



PAPAKOLEA NEWS

OCTOBER 2021

PAPAKOLEA FIRE ACADEMY SPECIAL EDITION

In honor of National Fire Prevention month, this special edition newsletter provides highlights of the Papakōlea Fire Academy. We are excited to share the story and people that make this program possible.

PAPAKOLEA'S OWN LIVING HIS DREAM



Leif Mokuahi Jr. "Braddah" was born and raised in Papakōlea. In 2016, as a KULA staff member, he supported the growing Papakōlea Fire Academy by providing administrative support for the PFA Captains. Therefore, he attended PFA classes. Leif always dreamed of working in a capacity that would serve others, originally thought to be in policy, but as time went on his dream changed. As he watched Uncle (Captain) Richard Soo, and listened to the rescue stories of Uncle (Captain) Gilbert Pelletier, he was overwhelmed with pride to see these Native Hawaiian kane from Kalawahine and Papakōlea teaching at the Papakōlea Community Center. They gave so much of their lives to help others and he knew he could live out his dream of service by also becoming a Fire Fighter.

Things changed for "Braddah" and he relocated to California in 2019. He left with the dream of becoming a Firefighter stirring within him. He assured us he would come home if the fire fighter opportunity arose. Leif returned to complete all the necessary steps; written exams, agility tests, and interview as they transpired. Having crossed all the hurdles, he returned home and became a Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) recruit on October 19, 2020. After completing more than 1,200 hours of rigorous training over 33 weeks, he graduated from the HFD's 109th Fire Fighter Recruit Class on June 4, 2021. The Pandemic kept us away from his graduation, but all of us involved with KULA and PFA over the years could not have been prouder.

Because of this training, we now prepare to once again, say a Hui Hou, as he prepares to return to California to join the Newman Fire Department to be near his son. I could not have been prouder when he called to share this news. He said, "Coming home to Honolulu to become a Firefighter was my dream, but as a father, my dream can't be realized at the sake of not being there for my son. He needs me in California". He knows he can still realize his dream and be the best dad possible. We stand with him on his journey as he is Papakōlea STRONG, and we are Papakōlea PROUD.

*Kula no na Po'e
Hawaii 'o Papakōlea,
Kewalo, Kalawahine*

2150 Tantalus Drive
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: (808) 520-8997
kula.papakolea@gmail.com



FOUNDING KUPUNA

Maria Suganuma
Winona Freitas
Rufina Molaka-Lee

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Theone Kanuha
Keola Nakanishi
Dr. Kawohi Tuasivi
Lahela Williams
Jerry Iokia
Wanda Iokia
Henry Foster
Leif Mokuahi, Jr.

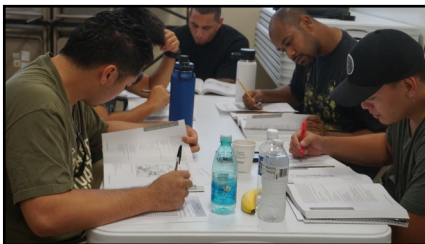
KULA STAFF

Dr. Adrienne Dillard
B. Puni Kekauoha
Kaaupuni Kama
Mahealani Austin
Chantal Keliioomalua
Meghan Kenney
Tatiana Kekauoha
Iolani Ulii
Hanakia Tui
Jeremiah Kama
Kamaka Kaaihue-Kekoa
Wilmagay Kaopuiki-Heen
Faith Kalamau
L. Ipo Paia
Kelli Anne Murakami
Kawai Kaneakua-Rauschenburg
Cappy Solatorio

THE STORY OF PAPAKOLEA FIRE ACADEMY

When Fire Captain Richard Soo retired in 2003, he wanted to give others in Papakolea, Kewalo, and Kalawahine a better chance to achieve a career in Firefighting which he enjoyed so much. It was his vision that gave birth to the very successful Papakolea Fire Academy (PFA). His vision came out of the belief that being part of the noble Firefighter profession is more than a career and is the dream of many local people in Hawaii. Many who have the heart to serve just needed the support and understanding of what is needed to prepare for the testing required.

