Kupu

UPU, FOUNDED IN 2007, IS HAWAI‘I’S LEADING CONSERVATION AND YOUTH EDUCATION NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION. We provide hands-on training in conservation, sustainability, and environmental education for young adults, with the goal of fostering our next generation of environmental and cultural stewards. A significant number of our participants are opportunity youth who come from underserved communities state-wide. To date, Kupu has trained over 4,500 youth. Thanks to our local and national organization partners, we have provided internship, scholarship, and career opportunities for our program participants. Many of our alumni have been hired to work in various sustainability and conservation-focused initiatives across the state.

Much of Kupu’s efforts last year focused on responding to community needs through food distribution and employment. In addition to providing nearly 100,000 meals to communities in need, Kupu worked diligently with various groups along with the State of Hawai‘i to develop Kupu Āina Corps, a temporary workforce development program created to address the drastic effects of COVID-19 on Hawai‘i’s economy. Program participants directly cared for over 21,000 acres of land in Hawai‘i by removing invasive species, planting native plants, clearing debris and otherwise managing precious natural and cultural resources. Kupu estimated this work produced over $6.5 million in economic benefit for Hawai‘i. More than 350 program participants logged over 89,000 staff hours at 150 host sites across the islands. One in three were able to stay working after the program ended, and nearly half of all participants are either currently working or pursuing higher education.

Kupu’s significant impact on its program participants—and the places where they gain experience—relies heavily on the tireless staff that makeup the organization and brings to Kupu their passion for the community, the environment, and making a lasting difference in other people’s lives. They also rely on the support of donors, volunteers and strategic partners.

For more information on our organization and programs, or to learn how to partner with us, please visit kupuhawaii.org.

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