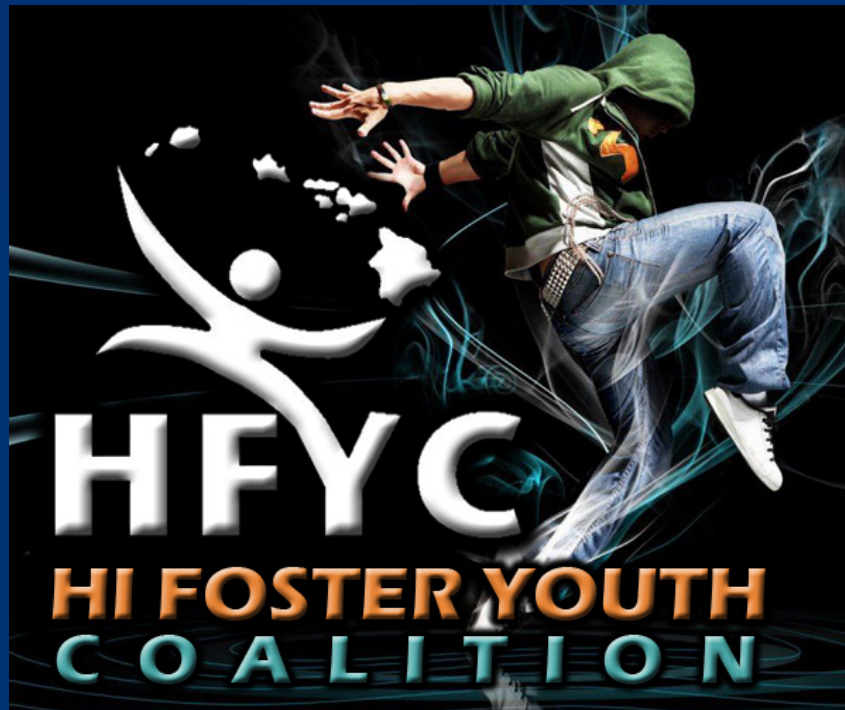


# Not Bound By Blood

“Biological to Non-Biological Connections.”



# HFYC

## Who we are

HFYC started in 2001 as a youth led initiative. Since that time, hundreds of HFYC youth members helped bring about positive change in the child welfare system and in the lives of transition age foster youth.

HFYC's impact and history is filled with the fulfillment of youths' visions of which many of you here have played an important part. Thank you. I just want to highlight a few:



In 2008, 21 youth were present at the Child and Family Services Review making Hawaii the only state at that time that actually had youth attending. Recognize any of those faces?





HFYC made three requests for the Youth Opportunities Initiative and after spending years developing collaborations and local support, HFYC members were the only youth present at the third meeting advocating for the Youth Opportunities Initiative to come to Hawaii. And, it did. HFYC members became HIHOPES board members, helping it succeed.



The Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition has had its ups and downs, like any family. We are like a family. We have each other and we have all of you. The bonds that have been made cannot be seen but they are etched into the hearts and souls of all youth who are empowered by HFYC and all who cherish Hawaii's children and work diligently for their success. Thank you for all that you have done to help the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition succeed over the past twelve years. Thank you for listening to the voices of youth and for giving them hope in their futures.

# Scenario #1

- It's Saturday night, a 16 year old foster youth decides he needs to see his siblings. So he leaves the foster home without telling anyone. While waiting at the bus stop he is assaulted. He is taken by ambulance to the hospital and you are called.

What is your response?

## Scenario #2

- A 14 year old youth is being bullied in school. She defends herself against the bully and ends up in the principals office. You are called.

What is your response??



## Scenario #3

- It's Friday night, a 17 year old youth goes to a friend's birthday party on the other side of the island. There's a fight and the police are called, they find alcohol and under age youth there. You are called.

What is your response?



# Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Problem
- Causes
- Solution
- Conclusion



# Introduction

What does “Not Bound By Blood” mean?

Youth that are removed from their parents for abuse or neglect are torn from their Blood, which impacts their understanding of:

- Culture
- Family norms
- Human Interaction
- Permanent connections

# The Problems

- high rate of emotional and behavioral problems, and functioning challenges.
- limited or stagnated in the development of their personal and cultural identities.
- attachment issues as well as challenges in experiencing permanent connections.

# Possible causes for this problem

**Problem: high rate of emotional, behavioral, and functioning challenges.**

- **Multiple placement changes contribute to a youth's behavioral problems.** (Newton, Litrownik & Landsverk, 2000)
- **Placements with non-relative caregivers or in institutionalized facilities tend to have negative impacts.**
- **Apathetic attitudes from social workers, resource parents and service providers perpetuate risk-factor behaviors.** (Lawrence, Carson & Egeland, 2006).



# Possible Causes for these problems

Problem: Youth in care may be limited or stagnated in the development of their personal and cultural identities. Separating youth from their biological family leads to attachment issues and challenges in experiencing permanent connections.

- Due to complex placement patterns siblings are less likely to be placed in foster care on the same day. (Wulczyn and Zimmerman, 2005)

- Limited resource placements.

- Differing permanency timelines, age variations and the diversity of needs for each youth.

- Organizational barriers and policy challenges.



# The Solution

- By understanding and implementing the ideas of Ohana and Hanai, we can help these problems.

Ohana: (n) family in an extended sense of the term including blood-related, adoptive or intentional.

Hanai: (v) to adopt, to be close, to nourish, to sustain. That includes lui, ho`okama, and kahu.



# The Solution -Hanai

- Developing permanence within the Resource Family.
  - Role in creating a nurturing home that demonstrates unconditional love
  - Exemplifying of love fulfills the absence of that relationship that was supposed to be built by biological parents
  - Identify strengths and positive components of your relationship
  - Maintain connection, even after youth exits







# The Solution - Ohana

- Supporting the continued natural development of a youth's personal and cultural identity.
  - Do not remove personal connection to maintain professional context
  - Create opportunities for youth to share about themselves
  - Maintain their connection with their siblings
  - Select appropriate resource family placements

# The Solution - Ohana

- Fostering life long permanence through the maintenance of sibling relationships.
  - Priority in joint placement of siblings
  - Prioritize sibling visitations
  - Resource family has most crucial role in this obligation

# The Solution - Ohana & Hanai

- Instilling a permanent connection to all human beings.

Open their perception to a global family











# Conclusion

- “Not Bound By Blood” represents the idea of extended connections through the Hawaiian cultural concepts of Ohana and Hanai.
- Foster youth possess a perspective unique and independent of all other human beings
- The cultivation of this perspective amongst our youth in care shifts the paradigm from victimized to victorious
- How we harness these ideas can provide youth with unlimited potential to become incredible leaders because of their life experiences, hardships and traumatic histories.



# MAHALO NUI LOA

