



**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Mission	2
Letter from the CEO	3
Our Team	4
Programs	6
Partnerships	14
Art & Media	18
Special Mahalo	21



## OUR MISSION

We empower children by connecting our keiki to the kai and 'āina to nurture a deeper sense of aloha and kuleana for the natural environment and themselves.

Aloha to our Supporters, Partners, and Friends,

We express our deepest gratitude for your unwavering support of Nā Kama Kai. Your commitment to our mission – connecting keiki with the kai, fostering a sense of aloha and kuleana for the environment – has been instrumental in our journey.

Our shared belief in "keiki aloha, kai aloha" has fueled our dedication to providing free ocean-based programs that emphasize safety and stewardship. We strive to fill the gap for keiki who lack access to the ocean, nurturing their love for the sea while instilling a deep understanding of their kuleana to Hawai'i and its natural resources.

Behind these achievements stand an incredible group of 250+ volunteers and dozens of community partners selflessly dedicating their time, energy, and service to ensure the success of our programs and uplifting of the next generation of ocean stewards.

Nā Kama Kai operates from a place of Hawaiian thought, rooted in traditions, culture, and knowledge passed down from our ancestors. One of our favorite 'ōlelo no'eau to share with our keiki is:

**He wa'a, he moku. He moku, he wa'a.  
*The canoe is an island. The island is a canoe.***

This Hawaiian proverb is a simple picture of the finite resources we have as island people. However, the deeper layer reveals the reliance we must have on each other in our community to survive and ultimately thrive. When one part of our island 'ohana is hurting, we're all hurting.

Although we are fortunate to have much to celebrate and to be grateful for throughout 2023, the latter part of the year was overwhelmed with the devastation in Maui. In the first few hours of hearing the tragic news, I knew in my na'au that we had to do something to help. A few calls later, and we had a plan. The ocean became a clear pathway to healing, to providing resources, and to sharing aloha. Many hands, connected by a shared sense of purpose, rallied together quickly to bring relief to the resilient community of West Maui.

While Mālama Maui is an ongoing process, Nā Kama Kai remains steadfast in our commitment to Kōkua Maui, providing support regardless of the time it takes. Our dedication to the well-being of our community underscores the essence of the 'ōlelo no'eau – we are all in this together, united by the currents of kuleana, resilience, and aloha.

Mahalo for your continuous support,  
**Duane DeSoto**

# OUR TEAM

## STAFF

Duane DeSoto, CEO + Founder

Matt Kauwe, COO

Maile DeSoto, After School Coordinator

Micah DeSoto, Ocean Clinic Coordinator

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Billy Pratt

Shawn Murakawa

Bud Antonelis

Chris Hochuli

Ben Komer

Anita Lopez

Daniel Ikaika Ito

Adam Wong

Shelee Kimura

Lāiana Kanoa-Wong

## BOARD OF ADVISORS

Angela Correa-Pei

Rob Iopa

Brian Keaulana

Scott McPhail

Malia Kaaihue

# PROGRAMS

---





# OCEAN CLINICS

Our monthly Ocean Safety & Conservation Awareness Clinics serviced our community statewide in 2023, reaching seven cities on O’ahu, two on Hawai’i Island, and one on Kaua’i. The clinics provide a positive, nurturing, and controlled environment enabling keiki to become confident in the ocean through a personally guided experience. The experience ingrains in each participant an understanding of their kuleana to water safety and environmental awareness, while also cultivating memories of fun in the ocean.

**1,045**

Keiki served

**217**

Volunteers

**1,970**

Volunteer Hours

**15**

Total Clinics



# KLINICS FOR KUMU

Nā Kama Kai designed a professional development course in partnership with Education Incubator for elementary school teachers across Hawai'i. Also called PDE3, our courses took the form of specialized ocean clinics structured to equip kumu with lessons in ocean safety stewardship, and conservation. Through ho'okele (wayfinding), kai palekana (ocean safety), kū hoe (stand-up paddling), and hoe wa'a (canoe paddling), we hope to inspire our kumu to bring these lessons from the sea to their haumāna in their classrooms.



We hosted five PDE3 clinics for teachers on three different islands in 2023. 71 teachers attended a clinic and were equipped with materials to help them share about ocean safety and stewardship in their classrooms. Mahalo to the DOE.

