
We Are Oceania Newsletter

February 2016, Honolulu, Hawai'i

Welcome, Aloha, Alii, Hāfa Adai, Lenwo, Kaselehlie, Mauri, Mogethin, Ran Annim, Iqkwe, and Wenimwemi Rewe!

My humble *tirow fairo* (greatest respect) to the land, spirit, *kānaka maoli*, and culture of this 'āina, the land of Hawai'i, with my sincere and deep appreciation to the State of Hawai'i for their great hospitality and support to us Micronesians who live in their land and state. Also my humble admiration for the people of Oceania for our usual courage in navigating unfamiliar waters and having the perseverance to sail through rough waters, strong currents, and powerful winds while staying loyal to maintaining, repairing, and rebuilding "our canoe" for our new generation and for the next generations to carry on our voyage to our "destination."

On behalf of the *We Are Oceania* (WAO) and the *Partners in Development Foundation* (PIDF) Team, I would like to welcome all of you to the first issue of the *We Are Oceania Newsletter*. It hasn't been a year yet, but it feels like WAO has been in service for that long because of your tremendous support

and the great sense of welcome from you and our community here in Hawai'i.

Our *Hālau Ola*, One Stop Center, was opened in August 2015. Since then we were able to help over 1,000 people. The Hawaiian name of our center signifies our cultural values of *Respect* and *Humility* to the land that takes care of us, the people that welcome us, and the culture that protects us. *Hālau Ola* means "a place of life or house of life."

For this, I want to express our deepest appreciation to the Honorable Esther Kia'aina, Assistant Secretary to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs for funding us to start the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that will focus on empowering our Micronesian community to navigate success while honoring the integrity of our diverse heritage.

As we continue building *We Are Oceania*, we are also building programs to better serve our community. One of those ways is this humble newsletter. Our newsletter will allow us to share our stories and keep each other informed, to show our appreciation,

and to provide a way of giving back to our community. I want to invite you to share your services and stories with us as well so that our wider community can celebrate your successes and become aware of the great service that you provide.

So please enjoy the first issue of our newsletter.

Kinisou Chapur, Meral Ma Sulang, Kalahngan, Komokar, Kom̧mooltata, Ko Rab'a, Kulo, Tubwa Kor, Si Yu'us Mā'āse', and Mahalo,

—Jocelyn Howard, *Director of We Are Oceania*

Meet WAO

Jocelyn (Josie) Howard



Program Director, josie@weareoceania.org

Josie graduated from Xavier High School in Micronesia and attended the Community College of Micronesia. She later transferred to the University of Hawai'i at Hilo studying Biology, Anthropology, and Pacific Island Studies in 1989 making her one of the first Micronesians migrating under the Compact of Free Association Treaty.

At the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Josie Howard's roles included student peer counselor, president of the International Students Association, student researcher at the Minority Biomedical Research Program, resident assistant at student housing, president of the Chuukese Students Association,

as well as chairperson for Campus Ministry. Josie has over 10 years experience of serving the community, with 8 years in the Department of Health Waiver program, 5 years in the Department of Education, and 5 years in program development, implementation, and piloting a one stop center model. Josie's community involvement includes being the founder of the Young Voyagers, a youth club in Media with 'Ōlelo TV, and co-founder of the Micronesian Health Advisory Council, and Micronesian Cultural Awareness Project. Josie earned her Masters of Social Work and worked as a Coordinator/Facilitator at EPIC 'Ohana Inc. and as a Social Worker at the St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church. She is currently the Program Director of *We Are Oceania*.

Josie is most recognized for her contribution to the "Micronesian Voices in Hawai'i Conference" where she participated as one of six steering committee members who worked with Micronesian Government leaders, community leaders, as well as conference sponsors. She is also known for her work at Goodwill Industries of Hawaii Inc.'s "Imi Loa Program" where she worked with families and their adult children providing direct services as well as managing the programmatic and fiscal operations. She successfully managed and grew the program from a one hundred eighty thousand dollar grant to a one million dollar grant after four years in operation.

