

A Collaborative Community Build Playground for KPT's Keiki

Proposal to the Atherton Family Foundation

This request is for funding to purchase equipment and surfacing for a community build playground at Kuhio Park Terrace and Kuhio Homes housing complex where approximately 1,000 children under the age of 13 do not have a safe and stimulating place to play.

The Good Beginnings Alliance is the lead agency and fiscal sponsor of a collaborate effort which includes GBA, the Kuhio Park Terrace and Kuhio Homes Resident Associations, Parents and Children Together, Aloha United Way and Island Recreation.

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a statewide 501c(3) organization, which spearheads efforts to create a coordinated early childhood education and care system in Hawaii. Good Beginnings functions as the critical link connecting community efforts with public and private policies and financing strategies. As Hawaii's legislatively designated early childhood intermediary organization, GBA's mission is to work in partnership with families, communities, policy-makers, providers and advocates by:

- Maximizing resources
- Mobilizing action to improve outcomes and
- Shaping public will and public policy to ensure that all of Hawaii's young children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed.

The Good Beginnings Partnership for Hawaii's Keiki (PHK), which got underway in 2001 was an innovative initiative to work with communities to ensure their children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed. The PHK project drew richly from the lessons in the fields of Community Development and Early Childhood Development to build sustainable grassroots efforts in six communities across the state.

The KPT/Kuhio Homes housing development was one location of this grassroots initiative. The Kuhio Park Terrace/Kuhio Homes Public Housing development has the lowest median income of any community with a concentrated population in the state of Hawaii. Forty-five percent of the residents over age 25 did not graduate from high school and the unemployment rate in 2000 was 26 percent, as compared to 6 percent for the rest of Honolulu.

In 2000, more than half the residents were Samoan, 14 percent were Native Hawaiian and 19 percent mostly recent immigrants from Micronesia, a population which has expanded even more since the last census figures. Nearly half of KPT residents have limited English language skills. Among the languages spoken in resident's homes are Chuukese, Marshallese, Vietnamese, Laotian, Samoan and English.

The population of approximately 2,500 people live in two 16-story high rise buildings and 141 low rise buildings in KPT and 134 one and two story concrete townhouse type

buildings in Kuhio Homes. Together the two developments house nearly 20 percent of all federal public housing tenants in Hawaii.

In this complex there reside approximately 1,000 children under the age of 13 who have no playground or safe place to play. And parents who want better for their children.

Beginning in January of 2003, Partnership for Hawaii's Keiki staff met with boards of the two resident associations to gather support and sponsorship for a community wide "Talk Story for the Littlest Keiki." The purpose of the Talk Story was to provide a forum where residents could voice their concerns about the needs of the children and where they could offer solutions to those concerns. A secondary purpose was to train residents to provide leadership for community building activities.

With resident support the staff of PHK facilitated a series of 8 trainings to 20 residents to convene a community-wide talk story. The team of community resident facilitators chose five issues as the focal points of the Talk Story; they were Keiki Safety, Keiki Program and Activities, Keiki Playgrounds and Play Areas, Keiki Abuse and Neglect and Keiki Health and Well Being.

Talk Story for the Littlest Keiki was held in August 2003 with booths in four languages. The more than four hundred parents and youth who took part emphatically found that the lack of play areas for children and toddlers was their greatest need for children in their community. Their comments clearly underscored that this lack of a play area creates problems related to health, physical and emotional development, learning and safety. Their comments further showed that the need for a playground crosscut all five focal issues of the Talk Story to become the priority issue for action.

In the spring of 2004 the Aloha United Way joined the Good Beginnings Alliance, the PACT Family Center and the two resident associations in a partnership to move the project forward. Current AUW activities include creating new collaborative partnerships to support identified initiatives. AUW determined that supporting a community build playground would be a tactic, which touched, to varying degrees, all of its own initiative areas. As part of the collaborative Aloha United Way is contributing introductions to potential funders, and the active participation of a staff member.

By fall of 2004 Island Recreation, which is known for assisting grassroots community build playground initiatives in Hawaii's communities, had joined the team. Island Recreation staff offered the expertise to put together a design for the playground as well as knowledge of community committee structures and partnerships to get the work done. All of the work provided by Island Recreation to date, through and including the design of the structures, has been provided as an in-kind service to the community.

More recently, PACT Teen Center and the PACT Administration have become involved in the project. They offer many years of experience working with residents at KPT/Kuhio Homes, knowledge about grant making opportunities, and sound advice on how to

proceed with all of the needed players in the community. PACT has also offered to assist with printing and distributing fliers and the survey to the residents.

The most important and active of the partners are the residents, through the participation of the Kuhio Park Terrace and Kuhio Homes Resident Associations. Residents make up the core of the planning committees. They will also be active fundraisers and the backbone for building the playground. Residents have scheduled their first fundraiser, a car wash, to be held on Saturday, November 6 at a location in KPT and another location on School Street.

The Good Beginnings Alliance is contributing approximately 62.5% of one staff person, Kathleen Hasegawa, who is providing leadership to the collaborative and 12.5% time of another staff person, Corrina Moefu, to work specifically with residents. Kathleen has 20 years of experience building coalition and collaborative efforts and has been working with KPT/Kuhio Homes residents for nearly two years. Corrina has worked in this housing project for nearly 18 years and knows and has worked with many of the residents. GBA has also assumed the role of fiscal agent for the collaborative.