Richard's primary goal for PFA was to ensure that Native Hawaiians and other locals could be better prepared for the Honolulu Fire Department application process. This includes a timed written test, physical agility and swim tests, and a panel interview. Passing these 3 requirements are needed for entry into this highly competitive team-based occupation, saving lives and conserving property, reducing the loss of life and property, confining fire to its place of origin, and controlling and extinguishing fires. When Richard asked for the support of Kula no na Po'e Hawaii (KULA), it was easy to support his vision of ensuring that Hawaii residents were ready to compete. With many people coming from other States to take these jobs as career stepping stones and not as lifetime careers; KULA supported the mission of the generation of firefighters who joined coming out of high school and stayed here to serve.



Beginning the first training sessions from his home in Kalawahine with five students, now more than a decade later under Richard's leadership, PFA has grown each year to ensure that there is mentoring and support at every level of the application process. Richard continues to take calls from aspiring adults to enter the various fire departments and provide counsel to new recruits. His network of retired firefighters and colleagues who volunteered their time speaks to his vision and foresight in building a program that could be provided free of charge to participants. PFA has been funded through grants when available and provided through the volunteer time of all those involved when needed.

Since 2012, PFA has served over 800 adults and successfully supported over 100 individuals to become recruits in City, State and Federal fire departments across Hawaii. Additionally, several participants with the skills they acquired, passed exams for jobs at Pearl Harbor and other trades careers. In July 2021, Richard Soo passed the PFA torch of leadership to another Kalawahine resident, Retired Captain Curtis Aiwohi. KULA looks forward to the journey ahead as we continue to support future Hawaii firefighters.





“For me, it’s getting to know the Captains, the in’s and out’s of the fire department...they have blessed so many lives and the people who went on to the next level. All in all, what we learned was a blessing. God Bless our Captains, Aunty Adrienne, and all Kula staff that are helping these up-and-coming firefighters.”

- Makena Artuyo



“PFA helped my journey to becoming a firefighter in ways that I never have imagined. They will give you all the tools you need to become a firefighter, all you need is your motivation.”

- Bryson Hue, Federal Firefighter



“PFA did everything for me, from the prep class to mock interviews and mock physical agility session. Because of PFA, I was able to follow my passion of serving my community and joining the brotherhood. I appreciate the program, because if it wasn’t for the Captains, KULA and the Papakolea Fire Academy, I wouldn’t be living my dream right now.”

- Ka’anoi Po’ouahi, Federal Firefighter

“If you’re planning on being a firefighter, PFA is an essential step. It prepares you for life as a firefighter and allows you to network, which is super important. I also volunteered with the community food drives earlier this year...this was a good opportunity to practice what my duty as a future firefighter will be, serving the community and helping as much as I can.”

- Kaimi Drumright



MAHALO NUI UNCLE RICHARD



Kalawahine resident retired Fire Captain Richard Soo, Kamehameha Schools graduate of class 1969, joined the Honolulu Fire Department in 1976 and was the Department's first full-time public information officer. When he retired from the Department, his vision to create a program for young people to learn and prepare to enter the Firefighter career created the Papakōlea Fire Academy. There would be no PFA if it had not been for Richard's desire to provide free training to aspiring firefighters.

KULA sends our aloha and mahalo to Richard Soo as it has been the extreme honor and pleasure of Kula no na Po'e Hawaii o Papakōlea, Kewalo, Kalawahine board and staff to be a part of his amazing vision.

MEET THE "PFA UNCLES"

Captain Curtis Aiwohi is the new lead instructor for the Papakōlea Fire Academy (PFA). Captain Aiwohi, a Kalawahine resident, retired as a Fire Captain after 28 years, officially hanging his boots on December 31, 2016, from Station 9, Kaka'ako. In the last 10 years, he assisted with training Blue Collar, Captains and FF3 in Incident Command. His experience and passion are essential for the young men and women who participate in the PFA. Captain Aiwohi says he "invited himself" to PFA by asking his neighbor, Captain Soo, about the firefighter training program. He came to check out the classes and got involved with encouragement from his former Captain, Gilbert Pelletier. He brings new energy and ideas to PFA and we look forward to the growth and future ahead under his leadership.