**KALAPAKI**  
Kaua'i

**'EWA**  
O'ahu

**HILO**  
Hawai'i

**KAWAIHAE**  
Hawai'i







# HĀLAU NĀ KAMA KAI

Halau Nā Kama Kai at Pōkaʻī Bay is our organization headquarters, but more importantly, it serves as a piko of learning and nurturing our keiki through after-school and school break programs, as well as events and collaborations with our community partners. Exactly 1,831 keiki were served at Hālau Nā Kama Kai in 2023.

**1,831**  
Keiki reached

## MAHALO TO OUR HĀLAU PARTNERS



### USAG-HI

For providing the land and space for us to operate and to have Hālau Nā Kama Kai



### THE BEACH HOUSE AT 604

For providing daily meals and snacks to all the keiki that come to the Hālau



### WAIʻANAЕ COAST COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CENTER

For providing meals and resources for our keiki



### ʻELEPAIO SOCIAL SERVICES

For hosting a food drive for our community and providing food for our keiki at the Hālau



### LILIʻUOKALANI TRUST

For partnering with Nā Kama Kai to support ʻōpio benefitting from our Queen’s legacy



### LEAHI SWIM SCHOOL

For providing swim lessons at Pōkaʻī Bay for West Oʻahu keiki, who don't have access to a public pool



### HUI HULIAU

To Adrian Silva and the Hui Huliau team for supporting our programs and initiatives at the Hālau



# ALAKA'I

Nineteen 'ōpio (youth) are enrolled in the Alaka'i Mentorship Program, where they are challenged and equipped with lessons to develop self-respect, self-reliance, and service to the community. Aligned with our values of ocean safety and stewardship, Alaka'i lead stations at our monthly ocean clinics and expand their knowledge of ocean wayfinding and boating skills. In-depth educational and cultural experiences for Alaka'i in 2023 included camping at Kahana and Mākua on O'ahu and Hakioawa on Kaho'olawe. These three huaka'i served as a platform to learn from these wahi pana, the people who care for these spaces, and to give back.

## **KAHANA** O'ahu



**HAKIOAWA**  
Kaho'olawe



**MĀKUA**  
O'ahu





# KŪMAU

Kūmau served as a vessel of education for 1,042 keiki this year. Kūmau's presence has been integral in engaging keiki with the ocean as well as elevating events and experiences with our community partners such as a coral planting and restoration event with Kuleana Coral and the Paddle Out for Maui.

**1,042**  
Keiki reached





# KEIKI SURF KONTEST

The annual Keiki Surf Kontest held at Mākaha Beach is a special event for the children of West O‘ahu. Home to the densest Native Hawaiian population per capita in the nation, we feel a greater kuleana to serve and nurture these keiki through the cultural practices of their heritage. Surfing is not only a Hawaiian sport -it is a catalyst for fun, confidence, and pride in their identity. The 2023 Keiki Surf Kontest featured 74 keiki competitors.





# PARTNERSHIPS

---

# PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS



## CORAL REEF RESTORATION WITH KULEANA CORAL

At an event in partnership with Kuleana Coral, we successfully planted a total of 97 coral colonies in Pōka‘ī Bay to restore the natural reef of the area and provide a habitat for many fish species. The event was supported by an Aloha ‘Āina Grant from the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority.



## ‘ŌLINO SUMMER PROGRAM WITH LILI‘UOKALANI TRUST

Hālau Nā Kama Kai welcomed ‘ōpio of Lili‘uokalani’s ‘Ōlino Summer Program for four weeks. The youth participated in six sessions spanning various ocean and cultural activities to deepen their connection to the community and our environment. They also gained CPR training and certification.



## HO‘ĀKEA MAUKA TO MAKAI WITH MĀLAMA LEARNING CENTER AND THE DEPT. OF EDUCATION

Students from Nānākuli and Wai‘anae High School participated in a three-day event at Pōka‘ī Bay to engage with wa‘a and aloha ‘āina organizations in hands-on learning experiences to perpetuate foundational values and perspectives of ho‘okele. Hōkūle‘a, Mo‘okiha, Mānaiakalani, Kiakahi, and Kūmau were among the wa‘a present. The event was made possible by the Hawai‘i Department of Education and their commitment to increase wa‘a education for our keiki.





# KŌKUA MAUI FUND

Our community rallied together to show their aloha for the Lahaina people affected by the fires on August 8th. Our Kōkua Maui Fund let us act quickly to get supplies to West Maui in August and allows us to provide additional support to families and keiki in need.

