



For Immediate Release

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NEARLY 5,500 STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL WITH FREE SCHOOL SUPPLIES FROM READY TO LEARN PROGRAM

HONOLULU—Helping Hands Hawaii's (HHH) Ready to Learn program (RTL) distributed 5,435 free school supply kits to low-income and homeless students for the new school year. This is 1,365 kits more than last year's back-to-school effort. Kits will continue to be distributed to students throughout the year.

From June 1 to July 31, Helping Hands Hawaii (HHH) raised \$12,101.19 in monetary donations and collected 18 pallets of school supplies (estimated value \$29,650) for a total of nearly \$42,000 to benefit its Ready to Learn program (RTL). Volunteers donated more than 1,000 hours of their time and assembled 8,500 individual school supply kits. Each kit has an approximate value of \$10.

Students who participate in the RTL program are referred through participating social service providers. This year HHH launched a pilot project that extended the RTL referral process to include social service agencies on Hawaii Island. This was coordinated by HHH's Hilo office.

Through this pilot, 150 Hawaii Island students received assistance from the RTL program. All other islands continued to receive assistance through HHH partner agencies. Donations received on the Neighbor islands stayed on-island to benefit local students.

About Ready to Learn and Helping Hands Hawaii

Ready to Learn was founded in 1999 in partnership with the late U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye and his wife Maggie Inouye. Its purpose is to ensure that low-income and homeless students throughout Hawaii have basic school supplies for their education. In 2005, HHH assumed statewide administration of this initiative and has continued to perpetuate the Inouyes' vision. Together with our community partners, HHH assists more than 7,000 students each year. For more information about the RTL program, contact rtl@helpinghandshawaii.org.

Helping Hands Hawaii (HHH) was founded in 1974 and connects individuals, families and organizations with essential human and material resources. Through our variety of programs, we provide a full continuum of care and help people overcome obstacles, like homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse and language access. Our strong partnerships with local social service providers and innovative approaches strengthen our community by helping people to help themselves. To learn more about HHH, its programs or services, please visit www.HelpingHandsHawaii.org.

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