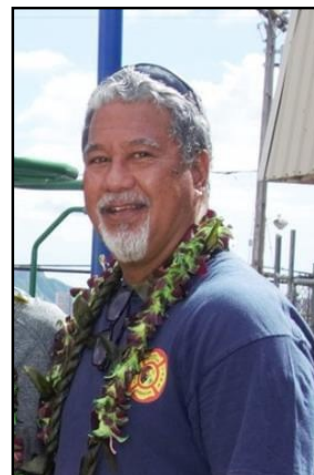
Captain Gilbert Pelletier retired from Station 9, Kaka'ako on October 30, 2002 after 29 years of service. Captain Pelletier is a life-long Papakolea resident and is known as the "HFD Historian" of the PFA Team. He shares his personal collection of artifacts and mementoes, such as newspaper articles, old ladders and hoses, to teach participants the rich history of the Honolulu Fire Department. When Captain Soo first started PFA, he asked Captain Pelletier if he could help, but Captain Pelletier hadn't retired yet. After officially retiring a few years later, he was approached by Captain Soo again and has been part of PFA ever since. He continues to serve others in his retirement as is always looking for ways to help those in Papakōlea to become firefighters.

MEET THE “PFA UNCLÉS”



After 31 years of service, **Captain Guy Katayama** retired from HFD from Station 5, Kaimuki. During his tenure, he served as a Rescue Specialist, Hazardous Materials Tech, Recruit Training Officer, as well as Company officer for an Engine Company in the Makiki, Downtown and Kaimuki areas. He is also an instructor at Honolulu Community College (Fire & Environmental Emergency Response) FEER Program, on the Board of Directors of the HFD FCU and serves with God for his church. Captain Katayama shares, “I liked the job because it was always different everyday, I loved the job because of the relationships that I made. I believe no other profession comes close to the camaraderie of the fire service.” Captain Katayama heard about PFA about 7 years ago and gladly accepted Captain Soo’s invitation to join.

Captain Earle Kealoha Jr., a first generation firefighter, retired after more than 30 years with the Honolulu Fire Department. After taking the fire entrance exam in 1977, on March 16, 1982 he became part of the 56th recruit class. In 1990, Captain Kealoha was one of the original promoted hazardous materials technicians. As Captain, he had the opportunity to work with other officers at the Charles H. Thurston Fire Training Center as a Recruit Training Officer where he found the greatest amount of gratitude and satisfaction during his career. Captain Kealoha is also an instructor at Honolulu Community College (Fire & Environmental Emergency Response) FEER Program. In 2014, Captain Kealoha received an invitation to join from Captain Soo and accepted wholeheartedly .



Captain Peter Ka’iu Akiona is from a family of Firefighters, a true “brotherhood” following the footsteps of his father, three brothers and sister. His journey began in September 1987, retiring after 31 years from Station 2, Pawa, Rescue 1. Captain Ka’iu would like to share this message, “For the young men and women looking to get into HFD, understand it’s more than a job, it’s a way of life. You will have a second family at the HFD.” Captain Akiona’s introduction to PFA was through his son who attended a session. When Captain Aiwohi learned this, Captain Akiona was invited to speak to the class and the involvement grew from there. Captain Akiona states, “I feel blessed to be able to give back and hopefully have a positive influence on the next group of first responders.”

***Mahalo nui to the PFA Captains
We Appreciate You!***

PAPAKOLEA FIRE ACADEMY SUMMER RECAP

The Papakolea Fire Academy (PFA) and Honolulu Community College's Fire and Environmental Emergency Response (FEER) Program assisted more than 65 young men and women run through simulated fire physical agility tests (PAT) and conducted more than 30 mock job interviews in July.