By joining together, the partners have hoped to open the doors to community initiative and to funding that will make the community build playground possible at KPT/Kuhio Homes. While it is the first time for all of the partners to work on a project together, both GBA and PACT have worked with the resident associations and AUW has supported PACT through funding and GBA by linking initiatives.

The Housing and Community Development Corporation of Hawaii has been helpful in figuring out issues related to land use, and Urban Real Estate Co. has made meeting rooms available, attended meetings, helped in the identification of a site and offered its support in carrying the project forward.

The Hawai'i Community Foundation has supported the project with a \$20,000 Mo`Bettah Together grant to support community participation and to provide leadership training in conjunction with the project's development.

In the spring and summer of 2004 three large meetings, open to the entire KPT/Kuhio Homes community, were held to introduce the community build playground concept to the residents and to gain initial input in its design. The largest of these meetings had 114 resident participants divided equally among adults and youth. Breaking into six groups, residents cut and pasted pictures from catalogs to create playground designs of their liking. They then presented their projects to others at the meeting.

At the last meeting, residents and partners broke into committees to begin work on the many needed aspects of the project. These initial groups have formed the framework for six committees which are: Design, Fundraising, Public Relations, Security and Maintenance, Volunteers and Construction.

One last coordinating committee, called the Core Committee, has recently been added.

With the purpose of moving a unified project forward, the membership of the core committee will be comprised of one member from each of the partners, one resident representative from each of the committees, management, political leaders from the district and community stakeholders.

The Fundraising Committee has met three times to date. Fundraising has been divided into three subcommittees, each of which is facilitated by one of the partners. They are: civic and corporate outreach, grant applications and resident fundraisers.

In three meetings of the Design Committee two structures were designed to meet the needs of the children as desired by both children and adults. Both are sturdy structures, which have been designed for safety, long-term usability and flexibility to meet the needs of a population of approximately 1,000 children.

A large site, approximately 7,500 sq. feet, has been chosen. It is the former site of the PACT Head Start Program and already has a good deal of the concrete area, which will be needed under the surfacing. The site where the Head Start structure was located will easily accommodate the new play structure for the 2-5 year olds. The larger structure will be situated close by within the same fenced in area. Management has offered to build a covered area and plant trees where parents can sit to watch their children and socialize. The wall of the Community Hall forms one side of the location of the playground. It has remnants of a mural painted by KPT teens almost 15 years ago. Management has offered to resurface the wall so that a new mural can be done by the youth of KPT and Kuhio Homes.

A groundbreaking and dedication of the playground is planned for mid-November. The concrete flooring will be poured soon after rainy season ends. In the spring the playground will be built by the community, as a festive event attended by and participated in by the children and adults of the Kuhio Park Terrace and Kuhio Homes.

The playground design is a direct result of the community's priorities that were identified by several community and design committee meetings. These priorities included:

1. Age appropriate play areas separating children 0-5 and 5-12 years old.
2. Emphasis on both active and passive play spaces
3. Opportunities for upper body and fine motor skill development
4. Shade
5. Supervision sight lines
6. Durability of playground equipment and site furnishings
7. Safety and Security
8. Area for adults to socialize while the children play
9. Seating areas positioned in sight lines for supervision
10. Infant toddler area

The playground is comprised of a variety of component areas, which include:

Infant Toddler area: An existing wood shade structure that has rubber surfacing already installed in the bottom will be enclosed on the three sides and will be designed for infants and toddlers who are not old enough to play on the playground equipment.

Adult Social Gathering Area: This area will feature a cluster of 4 recycled plastic square tables with game boards imbedded in them. Shaded and positioned in proximity to the infant toddler area, it will encourage complete families to come and enjoy the play area.

Covered Picnic Area: This area will provide a gathering place for entire families to socialize and recreate together. It will contain 4 picnic tables and trash receptacles and be positioned in-between the two play structures so that children will be visible at all times.

Playground Seating Area: Benches will be positioned just outside the playground safety surface area to facilitate and encourage active supervision from parents.

0-5 Playground Equipment: This composite play structure was designed with the smallest children in mind. The highest designated play space will be 48" tall and all of the components will be built for smaller children. Shade will be provided by two 12 x 12' roofs and in the play spaces underneath the large decks. Underneath the decks will be two built in tables for social interaction. The equipment will feature three slides of varying degrees of challenge, six climbing opportunities, a telephone connected by a hose under the surface to another telephone, a store front panel, an area that features panels containing positive messages from the popular cartoon Arthur, a crawl tunnel with view panels for supervision, arch bridges, fun house mirror and pilot panel for fantasy play, and a wheel chair transfer module.

5-12 Playground Equipment: This composite play structure is designed to provide play opportunities and challenges for school age children. The highest designated play space will be 72" tall to accommodate faster slides and more challenging components. Shade will be provided by two large hex roofs and in the play spaces underneath the hex decks. Underneath the decks will be game type panels to encourage cooperative and social play. The equipment will feature three slides of varying degrees of challenge including a split double slide, a 16' curved track ride will be one of the highlights of the eight climbing opportunities, a telephone connected by a hose under the surface to another telephone, a stationary cycler and log roll will be a challenging and fun opportunity for motor skill development, a large conical rope climber will serve as an area for children to climb and access both of the towers, other upper body events are a chin up bar, disc challenge, and large elevated wheel, a wheel chair transfer module will be provided.

Compliance to Federal Standards and Laws: This play area will be compliant with current ADA law and will provide play activities for all children and access for all adults. The playground equipment will conform with ASTM and CPSC federal guidelines.