

Aia pōhā mai ke alaula a hāla'e ka 'ohu nei!

Trustee's note: This month's column was written by Kepā Maly, cultural historian and ethnographer.

On Lāna'i, a new day has arrived and the dark mists are lifting, giving hope to the people and setting the foundation for pono on the land. As the headline above says, "Behold the light of a new day bursts forth, and the mists are cleared!"

The Lāna'i Culture & Heritage Center and community heritage-education initiatives have prepared the 'ohana of Lāna'i to work with the new island steward in planning for a culturally enriched future.

The richness of the island's future is found in our legacy landscape and in the hearts, minds and aloha of our young people. In the last month, two outstanding young Hawaiian women have demonstrated that good things come from being keiki o ka 'āina o Lāna'i.

Laua'e Gibson grew up on Lāna'i, and though she has been attending the University of Hawai'i-Hilo, Lāna'i is the home of her heart. Laua'e says that: "It is the closeness, that tight-knit sense of community that has kept me grounded in where I wanted to take my studies and in knowing who I am. I am incredibly lucky that my mother has supported me in all of my academic choices."

Laua'e has taken part in three study-abroad programs; one with the National Student Exchange at the University of Oregon; one with Semester at Sea, where she studied and traveled to nine countries in two and a half months; and most recently a year in Scotland through UH-Hilo's Center for Global Education and Exchange.

Recently Laua'e was accepted into the Master of Fine Arts program for creative writing at the University of Hamline. One of the papers she submitted in her application focused on Lāna'i and how



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she might help give voice to concerns and issues that are hitting close to home. Her topic was the issue of windmills on Lāna'i; she strove to create a pathos-driven argument in understanding the importance of preservation to the Native Hawaiian culture and way of life on Lāna'i.

Laua'e is proud to be from Lāna'i and is excited to discover more ways to incorporate being a Hawaiian and Lāna'i native in a new level of academics.

Shelly Preza, a member of the Kamehameha Schools Class of 2013, was born and raised on Lāna'i, descended from a family with generational ties to the island.

"Kamehameha has provided me with an amazing education and innumerable opportunities. I was raised by a close-knit community, and it instilled the value of compassion within me. When I return home, I am reminded of the kind-hearted people that have kept the spirit of Lāna'i alive."

Shelly has gained a greater appreciation of her own roots and of having a sense of place. She is ready to begin her next part of her life. She recently found out that she had been accepted to Harvard, Princeton and Yale, and she is still in disbelief.

She credits having this opportunity to the community that raised her. She states: "I am a product of my family, my island and my school, and without them I wouldn't be considering the schools that I am. Wherever I decide to go, I know I'll find comfort in knowing that I come from Lāna'i where the culture is as vibrant as its denizens, from a time when diverse ideas are embraced, and from a people who value the past and look towards the future with hope."

E mau ke ea o ka 'āina i ka pono, a aia ke ola o nā kūpuna i nā 'ōpio!

Mahalo nui e nā Kahu Waiwai o ke Ke'ena Kuleana o Hawai'i! ■