck Picnic and

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