Mrs. Howard is originally from Onoun Island in Micronesia and she speaks Chuukese, Onounese, and English fluently. ■

Keola Diaz



Social Services Manager, keola@weareoceania.org

Keola Kim Diaz is from the Republic of Palau. He has a BA in Communications and an MA in Pacific Islands Studies, both from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Before completing his education, Keola served in the Hawai'i Air National Guard with the 293rd Combat Communications Squadron at Hickam Air Force Base. He is an advocate of social and civil rights for migrants, particularly those from the Pacific living in the United States. Keola is interested in the transformative power of the media, particularly visual media, and utilizes different forms of media to address issues that affect the Pacific region, including Micronesians' social issues in Hawai'i. Before joining *We Are Oceania*, he was a television producer for MBTV and radio station manager for WWFM, both operated and owned by former Senator Alfonso Diaz of the Republic of Palau. ■

Kathy Martin



Case Manager, kmartin@pidfoundation.org

Kathy Martin is a native of the island of Piis Panu in Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia. She received her Bachelors of Social Work from the University of Guam in 2005 and in 2011 she completed her Masters of Social Work from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. After her studies, she returned to Chuuk where she taught at Saramen Chuuk Academy and worked as a peer educator for a youth HIV/AIDS prevention program. She also taught at the Caroline College and Pastoral Institute and served as a Quality Assurance Coordinator at the Chuuk State Hospital. Later Kathy was employed by Pālolo Homes on O'ahu. She currently is the case manager at *We Are Oceania* and a part-time Chuukese interpreter at the Bilingual Access Line. Kathy has been involved in advocacy for Micronesian immigrants for several years and was featured as a community advocate fighting for social justice in the 2013 film, *Breadfruit & Open Spaces* (directed by Lola Quan Bautista). ■

Joachim (Jojo) Peter



Community Advocacy Manager, jojo@weareoceania.org

Jojo lived and studied in Hawai'i for five years in the 1990s. After earning a double Masters degree he returned home to Micronesia and worked at the College of Micronesia-FSM at the Chuuk Campus for 15 years before returning to Hawai'i in 2011. He is currently working on a doctorate degree in Special Education at the University of Hawai'i focusing on immigrant families of children with special needs in Hawai'i. He is a certified assister for the Hawai'i Health Connector. With fellow community advocates, he co-founded COFA Community & Advocacy Network (COFA-CAN), a community advocacy network that provides awareness and support for crucial legislative and legal initiatives that affects the lives of the Freely Associated States (FAS) citizens living in Hawai'i and the United States. Mr. Peter is a native of Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and speaks Chuukese and English fluently. ■

Vidalino Raatior



Consultant (Web & Education Services), vid@weareoceania.org

Vid is a Chuukese educational consultant, social entrepreneur, and web designer. He is currently the Director of the Pacific Islander Student Center at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. Previously, he worked for over 10 years at Santa Clara University as Assistant Director for International Programs, Associate Director for the Center for Multicultural Learning, and International Student Resources Advisor. He also worked for a number of years at Xavier High School in Micronesia as a teacher and administrator. He brings to the team some social entrepreneurial experience as Principal of Raatior Ventures (www.raatior.com) providing educational consulting, social enterprises, web design, and other cultural and social engagements in the Micronesian diaspora.

Vid is a doctoral student in the College of Education at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. He recently served on a consultancy team focusing on a feasibility study to establish a Micronesian-focused charter school in Hawai'i sponsored by WAO, The Learning Coalition (TLC), Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE), and Micronesians United-Big Island (MU-BI). ■

WAO Updates

Halau Ola One Stop Center

We have been busy at the *Hālau Ola One Stop Center*, located at St. Elizabeth Episcopal Church, since we opened in August. We have helped over 1,000 people to get access to health insurance through the Affordable Care Act and other services. In the month of December alone we helped 779 people!

If you or someone you know needs help accessing health insurance or other services, please stop by the center M–F 8:30am–4:30pm or give us a call at (808) 754-7303. We are here to serve you in whatever needs you may have and we have specialists on site who speak several Micronesian languages.

Help accessing health insurance is also available at the Pālolo Housing Learning Center every Wednesday 9–4pm, every Tuesday at the Kam IV Housing Office from 9–4pm, and every Tuesday and Thursday at Queen’s Medical Center.

Website

Thanks to our volunteer Brad Rentz and the guidance of Vid Raatior, we now have a newly designed Word Press website (<http://www.weareoceania.org>). Our new site allows us to provide content directly to our community members wherever they may be. We currently have upcoming events and news on the site and links to relevant services. We hope to provide more information for our clients and service providers in the near future. Check the site often for new changes. If you have any news or upcoming events to add to the site, please let us know at contact@weareoceania.org

Past WAO Events

WAO partnered with *No Vote No Grumble* to host a free community training meeting on 1/30/16. This event was well attended and participants learned about civic engagement and how to get more Mi-

cronesian community members engaged in the political process.

