



UH Hilo Rural Nursing Newsletter

Hawi/UHH Health
Collaboration Project

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Summer Newsletter



This is the first UH Hilo Rural Nursing Newsletter. Some of the students who went to James Walker Hall Hawi describe below their experiences in meeting with the Hawi leaders to discuss Hawi's healthcare needs with the UH Hilo Doctorate in Nursing Practice (DNP) students who are in the Rural Nursing class this summer. The elders described the current healthcare options available in Hawi and gave details about some the areas in which the DNP students might to help. Interestingly enough, the North Kohala/South Kohala House Representative, Cindy Evans, was present, and mentioned that she would like to have ongoing input into future legislation by anyone who was willing to communicate with her on healthcare issues. David Fuentes spoke about and gave a tour of the Kohala Intergenerational Center, extensive recreation, and community center facilities that had been recently built, and also spoke about the Hawi area total sustainability projects in which the entire community was sharing to make people of Hawi totally independent, particularly in the area of food. One of the examples was an ingenious circular fish raising and garden setup in which the water and nutrients are piped in a circle through several

gardens in large tubs and a fish tank, which uses the fish waste as fertilizer and the gardens as filters to clean the water so it can go back into the fish tank. The whole experience was very impressive, and it is inspiring to see an entire community work so harmoniously together to make huge changes in their community. The story about how the whole community formed a line three miles long to pass the books from the old library to the new library showed that the traditional Hawaiian community spirit is alive and strong in Hawi. The people of Hawi are to be commended and are a shining example to the rest of the country and the world of how people can shelve their differences and accomplish miracles if they just work together for the common good.



Poki'i's Hawi Experience

The trip to Hawi, I felt was very rewarding and eye opening. The kupuna of Hawi were very welcoming and seemed open to our presence and the idea of us coming into the community to help them achieve optimal health. The elders were very knowledgeable about their health,

what would help them, and where their resources are. I was a little surprised as to the want for La'au lapaau but it made me excited and hopefully I will be able to bring that or at least the resources to them. There was an Auntie from the community that approached me and gave me her info to keep in touch. The whole community made me feel welcomed and at home.

Meeting Uncle David Fuentes and being able to wala au with him was an awesome experience. You can see that his heart is into helping the people and building up the Kohala area. He has a lot of knowledge, experience, and is willing to help anyone. He is very open to any help that can benefit that area. It seems that he also has made partnerships that have begun to help people in that area. Making connections is imperative and beneficial for all of us as it will help to achieve our own goals and those of our patients and the communities that we serve. No one has all the answers. Going with Uncle David to the youth community center and hearing how it all came about showed the strength of the community as a whole. He noted that Kohala plans to be 50% self-sustainable by 2018 and it looks like they are well on their way.



Patricia's Hawi Experience

I feel that the most significant information that came out of my encounter with the Hawi Elders Group is their need for an adult day care. The community elders as well as community leader David Fuentes voiced the need for an adult day care that could provide respite for caregivers of elderly family members. In addition, the Hawi community elders mentioned that there was only one health clinic in the community and that accessing community-based healthcare was an issue. The issue of lack of access to preventative healthcare seems like a significant issue in the community that needs a

remedy. The community needs to have a convenient way to receive preventative or episodic healthcare, otherwise their long-term health will most certainly suffer and hospital stays and related costs will increase.

I also received valuable information from community leader and Ka Hana No'eau Mentorship program director David Fuentes. Mr. Fuentes is very knowledgeable regarding community program development and sparked many ideas on how to progress with developing a community program. His passion for his community was abundantly evident and inspired many ideas for my own future community projects! I am glad that I was able to make a connection with this knowledgeable community leader who I was welcomed to contact in the future should I need any guidance.



Noemi's Hawi Experience

Reductions in spending and public services is evident in today's economic difficulties, therefore, there is an increase emphasis on locale people and communities acting together to help ensure the well being of their community members from young to old. My experience with Hawi has been so rich that I was touched by the engagement of the community members in working together capturing their past experiences and translating these knowledge to their young. Educating their children and grandchildren through mentorship program and valuing their roots of where they came from translating to generations of leaders with sense of "local style" and OHANA yielding to creative solutions to Hawaii's problems.

It is pleasing to have found communities such as Hawi having locale people develop projects and activities that capture the engagement of the whole community enhancing localism evidenced by the development of Ka

Hana No'eau. This project develops self-esteem through mentorship program such as agriculture, animal husbandry, biotechnology, culinary arts, etc. Preparing their students to be good citizens of America with the motto "If you want 'em you make 'em, if you broke 'em you fix 'em" style.

