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Grants to support keiki COVID-19 education

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(Kaiser Permanente Hawaii/Special to West Hawaii Today)

(Kaiser)

Editor's note: *Each Wednesday, West Hawaii Today is publishing a story about individuals, groups or organizations that have helped make life better for others in our community during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Kaiser Permanente Hawaii recently awarded \$100,000 to the Hawaii Afterschool Alliance and \$50,000 to the Big Island nonprofit Hawaii Science and Technology Museum to support their efforts in increasing awareness about COVID-19 and vaccine safety among school-aged youth in communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

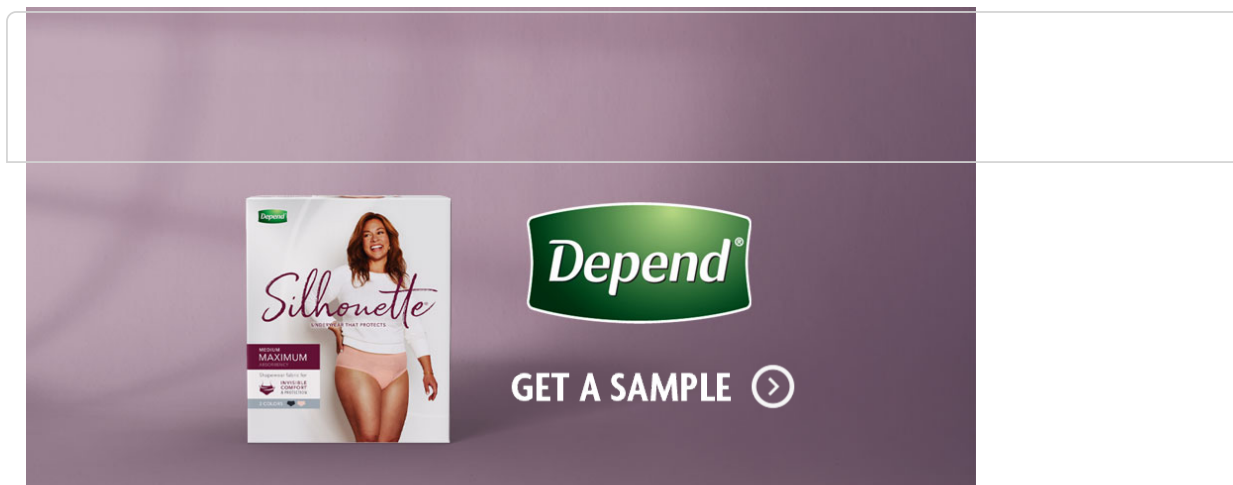
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Hawaii Afterschool Alliance, in partnership with the Hawaii Public Health Institute, will use the funding to award mini-grants to student groups, schools, classrooms, youth sports teams, and community organizations working to create culturally relevant COVID-19 awareness programs for Filipino, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities.

A working group of community stakeholders and youth representatives of underserved and diverse backgrounds will assess applications for programs centered around translated messaging campaigns, peer-to-peer and peer-to-parent strategies, and vaccination incentive programs. The workgroup will also serve as an advisory group and resource hub for organizations chosen to implement vaccination programs in their communities.

The Hawaii Science and Technology Museum grant will go towards its Keiki Heroes program, a community initiative that provides families with fun, engaging, and culturally relevant ways to encourage healthy habits. Keiki Heroes will develop new educational materials translated in Chuukese, Kosraean, Marshallese, Ilocano, Tagalog, and Spanish that focus on vaccine education. The organization will partner with the Hawaii Fire Department to distribute the materials to all schools on Hawaii Island during the annual Fire Prevention Week, and additional community-based organizations to deliver the translated materials to keiki on other islands.

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“The most effective way to protect our youngest residents, especially those who are not yet able to be vaccinated against COVID-19, is through organizations that have built trusted relationships within their communities,” said Greg Christian, Hawaii Market President, Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Hospitals. “We are pleased to partner with Hawaii Afterschool Alliance and Hawaii Science and Technology Museum as they develop out-of-the-box programs that will resonate with families and help us get closer to the day when we don’t have to worry about this devastating disease.

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The grants are part of a comprehensive national Kaiser Permanente COVID-19 education campaign to fill information gaps and foster trust among communities most impacted by the pandemic. So far, Kaiser Permanente has provided \$5 million in grants to support 24 nonprofit and community-based organizations that are providing direct assistance in communities across the United States to people most affected by COVID-19. The campaign is designed to encourage vaccination, motivate people to keep wearing masks, physically distance, and avoid gatherings until the pandemic ends.

Know a Hometown Hero who should be highlighted next Wednesday? It can be anybody, from a youngster doing good for the community, to a professional helping with the COVID-19 pandemic, or even a kupuna! Please send your nominations to cjensen@westhawaii.com with the subject: Hometown Heroes Nomination. Please include the hero’s name, contact information and what makes them a hero.