Volunteers

We are currently looking for more volunteers at WAO. If you have time to spare and would like to help us out, we would love to have you join us. If you are interested, please send us an email or stop by our office. ■

The Fourth Branch–Micronesia

This section is sponsored by The Fourth Branch–Micronesia (www.tfbmicronesia.com)

Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner Reflects on the Paris Climate Talks

- **TFB** = The Fourth Branch
- **KJK** = Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner

TFB: How was the experience in general? What did you do?

KJK: The experience was intense, inspiring, draining, frustrating, and getting lost a lot [laughs]. I was there specifically under the Global Climate Call for Action, a non-profit, with a group of spoken word poets representing Guåhån, Philippines, Australia, Samoa, and the United States. I performed at a number of events, inside and outside of the COP, and also spoke on panels and did interviews.

TFB: What would be your most memorable moment? Any highlights worth sharing?

KJK: One of my most memorable moments was being a part of the 350.org Exxon Mobile mock trial, hosted by 350.org founder Bill McKibben and author of “This Changes Everything” Naomi Klein. It was supposed to be a trial, like courtroom trial,

where we tried the big oil company Exxon Mobile, for crimes against the world. Milan was brought in as a judge, and I was brought in as a witness, representing the Marshall Islands, and there were also witnesses from other first nation indigenous peoples, from Africa, from the Arctic, as well as scientists and researchers. One after another, we testified to how climate change has affected our communities. Every testimony was so much more intense than I expected. I was the first one to go up, and as I listened to each witness go up and describe how climate change has affected their communities in horrible ways, I got angrier and angrier. I really had no idea that Exxon Mobile had wreaked so much havoc, and being at this was illuminating, to say the least.

The other moment that definitely stood out to me was being a part of a stone passing ceremony. A stone that was taken out of the river in the northern arctic was passed, marathon like, almost like a torch, across thousands of kilometers, one person at a time until it reached the COP in Paris. The whole thing was live streamed, as each person ran, or walked “for their life.” Me and the group of poets I was with were asked to take the stone into the COP, and to write a poem that would be spoken over the live-stream. We brought the stone into the gates of the COP, then passed it to first nation indigenous youth, and it ended with Milan bringing the stone inside of the COP. It was a beautiful ceremony, and I loved how they connected the arctic to the islands, how it made this giant connection—this single stone.

TFB: What would you say was your biggest disappointment.

KJK: Mm...not sure. Biggest disappointment for me was that indigenous rights were not recognized in the agreement, once again, and that women’s rights weren’t recognized either.

TFB: Would you say that this is the deal you wanted?

KJK: No it’s not. I was ecstatic when I first heard that 1.5 [degrees] was in the agreement, and I’m still optimistic because of it. But I think it should have been way more ambitious.

TFB: 1.5 [degrees] did not pass but was recognized. Are you hopeful that countries will adhere?

KJK: Having it recognized was a huge step—this can’t be overlooked. Before I went to the COP, I was told by many campaigners and veterans of the COP that 1.5 [degrees] wouldn’t be on the table. So it was a huge deal to be recognized. I know that the only way countries will adhere is if we continue to put pressure on them.

TFB: What is your overall thought on the Pacific’s voice at the event?

KJK: I think the Pacific had a stronger voice at this COP than any other. I felt we were more united, and we had a strong presence, and I think we made a huge impact.

TFB: And your thoughts on super-powers?

KJK: Flying for sure.

TFB: The talks ended with many promises made, should we be optimistic?

KJK: We need optimism to have the energy to fight, but we need realism so we don’t get lazy or float away [laughs]. So Yes I think we should be optimistic.

TFB: There is much skepticism, is this the time to talk of relocation?

KJK: I would say no—we shouldn’t have to relocate and I refuse to even think of it.

TFB: Minister Tony de Brum has been instrumental in the talks with his performance and leadership. However, he did not get re-elected, what is your reaction to that?

KJK: It was a tragedy that Tony wasn't re-elected. However, he made a huge splash at the COP. I admire his work and I have no doubt that he will continue to have a huge impact on the global scene.

TFB: What would you say is the legacy of the RMI in climate talks?

