



**Hawaiian  
Electric**

NEWS RELEASE

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## **Hawaiian Electric and HEI Charitable Foundation support Hawai'i Island families during COVID-19 pandemic**

**HILO, May 12, 2020** – Hawaiian Electric and the Hawaiian Electric Industries Charitable Foundation (HEICF) recently donated \$21,000 to three Hawai'i Island non-profit organizations that are feeding communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Hawai'i Island, the biggest concern and priority is food security. The Boys & Girls Club of the Big Island, The Food Basket, and Activate Hawai'i Aid each received \$5,000 from HEICF to support their ongoing efforts to provide fresh produce, shelf-stable food, and prepared meals to Hawai'i Island families. These donations are in addition to the \$2,000 each organization received from Hawaiian Electric last month.

“Communities count on us to provide reliable electric service to operate essential businesses and support new stay-at-home lifestyles,” said Sharon Suzuki, Hawaiian Electric’s president of Maui County and Hawai'i Island Utilities. “It’s also important for us to do what we can to help those who are struggling with basic needs. I’m grateful these three organizations are working together to meet Hawai'i Island’s food security needs during this very tough time.”

Through its daily Community Meal Support Initiative, the Boys & Girls Club of the Big Island (BGCBI) is providing nutritional hot meals to the island’s most vulnerable populations including keiki, kupuna, homeless, and struggling families. Their efforts help fill shortfalls and resource gaps, especially in very rural communities that are unable to benefit from school-based cafeteria meals due to lack of transportation. Last month, it provided more than 18,000 meals and it now provides up to 800 meals daily. Through this donation, BGCBI can provide 1,272 meals for the community.

“The continued support of Hawaiian Electric and the HEI Charitable Foundation has allowed the Boys & Girls Club of the Big Island to be able to quickly respond to the needs of those on Hawai'i Island who are struggling as a result of the pandemic,” said Chad Cabral, Chief Executive Officer. “Thank you for a true partnership that helps to support and strengthen our Hawai'i Island communities.”

The Food Basket is providing Ohana Drop boxes which include a multi-day supply of shelf-stable food and local fresh produce for individuals and families. It offers drive-thru food distribution at 16 sites around the island and home delivery for those with limited transportation or compromised health. Through this donation, The Food Basket was able to purchase 5,000 pounds of food for the community.

**(more)**

“We are so extremely grateful to HEI and Hawaiian Electric for their long-time partnership and generous support to provide food assistance to the most vulnerable residents on Hawai'i Island,” said Kristin Frost Albrecht, executive director of The Food Basket. “Given the skyrocketing number of families and individuals in need in our hard-hit communities across the island, this donation will provide critical food support during this unprecedented and challenging time.”

Activate Hawai'i Aid (AHA) is a collective of community and government, working together to activate an islandwide network of resilience. The \$2,000 donation supported the Keiki Care Packs initiative by providing 2,712 packs to children in more than 30 Hawai'i Island communities. Each pack includes food stuffs, curated activities, resources and materials to help keiki and parents better understand and cope with the pandemic. The additional \$5,000 will support the #FeedThePeopleHI - Puna project, a collaboration between Chef Hui and AHA to increase food security for Puna households. Beginning May 15, and every Friday for the next eight weeks, 500 meal kits with ingredients and recipe cards for one-to-two big batch meals will be distributed to communities in upper and lower Puna subdivisions.

“Many hands and many hui have come together to do something special for our keiki and community,” said Ashley Kierkiewicz, lead organizer for Activate Hawai'i Aid. “So much thought, aloha, and planning goes into each project, and because it is a massive, ongoing give, working with community leaders is key. We rely on generous donations such as those from Hawaiian Electric, so we can activate our volunteer network and amplify our give.”

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