**\$200K+**  
Raised







# MAHALO PARTNERS & DONORS



**WAIANAЕ COAST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HEALTH CENTER**



**kuleana**  
CORAL RESTORATION



**MIKE ITO PHOTOGRAPHY**



**ZIPPY'S**



WATER SAFETY • EDUCATION • CERTIFICATION



**'ELEPAIO  
SOCIAL SERVICES**



OUTRIGGER  
**DUKE KAHANAMOKU  
FOUNDATION**



Kamehameha Schools



**LILI'UOKALANI  
TRUST**



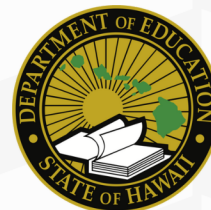
First Hawaiian Bank.



**BILLABONG**



**HAWAII TOURISM  
AUTHORITY**



**CITY AND COUNTY OF  
HONOLULU**

**YOUNG  
BROTHERS**



**Hui Huliau**  
A Native Hawaiian Organization



# ART & MEDIA



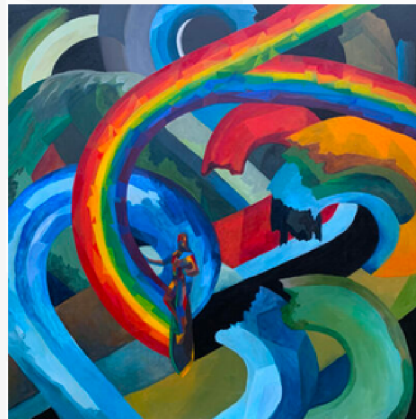
# KA MO'OKŪ'AUHAU O HE'E NALU

## THE GENEALOGY OF SURFING BY SOLOMON ENOS

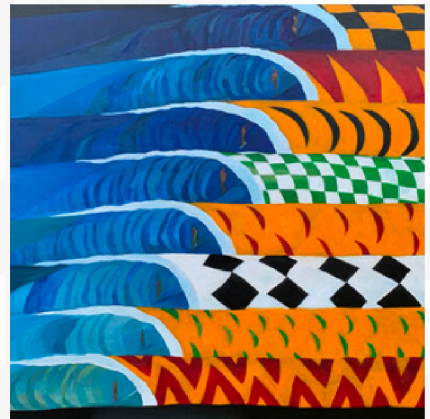
In January we hosted the Source of Surfing Honolulu Exhibition at The Manifest featuring the unveiling of a five-panel mural commissioned by Vans and brought to life by Solomon Enos, "Mo'okū'auhau o He'enalu" - the genealogy of surfing. This mural invites you to revisit your narrative of where surfing comes from, and to connect to Hawaiian values like Pono, 'ohana and 'āina.



**AKUA**



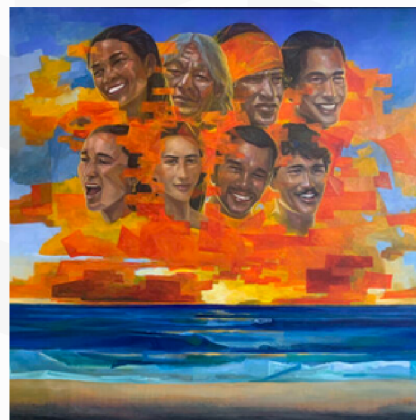
**ĀINA**



**ALI'I**



**THE MONARCHY**



**ME'E**



# MAKA'ALA BAY

## LESSONS FROM THE SEA - AN ANIMATED SERIES

“Maka’ala Bay: Lessons From The Sea” is a series of five animated videos based on our ocean safety and stewardship clinics and designed to take our message to a wider audience. Each episode is based on one of Nā Kama Kai’s five educational pillars: Kai Palekana (Ocean Safety), Ho’okele (Wayfinding), Holokai (Ocean Experience), Hoe Wa’a (Canoe Paddling) and Mālama Kai (Ocean Conservation & Stewardship).

Our keiki audience will experience these lessons through the animated adventures of Maka’ala Bay’s ocean keiki - I’o a Hawksbill Turtle, Ma’o the Green Sea Turtle, Sila the Hawaiian Monk Seal and little ‘A’ama the black crab. Along the way, they will be guided by their teacher ‘Anakē Manō, the wise maternal tiger shark, and mentor ‘Anakala Wa’a, an ocean-going canoe, as well as live-action mentors. Each episode ends on a high note with an uplifting song, summarizing its message, sung by Maka’ala Bay’s ukulele playing octopus ‘Anakala He’e.

The series is produced by Twiddle Productions featuring original artwork by Wooden Wave and the voices from our Nā Kama Kai ‘ohana.

