



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

KEIKI O KA 'ĀINA FAMILY LEARNING CENTERS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

NOLAN P. ESPINDA
DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2016

KID'S DAY AT THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER HELD TO SUPPORT THE CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED WOMEN

HONOLULU – Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers hosted a Kid's Day this afternoon at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) to bring incarcerated moms and their children together in honor of Mother's Day.

WCCC has partnered with Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers (KOKA) to hold Kid's Day since December, 2005. The time is used by mothers and children to interact in a positive setting, within a prison environment, through food, games, crafts and activities.

"The keiki need this," says KOKA Coordinator Memory Ku. "The evidence demonstrates that children want to see their parents; they need to know they are still loved, still wanted. And, the caregivers recognize how spending time with their parent supports their continued development, their relationships and social situations. Absolutely, this is a treasured time."

While incarcerated, mothers were able to spend some positive time with their keiki, playing, hugging and talking. Emotions ran high as keiki and their mothers laughed, cried, ate, and shared within the 3-1/2 hours allowed. They also engaged in specially designed games, made a craft together, and played volleyball and football with their moms. An early education area was provided with books, blocks, pretend play, and playdough. Mothers had the opportunity to read to their children and some children read to their moms.

"The women look forward to this day as much as the children, and having this important visit during the Mother's Day weekend makes it even more special for them," said WCCC Warden Eric Tanaka. "We appreciate all of our community partners, like Keiki O Ka 'Āina, who devote hundreds of hours organizing these family visits and helping these mothers mend relationships and break the cycle of incarceration".

This 2016 event was a community partnership as a select group of WCCC inmates' prepped, bar-b-que'd and served the lunch. Bake-A-Blessing Outreach Ministry from Inspire Church in

Waikele provided nine dozen cupcakes. The Laulima Giving Program donated toys for this special event, and keiki were allowed to choose 2-3 items while interacting with their parent.

###

About Keiki o ka 'Āina Family Learning Center

The Mission of Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers (KOKA-FLC) is to *Educate Children, Strengthen Families, Enrich Communities and Perpetuate Culture*. We fulfill our mission by communicating the vital importance of education, advocating for literacy, learning and life readiness, supporting parents as the first and best teacher, and empowering families to undertake leadership roles in their communities. All of this is done within the context of culture-based education and family engagement (CBE.FE). More information at www.koka.org

Media Contact:

Toni Schwartz
Public Information Officer
Hawaii Department of Public Safety
Office: 808-587-1358
Cell: 808-683-5507
Toni.E.Schwartz@hawaii.gov
<http://hawaii.gov/psd/>



Momi Akana
Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers
(808) 843-2502
Momi@koka.org