KJK: I think the RMI came out as leaders in this COP—I have a friend who works in Fiji. They had a debriefing workshop at USP afterwards, and he told me that each presenter was full of praise about the work of the RMI delegation. And I think it's because we had an amazing leader—Tony—and we also had amazing representation outside of the COP from our NGOs and from our youth.

TFB: What's next for you?

KJK: Teaching, focusing on my students, and focusing on a new campaign that would partner us with the *Majuro Atoll Waste Company*—so we can start taking care of our islands ourselves.

TFB: Finally, Youth voices were strong, thoughts on that?

KJK: <https://jkijiner.wordpress.com/2016/01/13/on-marshallese-youth-and-cop21/> ■

Updates from our Partners

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Our

vision for our work in the Pacific is clear and compelling: to support strong schools, healthy communities, and thriving cultures with Pacific hearts and global minds. For the past 25 years, we have been working to achieve this vision by enhancing the well-being of Pacific island communities through partnerships in education. PREL's work focuses on the United States-affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPI) region, which includes CNMI, FSM, Guam, Palau, and RMI, as well as American Samoa.

Even though most of PREL's ongoing work is situated in the islands of geographic Micronesia, PREL is dedicated to working collectively in support of all Pacific children—including Micronesian children residing here in the State of Hawai'i—living strong and healthy lives in their own language and culture, while also being successful global citizens. PREL provides support for teachers with professional development opportunities such as "Culturally Responsive Sheltered Instruction" and previously "Pacific CHILD," which are geared toward educators who serve diverse student populations, including Micronesian students. PREL also shares resources such as early readers in various Micronesian languages with the Hawai'i Department of Education and other local community groups. PREL continues to seek ways to support the diverse communities of the State of Hawai'i and Oceania more broadly. For more information about PREL and our work, please visit our website at www.prel.org, or contact us: 1136 Union Mall, PH 1A, Honolulu, HI 96813, (808) 441-1300. ■



Are you a service provider who serves Micronesians in Hawai'i? Contact us and we can include an update from your organization in our upcoming newsletters.

Upcoming Events

Events on O'ahu

For more details about these events, check out our website: <http://www.weareoceania.org/events>.

- 2/15 Open enrollment for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act ends for COFA citizens
- 2/26 GoCook! Hawai'i is offering a free information session at KCC for free professional culinary skills training classes

Awards

Chaminade University Founder's Award: Martin Joseph Moore III

Chaminade University gives the Founder's Award to a student "who has exhibited a commitment to Marianist values by his/her outstanding generosity, respect for others, and spirit of faith and who is an exemplary role-model for the Chaminade community." This year it was awarded to Martin Joseph Moore III.

Martin is a senior at Chaminade University and is from the Republic of Palau. He will be graduating in May with a Bachelor's of Arts in International Relations with minors in English and Hawaiian-Pacific Studies. Martin has a passion for helping his fellow Pacific Islanders and wants to make a difference in the world either by working for the Federal Government or in the private sector. Martin is also an alumnus of Xavier High School in Chuuk.

We at WAO congratulate Martin for his hard work and his dedication to serving others! ■

If you know of anyone in your community who has recently won an award, please let us know and we would be honored to share that person's accomplishments in our newsletter.

Micronesian Artist Spotlight

star language

By Emelihter Kihleng, Ph.D.