I believe that locally developed programs such as the Ka Hana No'eau can be delivered to another community and be the role model to emulate from. Mr. David Fuertes the founder of this program has vision of "working diligently" and put it into action. These actions have captured many audiences including the University of Hawaii at Hilo DNP program and I was blessed to have witnessed this changing experience. It is these voluntary activities that need enhancement and support from government sectors supporting leaders such as Mr. Fuertes who have a clear sense of vision for his local community and help put these visions into action. We need Leaders that supports the concept of local planning, collaborative work of communities supporting local, sustaining the 'Aina, and sharing the Aloha spirit with service providers and community members working together addressing the ever increasing economic turmoil of our land. It is quite refreshing to see a small rural community such as Hawi paving the way to a better, healthier, and safer place to live in America.



Hui's Hawi Experience

I learned that the Hawi trip is a great experience that will definitely contribute to my DNP project! Today's economy has significantly impacted many aspects of our lives, especially the healthcare system. Hawi community can be a great example for other communities in Hawaii on how to become self-sufficient in this economic state. Their leadership role and vision to pull their members and youth together, and make projects to meet their

needs, are impressive and meaningful. By engaging the community and its members to work together and develop projects, and inspire the youth, the leadership takes great steps to help the community to sustain itself. This transforms their community's OHANA up to new levels. If other Hawaiian rural communities can utilize their resources and efforts for a better community, the Hawaiian Islands would soon be self-sufficient and would prosper. Through their visions and actions, I can see the UH Hilo DNP program will be inspired to make a difference in Hawaii rural health, especially through collaboration with the community of Hawi. The community of Hawi and the UH Hilo DNP program together will help pave a new way to improve the rural health environment in Hawaii.



Amy's Hawi Experience

The day in Hawi truly was amazing for me. First of all, I was amazed at how many people were at that meeting. The community members were so welcoming and open to us, and were so actively involved in the meeting. Males and females, different ages, different backgrounds, some born and raised there, some newcomers. They gave us such great information on what resources are there and how they are, and what is needed. They kind of led the conversation themselves. I loved chatting with and mingling with the community members at lunch-time.

I think my favorite part though was going to the Kohala Intergenerational Center and talking with David Fuertes and learning all about what he and other community leaders have done. He is amazing. He is inspiring. The whole center out there - with the pool and tennis court and the massive gym and park and baseball field, etc., etc., etc. - is so great. And the most wonderful thing is that Hawi and its community members did it all.

As a community they recognized their problems and then also where to start intervening to make a difference - for them, it was with the youth. And they have the numbers that show that their programs and interventions work!

It is hard to find communities like this. Many communities, with all their problems, may sit around and blame everyone else or wait for outside people to come in and help. There's not the same sense of community pride and ownership. Even though many small towns are "rural", they don't have the character that Hawi has. I've spent a LOT of time the last few months out at the Waianae Coast and it is so wonderful because it reminds me of how Hawi was. They have taken it upon themselves to better their people and their community. These are places that are considered "undeveloped" by so many outsiders, when in-fact, places like Hawi and Waianae are turning themselves into models for what a community really should be. SO INSPIRING!! I keep saying it, because it's true. I can't wait to graduate so I can live in and be a part of huge community change like this. I LOVE IT!!



Tracy's Hawi Experience

Promoting cultural education is an important part of cultivating resilience. I believe it helps to both know "where you came from" and have a vision for "where you are going" when developing resilience. Also, many cultural programs focus upon traditional ways of doing things, including growing food, making clothes, etc. These are skills that have been identified as ways to cultivate resilience. I think the key with kids is to make the process fun and allow them to have some ownership of what/how they are learning. I thought the mural on the wall at the Ka Hana No'eau Mentorship Program's

building was a perfect example of this. David Fuentes and his volunteers were working to find ways to connect kids with Hawaiian heritage through both mentoring and cultural activities, but were also willing to allow the kids to make the space their own with that amazing mural. No doubt this helped the kids to feel invested in the program and therefore, more receptive to learning about their cultural heritage.

Question: Could the photovoice method, described in some studies, be used by kids to help them identify what their cultural heritage is/means?



Editorial Comment

We all look forward to creating a long-lasting alliance between the community of Hawi and the UH Hilo Doctorate in Nursing Practice Program, rural nursing emphasis. The intention is to further the goals of the community and of the university for the mutual benefit of both. Here's to a happy and fruitful collaboration, so we can move into the future together!

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