

Oahu teens organize gun control events

By [Lee Cataluna](#) · March 4, 2018

Fifteen-year-old Hayden Hawkins watched high school senior Emma Gonzalez's call to action after the Feb. 14 shooting at her Parkland, Fla., campus and was brought to tears.

"I'm not much of a crier, and I should note, I don't buy into the whole 'boys shouldn't cry' thing," he said, "... but listening to Emma Gonzalez speak to the nation with such passion in her voice hit me harder than I could have anticipated. I can say with complete confidence that I was inspired to take action because of her words."

Hawkins, a student at University Laboratory School, connected with his friend Imiloa Borland, 15, a student at Punahou. The two know each other through Ceeds of Peace, an organization that promotes peacemaking skills and education for teachers, parents and students. They then contacted friends at other Oahu schools and started talking about how to honor the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas and how to join their fight for safer schools.

Said Borland, "I've been to many different rallies and marches throughout my entire life, but I've never organized one myself. Neither have the students at Parkland, which is something that makes this movement so powerful — that we're all so moved that we've stepped out of our comfort zones to speak up and fight for what we believe in."

Under the name March for Our Lives Honolulu, they plan to join the nationwide protest on March 14 when students will walk out of their classrooms for 17 minutes to honor the 17 people killed in the Parkland shooting. They also will hold a rally March 24 at the state Capitol to coincide with student rallies across the country to call for legislation to keep American schools safe from gun violence.

While Stoneman Douglas students met in a parent's living room to plan strategy, Oahu students are calling a meeting from 3 to 5 p.m. today at the McDonald's on Keeaumoku Street, near Walmart, and inviting all interested students to join them.

"We want to have every high school on the island participate in this event," Borland said. "This meeting isn't us trying to control how other schools hold their own walkouts. We're trying to give students the resources so they can go to their own schools and schedule a walkout," Borland said.

They will discuss things like how to talk with teachers, administrators and parents. They will talk about how to wear orange, the color of the protest, even if your school requires uniforms.

Both students say Hawaii has stricter guns laws than other states and generally less violence, but that does not mean it can't happen here. In just the past month, two Oahu schools have gone through lockdowns.

Both Borland and Hawkins were born well after the Columbine, Colo., school massacre of 1999. They, like their Florida counterparts, don't accept this as a new normal. They want it to end.

"I'm doing this because I want to see and inspire change," Hawkins said. "If the adults in power won't do anything, I'm going to do everything in my power to make a difference. We are more capable than we are often given credit for, and our voices do matter, especially in this discussion."

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The student organizers can be contacted via email at marchforourlivesHawaii@gmail.com; follow on Instagram at [@marchforourliveshonolulu](https://www.instagram.com/marchforourliveshonolulu).

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