



'Ohana is Forever

Ke Ola Hou: New Beginnings

July 18, 2014 · Ko'olau Ballrooms · Kaneohe · Hawai'i

Keynote Speaker



Keynote speaker **Jaiya John** was born into foster care. As an African American and Native American, his struggle with cultural isolation was a forging fire. Jaiya slowly grew from childhood muteness and private self-destruction into a realization of purpose. As a college teenager, an encounter with the poet Nikki Giovanni broke through his shell and silence. Jaiya beheld in Giovanni a powerful example of what it meant to Love yourself and to make your life like poetry: a free, unbridled expression of beauty and Truth. That night, he wrote his first poem, staining the pages in tears of long desired emotional release. Soon after, Jaiya's spirit led him to the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, where he found a sacred spirit of land, people, and heritage. He discovered the fiercely devoted lives of Gandhi and Mother Teresa. Leper colonies, street children,

and resilient parents humbled him. Living with a local Lama family and trekking for seven weeks from the jungle of Nepal's southern border at India to the icy heights of Mount Everest, he glimpsed a vision for human existence. Even in dire material poverty, the people of Nepal exuded warmth, kindness, openness, and vital light. Seeking to understand, Jaiya studied Tibetan holistic medicine through private conversation with Nepal's healers. Their message: "The souls you serve are your teacher. Be their student. Learn their life. Healing has nothing to do with treating symptoms, and everything to do with honoring every single grain of a human life. This is the root. Once you arrive at the root, you may bless the tree."

Jaiya returned to Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon, and then earned his doctorate degree in social psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Even as a professor at Howard University from 1995 to 1998, the flower of Jaiya's life purpose was continuing to open. His heart and spirit had always been drawn to human suffering: the reflection of profound human beauty. In a step of faith, filled with an astounding Peace, Jaiya founded his ministry and reason for being: Soul Water Rising, a global human mission. He sits in sacred circle with youth, and as a speaker has shared soulful time with over a quarter of a million people. Thousands of his books on our human journey have been donated to youth programs and schools worldwide. His life is like poetry.

Jaiya will be signing books throughout the day. You reach him by phone at 301.221.7116, email at jaiya@soulwater.org or visit his website at soulwater.org.

Emcee Information



Gerald Yutob was inspired by the Bruce Wayne Enterprise from the movie *Batman The Dark Knight Rises*. He is an ambitious 19 year old with a mission to inspire the next generation of foster youth. Gerald spent over a decade in the foster care system before emancipating last year. He attended Leeward Community College for three successful semesters and is now working toward his associate's degree in liberal arts at Honolulu Community College. Gerald gained as a board member for Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition prepared him for his newest role with Family Programs Hawai'i and Youth Empowerment and Success (YES Hawai'i). Gerald is part of the Leadership Development Program with YES Hawai'i where he is working toward becoming a Youth Activity Leader. He enjoys spending time planning and hosting fun events for foster youth with YES Hawai'i. Gerald hopes to start his own non-profit organization called the Yutob Foundation to help kids off the streets, especially foster youth and orphans.



Spending her teenage years in the foster care system gave **Melody Rolnick** experience, energy and passion to fuel her professional career as an inspirational speaker, host and program coordinator for transitioning foster youth. Her fuel for her passion and positive energy comes from working through the sadness and anger she felt while in care, and finding a positive outlet for those feelings. Melody was introduced to broadcasting and DJing with UH Manoa's college radio station KTUH. After a few years of hard work and great music with KTUH, Melody joined the team at Island 98.5. She had found her voice. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in psychology in December 2013 and she joined the 'Ohana at Family Programs Hawai'i. Here Melody is able to fulfill her passion to motivate and empower foster youth as the coordinator of a foster youth led program, called Youth Empowerment and Success or YES Hawai'i. Contact Melody for information about YES Hawai'i at MRolnick@FamilyProgramsHi.org or (808) 540-2546.