Members of the last PFA class were scheduled to participate in a mock PAT on their final day of class. However, word began circulating that former PFA and HCC students received invitations to participate in an actual PAT conducted by the HFD the first week of July. So, a revised date and time was established at the end of June and FEER Coordinator Richard Rhode, a retired deputy chief with the Federal Fire Department of Hawaii, obtained permission to utilize HCC's Aeronautical Maintenance Technology Facility (utilized by the FEER Program as well) to conduct simulated physical testing.

On Saturday, June 26, 2021, graduates of HCC's FEER program helped to set up the simulated PAT. Members of the PFA class and another 40 plus HFD PAT invitees arrived shortly after and were greeted and apprised of the morning's objectives.



First, the attendees walked the course with the FEER graduates on hand and received a brief overview of each station along with some tips to better complete each event. Next, one of the FEER graduates donned a fire jacket, gloves and a helmet (PPE), and walked through each of the ten events that make up the PAT. Then, those attendees who had received invitations from the HFD donned PPE and were guided through the simulated PAT. A FEER graduate served as a proctor for each participating attendee. Remaining attendees were assigned to each of the ten stations and reset that station after each participant completed the station.

Once all HFD invitees had gone through the PAT, PFA students were asked to spread out and run through each of the ten stations until they were able to complete the entire course. At the conclusion of the mock agility test, all attendees gathered for some final words.

Retired HFD Captain Gilbert Pelletier set up another mock PAT at Papakolea Community Center the following Monday. This was a great opportunity for a few candidates who were NOT able to attend the PAT conducted at the HCC facility. It was also another opportunity to complete the course for those who ran into challenges and difficulties during the previous PAT.

The HFD conducted their PAT the following week from Friday, July 2, 2021 through Thursday, July 8, 2021. Once word was received from candidates who had successfully passed HFD's agility test, mock interview sessions were initiated to assist these individuals with the interview portion of HFD's hiring process. Three panels were established to conduct interviews on Saturday, July 10, 2021. A Zoom interview session was conducted on Sunday afternoon. Three panels were established again on Monday, July 12, 2021. And, finally, another Zoom interview session was conducted on Tuesday evening.



PFA SUMMER RECAP (cont.)

Mahalo to all those that helped make these events possible and for everyone's continued efforts in making the PFA program a success!

As we anxiously await the results of the HFD's recruit hiring process, each of us who participated in these endeavors look forward to seeing still more PFA and HCC students realize their goal of becoming a firefighter with the HFD!

—Captain Earle Kealoha Jr, Summer 2021



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION MONTH!

The goal of Fire Prevention Month is to raise fire safety awareness, and help ensure your home and family is protected. The 2021 campaign is "Learn The Sounds of Fire Safety."

So what is your smoke alarm telling you?

- A continued set of three loud beeps means smoke or fire. Get out and call 9-1-1!
- A single "chirp" every 30 -60 seconds means the battery is low and must be changed.

Make sure your smoke alarms meet the needs of everyone in your home, including those with sensory or physical disabilities. Special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers could help those who are hard-of-hearing or deaf.

For more fire safety tips, visit www.firepreventionweek.org.



Remember...

Hear the beeps, get on your feet! Hear a chirp, make a change!



SHIRTS AVAILABLE



Short Sleeve and Long Sleeve
PFA Shirts are available at the park.
Please call 520-8991
for more details.



Kula no na Po`e Hawaii
P.O. Box 23268
Honolulu, HI 96823

Papakolea News

Kula no na Po`e Hawaii 'o
Papakolea, Kewalo, Kalawahine
2150 Tantalus Drive
Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone:
(808) 520-8997

Email:
kula.papakolea@gmail.com

Website:
www.kula-papakolea.com

*Well-Being our Priority,
Education our Commitment,
Community our Drive*

PAPAKOLEA FIRE ACADEMY SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER IS FIRE PREVENTION MONTH!