



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hawaiian Electric Donation Supports STEAM Early Learning Curriculum

Honolulu, HI – Armed Services YMCA (ASYMCA) has received a \$15,000 grant from Hawaiian Electric to support an early childhood education program focused on science, technology, education, arts, and math (STEAM). The program provides military dependent children ages 3-5 years with STEAM concepts in a relevant, engaging curriculum that ignites their interest and provides the social and academic skills necessary for a successful transition to kindergarten.

“Armed Services YMCA is incredibly grateful to Hawaiian Electric for supporting the purchase of the KIBO robots and the training for our team. This unique learning opportunity has been implemented in our preschool classes at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Marine Corps Base Hawaii and Wheeler Army Airfield and we are excited to offer KIBO as part of our high quality early education program. New technologies are influencing how young children are learning and playing, and as we move forward, coding is becoming the literacy of the 21st century. Much like learning to write well is vital to self-expression, so coding will be in the years to come. Research has shown early exposure to robotics, coding and engineering increases a child’s confidence in continuing to pursue those subjects throughout their lifetime,” said Laurie Moore, ASYMCA Executive Director.

The KIBO robot kit is specifically designed for young children to engage in hands-on, open-ended play, and does not rely on a computer, tablet or smartphone to enable the robot. Children build their own robot, create a series of instructions using wooden KIBO blocks, scan the blocks with the KIBO body to instruct the robot, and press a button to bring their robot to life. Developed by Kinderlab Robotics, KIBO has won numerous awards for its innovation as an educational tool.

Teacher training was held during July and August, and the KIBO kits deployed in classrooms in September. “The kids look forward to center time all day just so they can use KIBO. They love the way KIBO does what they decide and they think it’s hilarious to record funny voices and have KIBO replay it. It’s an excellent tool to teach teamwork and integrate coding into our preschool curriculum,” says Aliah Beattie, Armed Services YMCA Teacher at Joint Base Pearl Harbor- Hickam. Teachers have seen firsthand that children ages three to five can successfully build

and program a robot and are enthusiastically embracing this new opportunity in the classroom.

“Hawaiian Electric has been helping to advance STEAM education and initiatives in Hawai‘i for more than three decades,” said Michael DeCaprio, Hawaiian Electric director of generation and ASYMCA board member. “Through the Armed Services YMCA, we are glad to be able to support this innovative early childhood education program for families of young men and women who serve our country.”

Armed Services YMCA of Honolulu focuses programs and services in the areas of education and child care; financial support and assistance; and services that reduce military members and families’ feelings of isolation and loneliness. As a private non-profit organization serving Hawai‘i’s community since 1917, ASYMCA has touched more military lives than any other organization in Hawai‘i. For more information, contact (808) 473-3398 or visit www.asymcahi.org.

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