Conference Presenters

Judy Adviento recently earned her Master's Degree in Social Work from UH Manoa. She is currently working with Family Programs Hawai'i as the Program Coordinator for the Mentoring Connection Program. Her previous work experience includes being a Project Coordinator for CASA's Fostering Futures project and working with Kapiolani's Peer Mentoring Program. She has done internships with Family Court's Juvenile Intake and Probation Section and Family Promise of Hawai'i. Judy has a passion for helping children and families.

Shannon Brower has been a consultant to the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative since 2008, but she began her work in 2002 as state coordinator of the Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, one of the original Jim Casey Initiative sites. In that role she led the Department of Human Services' demonstration sites in Wayne and ten Northern counties, and as it began statewide expansion. She has also been a consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, working with Family to Family, Families Count: the National Honors Program, and other Casey Initiatives.

Amber Carlson was in and out of the foster care system since the age of three. She aged out of the system after graduating high school. Amber currently works as an intern at Kids Hurt Too Hawaii and Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition. She plans to earn a Masters in Social Work from UH Manoa.

Don Faumuina and **Taylor Hoopii** are officers with the Honolulu Police Department and have served as Community Police Officers. They are the co-founders of Project tHInk! (To Help Inspire Neighborhood Kids) which redirects and transforms the lives of at risk and high risk youth involved in delinquency, truancy, drugs, gang involvement, low self-esteem, and a lost sense of direction.

They are co-owners of *Time 4 Change*, a character & leadership development company that is committed to producing successful results and changing lives through experiential learning...One Heart at a Time.

Paula Fuga is a musician on a mission! She is a former foster youth who shares her powerful story of overcoming obstacles of homelessness, abuse and neglect in hopes of inspiring and igniting passion in the generations to come. For the youth of Hawai'i, Paula is a beacon of hope sharing the healing powers of forgiveness and love. She is a shining example of possibility for youth who are learning to believe in themselves.

Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition (HFYC) is a "Youth Led" Organization comprised of former and current foster youth from the ages of 14 to 26. Since 2001, HFYC board and members advocated for improvements in the foster care system, developed resources for foster youth based on their identified needs, and offered support for the well-being of foster youth in Hawai'i. HFYC's work as a voice for foster youth gained the organization national and statewide recognition and paved the way for leadership by current and former foster youth.

HI H.O.P.E.S. (Hawai'i Helping Our People Envision Success) Youth Leadership Board is made up of current and former foster youth between the ages of 14-25. They provide the "youth voice" for the Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative ("HYOI"), a Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, to identify the needs of and advocate on behalf of transition-aged foster youth.

James LaBrie continues to be in the care of foster parents due to cerebral palsy. James plans to enter community college in the fall of 2014 to pursue his dream to be a journalist. He receives support in a Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i peer support group and plans to take the Children's Grief and Trauma Facilitator and Mentor training in August to become a mentor for other youth in care. He is a Board Member of the Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition, Oahu.

Lehua Kaopio aged out of foster care in 2011. She graduated from High School as a Kamehameha Scholar, received the Urban Corps Outstanding Achievement Award in 2011 and was chosen as a Foster Club 2012 Outstanding Young Leader. She obtained her Hawai'ian Studies AA this past May and one day will be a Hawai'ian language teacher at the secondary level. Lehua has been connected with Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i since 2009. She became a Children's Grief and Trauma Facilitator and Mentor in 2013. Her connection to the Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition (HFYC) started in 2010 while participating in an HFYC youth leadership training. She currently serves as the HFYC State-wide Board President.

Malia Malufau is a former foster youth and mother to both a beautiful 11 year old girl and a nine month girl. Malia graduated from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa with a Bachelor's in Political Science and a Certificate in Ethnic Studies. Malia has shared her wisdom by helping plan and serving as the MC for past 'Ohana is Forever Conferences.