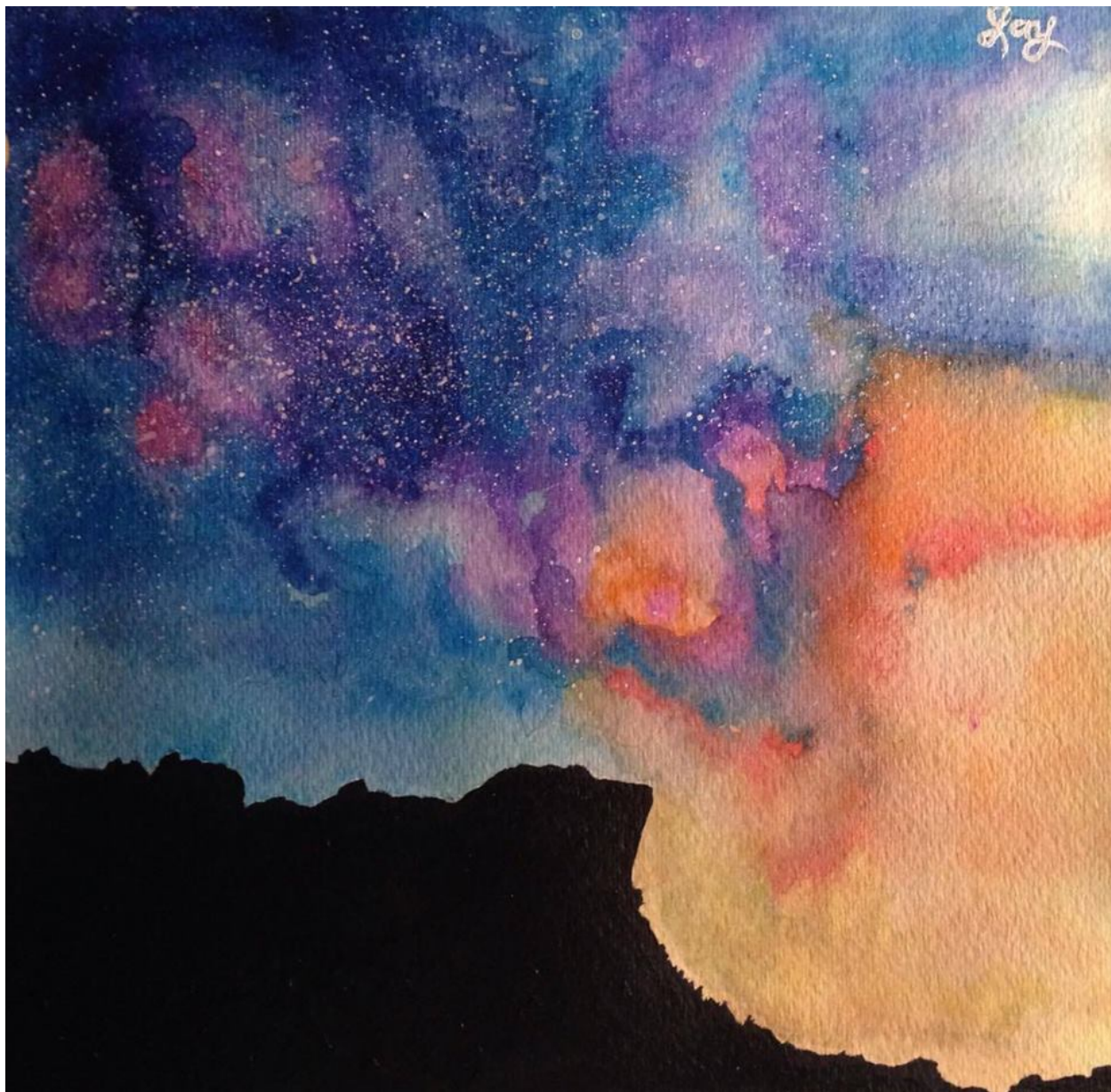
you are now an usu
one of the brightest
my eyes squint
to see you
nanmadau o
beyond the reef

you were fearless
you men of the ocean
usually are
trusting the currents, wind, birds
smell of the rain
schools of fish
comforted by danger
home in the quiet isolation
of vastness and depth

my friend says her fisherman
goes to see the mermaids
you left your little atoll
for volcanic Hawaiian Islands
barely speaking English
you went

who needs language
when your mind expands the Milky Way
when you still dream as your ancestors did
when you sail alongside those first voyagers
only your people from outer islands of Yap and Chuuk
kept this sacred knowledge
sacred
your people never forgot
words mean little
with such manaman

did you know you were holding the light?



Sokehs Twilight, by Lissette Yamase

it was your usu Nainoa and so many others would
follow
it is your usu up there that I see
at Matariki, here in Aotearoa

this lonely Micronesian thinks of you

*Editor's note: "star language" was first published by *4th Floor Literary Journal*,
2013. It was written in honor of Mau Pailug. Used with permission.

News from Back Home

Dr. Hilda Heine was elected as the President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands on January 27, 2016. She is the first female President of the RMI and also the first woman to be the head of government of any independent Pacific nation (except New Zealand).



We Are Oceania (WAO) is a program of *Partners in Development Foundation*, a 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity.

WAO's mission is to empower our Micronesian community to navigate success while honoring the integrity of our diverse heritage.

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The Fourth Branch–Micronesia; Pacific Resources
for Education and Learning

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