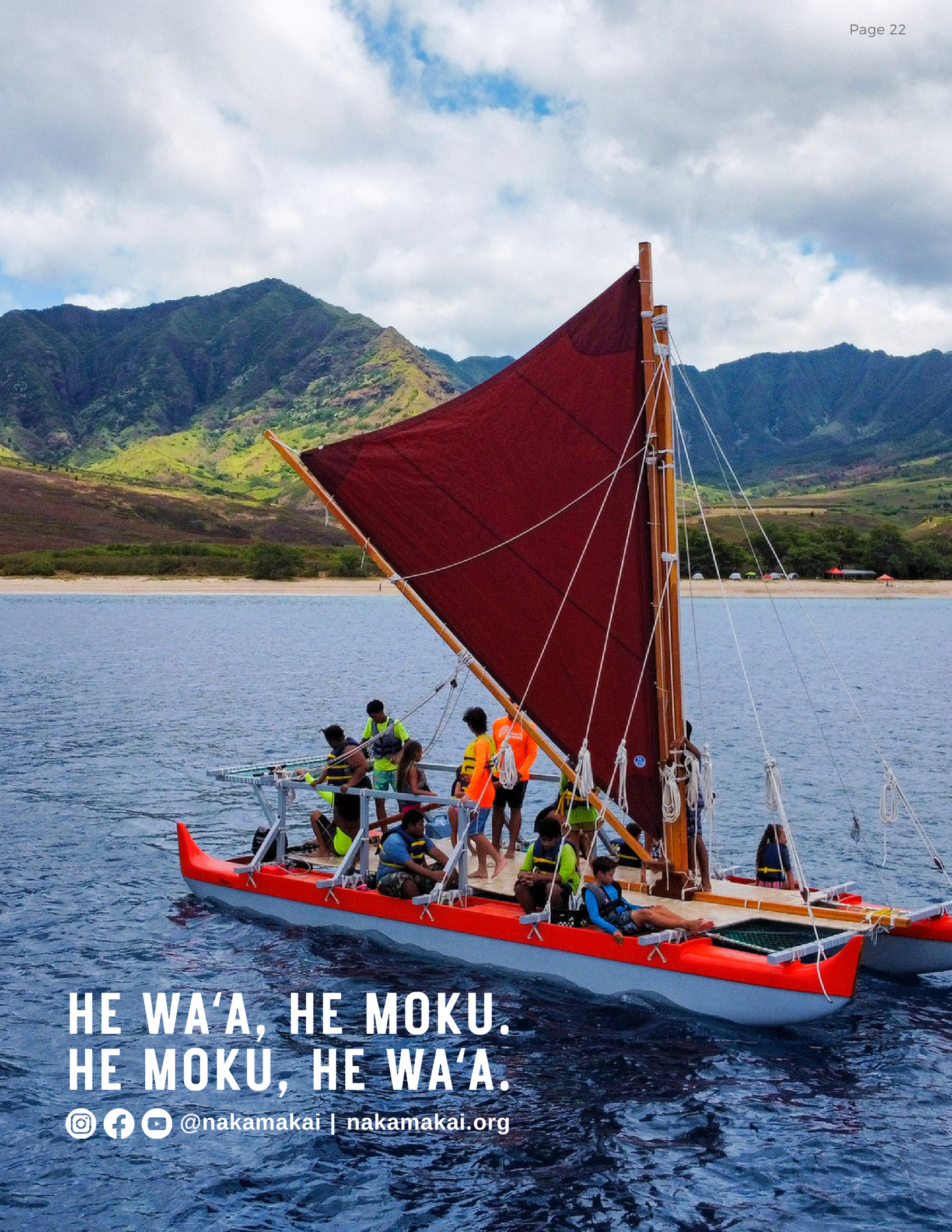


# SPECIAL MAHALO



# MAHALO

Pomai Bertleman  
Kawika Crivello-Helm  
Mike Ito  
Archie Kalepa  
Noland Keaulana  
Brian Keaulana  
Rodney Kilborn  
Alex Kinimaka  
Johnny Mac  
Chad Paishon  
Mike Pederson  
Jody Ragsdale  
Mikey Red  
Zane Schweitzer  
Pohaku Stone  
Kamaka Air  
Rell Sunn Education Foundation



**HE WA'A, HE MOKU.  
HE MOKU, HE WA'A.**

   @nakamakai | [nakamakai.org](http://nakamakai.org)