Nellieshy Mamuad is 25 years old, President of the East Hawai'i HI H.O.P.E.S. Board and East Hawai'i Site Coordinator for the Y.E.S. Hawai'i project. She spent 5 years in foster care and aged out at 18. She graduated from UH Hilo in 2012 with a B.A. in Psychology. Nellieshy is currently working on her MSW via UH Manoa while employed at Hale Kipa as a CAMHD paraprofessional and at Catholic Charities Hawai'i as a resource family co-trainer for child-specific families. Nellieshy has 2 beautiful children, ages 4 & 6.

Patricia McManaman, Director of the Hawai'i Department of Human Services, has practiced law in Hawai'i for over 30 years. She has served as a per diem judge in the District Court and Family Court of the First Circuit. The Director is a huge advocate for foster children and youth in Hawai'i. She was instrumental in the passing of Act 252, the new law that extends foster care to age 21 in Hawai'i.

Pono aged out of the foster care system in 2008. Kicked out on his 18th birthday, he dropped out of high school to get a job and survive. In 2010, he worked to obtain his GED and started attending college in 2012 to pursue his goal of becoming a grief counselor. He became a member of the Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition in 2011, then was hired as a Youth Outreach Coordinator in 2012 where he continues to work. Pono was trained in 2013 and also works as a Children's Grief and Trauma Facilitator and Mentor for Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i.

Judge Paul Murakami is a judge of the O'ahu First Circuit Family Court of Hawai'i with a strong interest in foster youth's outcomes. Prior to his appointment, Judge Murakami had a private practice specializing in family law and criminal defense. Judge Murakami is a familiar face at 'Ohana is Forever Conferences as he has served as a presenter, on conference planning committees, and as a steadfast advocate for foster youth.

Jenna Robinson graduated from UH Manoa with a double major in History and Ethnic Studies. She was the commencement speaker at the UHM graduation ceremony. Jenna currently performs and teaches slam poetry throughout the nation and has competed on several national poetry teams. One of the ways Jenna helps at-risk youth is by organizing the art community to create her own business, *Urban Aloha*, to raise money for non-profit organizations that support youth.

Keith Spencer is with the Department of Human Services Development Training Staff. Keith has worked with youth in foster care for 24 years. He is able to reach many youth through shared passion for basketball. He graduated from Hawai'i Loa College with his B.A. in Social Science.

Noy Worachit is 21 years old and the vice-president of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board on Oahu. She spent six years in foster care and emancipated at 18 ½. Noy attends Honolulu Community College and is pursuing a degree in Administration of Justice. She works for EPIC 'Ohana as an assistant for the Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative, is a mother of two and an advocate for systems change and increased awareness about the needs of young people aging out of foster care.

Cynthia White, Executive Director and co-founder of Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i since 2001 and Director of the Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition since 2003, specializes in children's grief and trauma. Her work and research with children and youth for 33 years focused on death, grief, and trauma. She has a Master's degree in Education/Counseling Psychology from Western Kentucky University. Cynthia was in the foster care system in Kentucky from age six and grew up separated from five siblings.

Kintaro Yonekura is a former foster youth who received his Master's in Social Work degree at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He now works for Family Programs Hawai'i as a Voluntary Case Management Social Worker, working hard to strengthen families. Kintaro sits on the Board of Directors for the C.R.E.A.T.E. One 'Ohana and the Life Foundation, giving motivational speeches and training to youth. He also works with intermediate, high school and college youth doing presentations about HIV and AIDS. Kintaro is an ally and advocate for all foster youth and currently serves on the National Foster Youth and Alumni Policy Council.

Gernani Yutob, Jr. is 24 years old and alumni of the foster care system. He currently serves as the president of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board on Oahu and is active in advocating for improved outcomes for transitioning foster youth. He graduated from the University of Hawai'i - West Oahu with a B.A. in Public Administration, with a concentration on Justice Administration, and currently works for EPIC Ohana's Youth Circle program as a coordinator/facilitator, helping young people involved with