

Good Neighbor

Photo courtesy Reid Shimabukuro



Shelly & Reid SHIMABUKURO

There's a lot that Pālama Settlement does for the community, and it's all thanks to dedicated volunteers like the husband-and-wife team of Reid and Shelly Shimabukuro. "My wife and I are both from Kalihi," says Reid. "We got really attached to Pālama Settlement after finding out what they do for the community."

In addition to youth football, Pālama Settlement also offers aquatic and kūpuna activities, as well as its Pakolea and in-community treatment programs to help at-risk youth.

The duo, though, assists with the nonprofit's youth football program, something they've been involved with for the past nine years, when their oldest son Duke (who is now in college) started playing.

This season, Reid will be coaching his 11-year-old son, who is enjoying his first tackle football season with Pālama Settlement so far.

But more than the athletics, which is loads of fun, to hear Reid tell it, is the organization's focus on academics.

"That's one of the things that's impressive about Pālama," he says. "You don't just practice five days a week."

Kids will hit the field a few times each week, with the other days dedicated to schoolwork and tutoring. Volunteers, for example, come in from University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Pacific University to help students.

And no team would be up and running without Shelly, who's an administrative assistant at Hawai'i Baptist Academy.

"She recognizes the challenges that some of these boys come from," says Reid, who's been a federal firefighter for nearly three decades.

Shelly recently coordinated with HBA to provide meals for players about once a week. "Whether it's that or buying football cleats for the boys, it's really just her treating them all like our sons," Reid adds.

The stories the Shimabukuros have of their time with Pālama Settlement are many. The kids that play for Reid season after season come from all walks of life, and, he adds, they teach him much more than he could ever teach them.

"Most of them don't have much, and they have a smile on their face every single day," he says.

And the Shimabukuros enlist the help of their family, friends and community — all of whom chip in by the dozens. Just this year, in fact, Reid recalls that overwhelming spirit of giving after seeing a boy who he thought didn't know how to tie his shoes.

"I realized it wasn't his shoelace," Reid says. "He said, 'I gotta put this rubber band back on.' It was to hold his shoe together because it was the only cleats he had."

Reid went on to share this story on Facebook, and people responded in droves. Nearly 100 cleat donations came in.

"When you think you got it really good, you gotta look at this community," he adds.

For more information on Pālama Settlement, a full list of offerings and details on how to volunteer, visit palamasettlement.org.

— Nicole Monton



PROOF POSITIVE

'AGdaptation: Hawai'i's Growing Opportunity'

By Taylor Kellerman, president of Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i

Agricultural Leadership Foundation of Hawai'i provides leadership development opportunities for people committed to strengthening agriculture in Hawai'i. In response to the major shift from plantation agriculture, ALFH was founded in 1982 to support the industry through the difficult transition from plantation to diversified agriculture.

Since 2002, ALFH has hosted the Hawai'i Agriculture Conference (this year slugged AG2019) as its signature event. The conference provides an environment of learning and networking for all sectors of Hawai'i agriculture and continuing the conversation for sustaining this important industry.

Past conferences have pushed and expanded the horizons of businesses and decision-makers alike. Over the past 17 years topics have ranged from agri-tourism to Internet sales; entrepreneurial business skills and the power of local markets; to agricultural theft and biofuels. Each topic showcasing the continuing evolution of Hawai'i's agriculture sector.

Fittingly, this year's conference theme is "AGdaptation: Hawai'i's Growing

Opportunity" and takes place Oct. 15-16 at Hawai'i Convention Center. The theme represents how Hawai'i agriculture must adapt to become a viable, sustainable resource that provides rewarding careers, enriches lifestyles and stewards our 'āina for future generations. AGdaptation means agricul-



This year's Hawai'i Agriculture Conference takes place Oct. 15-16 at Hawai'i Convention Center. MARCO GARCIA PHOTO; HEADSHOT COURTESY AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

ture in our state doesn't just survive, it thrives.

AG2019 will connect industry leaders to learn, shape and develop cutting-edge ideas and innovative strategies to help set the sector on a trajectory for success and resiliency.

One highlight is a student program focused on sessions that help the next generation to learn, develop and advo-

cate for agriculture for years to come. With a robust schedule of over 30 breakout sessions covering diverse and an engaging spectrum of issues, we encourage anyone with an interest in agriculture to attend the conference.

Agriculture is key for the goal of better food security in Hawai'i. Ultimately,

the success of agriculture depends on everyone who grows, sells or consumes food.

AG2019 is one way to ensure we are all educated and committed to sustaining our food systems.

To register for AG2019, visit hiagconference.org. For more information about ALFH, check out agleaderhi.org.

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