Program Leaders:

Captain Bonnie Kahapeʻa-Tanner, Plasito Eseluquipi, Kala Thomas, Kelea Levy
The Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy

Kat Lobendahn, Dr. Willy Kauai, Kanaloa Schrader, and Dr. Ulla Hasager
The UHM College of Social Sciences
Program for Civic Engagement

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Ka Holo Wa’a - Creating Oceanic Pathways Service-Learning Program

Program Description:
Ka Holo Wa’a - Creating Oceanic Pathways: Walking the Stick of Our Ancestors is a canoe-building project that gives college, middle-school, and high-school students an opportunity to help create a 12-16 foot wa’a (canoe), using traditional materials. The Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy (KVA), college students in the Ka Holo Wa’a (KHW) program, and leaders from the community are working directly with urban Oceanic youth from O‘ahu. As they work on the canoe, students also learn about the important relationships between Oceanic peoples and the ocean that connects us through voyaging. Our project follows up on the recent history of reciprocity between Micronesian peoples and Hawaiians. When the voyaging canoe, Hōkūle‘a, was built and launched in 1975, Master Navigator Pius Mau Piailug from Satawal agreed to guide the canoe to Tahiti using only the natural elements. Of this great act of giving to the Hawaiian people, Pius Mau Piailug later said, “I have placed the stick between Polynesia and Micronesia, I like we make one family.” The Creating Oceanic Pathways project is a step towards bringing Mau’s vision to fruition, to heal and continue the reciprocal relationship between the peoples of Oceania. By creating a canoe together, the youth begin to walk the stick of our ancestors. In the spirit of continuity, our master canoe builder for this project, is Plasito Eseluquipi, son of Mau.

Program Details:
Hoʻoulu ʻĀina (under Kōkua Kalihi Valley - KKV) will serve as the initial natural laboratory of the program. KKV has provided the Albesia log that will serve as the kaʻele (hull) of the wa’a. The majority of the initial work will be done at various work areas at Hoʻoulu ʻĀina (3659 Kalihi Street, Kalihi, Hawaii 96819) and at KUPU’s Net Shed at Kewalo Basin (725F Ala Moana Blvd., Honolulu, HI 96813): The wa’a will be moved to this Kākāako site, once Kumu Plasito determines it to be ready. Here the finishing work will be done. There will also be additional field activities to facilitate cultural and environmental learning and to gather natural materials needed to build the other parts of the wa’a.

Program Dates:
College students will be trained and work under the leadership of KVA leader Bonnie Kahape’a and KHW leader Katherine Lobendahn with the assistance of Kala Thomas, Kanaloa Schrader, and Willy Kauai. There will be opportunities to work daily (M-F) 10am-4pm on the canoe. Students will set up a work plan with the on-site KVA representative and project leader Kala Thomas.

10/1 (W), 3-4pm: Orientation in George Hall 301 at UH Mānoa. Required for service-learning students only. If you can’t make it, please contact us immediately
10/8 (W) and 10/9 (R), 10am-4pm: Work day with 20 middle and high school youth from Pālolo
10/11 (Sat), 8:30am-1:30pm: Mokaua Island field activity
10/15 (W) 9am-12pm: Work day with 50 Campbell High School students
10/18 (Sat) 9am-12pm: Work day with community members and middle and high school youth
11/15 (Sat) 9am-3pm: Work day with community members, and middle and high school youth
11/29 (Sat) 10am-3pm: Work day, Ka Holo Wa’a college students reflections session
12/13 (Sat) 2-7pm: Final celebration

PROJECT PARTNERS AND SPONSORS
This service-learning project is offered in a partnership between the Kānehūnāmoku Voyaging Academy program, the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s College of Social Sciences Program for Civic Engagement, supported by KKV-Hoʻoulu ʻĀina, and KUPU.