



PBS HAWAII

Local Content and Service Report to the Community

JULY 2023 – JUNE 2024

Locally Owned

PBS Hawai'i is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We are the Hawaiian Islands' only locally owned statewide television station, the only member of the nationally trusted Public Broadcasting Service and the only federally licensed statewide educational broadcaster in the Islands.

We provide quality multimedia programming for the educational enrichment of our local communities with the support of individuals, businesses, charitable foundations and the private nonprofit organization, Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

OUR MISSION

PBS Hawai'i advances learning and discovery through storytelling that profoundly touches lives.

Local Value

Our relevance to the community extends far beyond being a source of entertainment. We are a valued resource that contributes to the health, vitality and collective well-being of Hawai'i's people.

Through impactful programming and community-focused initiatives, PBS Hawai'i demonstrates a deep commitment to serving the diverse needs of our residents and their future.

Here we nurture and perpetuate the stories of our islands and share them with our communities and the world ... we foster transformative conversations and bring to light the most pressing issues affecting our residents ... and we provide keiki a platform to learn, grow and develop into community-minded adults.

This report reflects FY 2024 and how the station played an essential role in enhancing our community's overall well-being while maintaining accountability to the people it serves.

Local Programming

We are dedicated to creating original programs reflecting Hawai'i's diversity that viewers have come to appreciate and trust. These programs cover a wide variety of important community issues, aiming to build impartial understanding through distinct voices and representation, preserving our diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.



INSIGHTS on PBS Hawai'i

INSIGHTS on PBS Hawai'i is a trusted space for information on critical issues that impact the lives of Hawai'i's residents. Through weekly live discussions, this program becomes a neutral space where diverse perspectives converge, creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue.

This past year, our weekly live one-hour public affairs program touched on a variety of issues facing our community including the cost of living, the economy, public safety, government functions and invasive species. Regarding public safety, we discussed what can be done to prevent wildfires like the one that destroyed much of Lahaina, Maui.

We also held discussions about the constant high rate of pedestrian fatalities, the rise in violent crime even as other types of crime are decreasing, the constant threat of domestic violence, the proliferation of illegal gaming rooms across the islands and the seemingly never-ending problem of illegal fireworks.

We hosted forums on the cost of living, including the idea of building more tiny homes to help alleviate the housing crisis, state proposals to build more housing, improving the economic well-being of our youth and the rising cost of hurricane insurance for condominium associations.

Lingering issues like what to do about the popular yet controversial Ha'ikū Stairs hike, how Hawai'i is way behind schedule in removing more than 80,000 cesspools that will soon be illegal and a controversial plan to build a pedestrian bridge over the Ala Wai Canal were also discussed.

Other forums focused on the problems caused by feral cats and chickens and the damage caused by invasive species like the coconut rhinoceros beetle, fire ants and coqui frogs. We also discussed the lack of mental health services for veterans and how survivors of the Maui fires are coping. We ended the year with candidate forums in the race for Hawai'i County Mayor and various state legislative races.



Home is Here

Home is Here is a vital program that highlights the rich and diverse tapestry of life in Hawai'i. The monthly 30-minute episodes offer the community a platform to share and celebrate local stories and achievements that impact the people of Hawai'i.

In fiscal year 2024 these included a story about how the Mālama Learning Center uses place-based learning techniques to teach Hawai'i's youth about the cultural and natural history of West O'ahu, the efforts to preserve endangered native species of snails and butterflies at the Honolulu Zoo, and about a program at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu called NiuNow which is trying to re-educate the public that coconut trees are not only culturally significant but also a viable food source.

Other stories included profiles of The Salle Fencing Club of Honolulu, the award-winning eSports team at UH Mānoa, the annual HURT100 endurance race in the hills above Honolulu and family run-businesses like Fujikami Florist, Sumida Farm, Aloha Tofu and Elena's Restaurant. There were profiles on long-time surf promoter Randy Rarick and artists Bonhui Uy, O.G. Slick and Aaron "Woes" Martin.

We shared the history of the Civil Air Patrol, Hawai'i Theatre, the UH Bands programs which celebrated 100 years and Kawaii Kon – a three-day convention celebrating Japanese anime (cartoons) and manga (comics). But we did not stop there. Other stories showcased the Old Queen Street Stadium, a local sports museum, the unique-to-Hawai'i fish sommelier at a West O'ahu resort restaurant, how to search your genealogy and an entire show that was dedicated to Hawai'i Walls, where artists from diverse backgrounds and communities join forces to create art in the public sphere.

Nā Mele

Nā Mele is a dedicated program for celebrating and preserving Hawai'i's rich musical heritage. The program showcases the diverse and vibrant voices of local artists, bringing the music and stories of Hawai'i into homes across the Islands and beyond.

In fiscal year 2024, we launched **Nā Mele 25**, which celebrated 25 years of **Nā Mele**. New programs included Kamakāhau Fernandez, a falsetto from Maui who was born in Arkansas but adopted by a Hawaiian family at birth and raised learning 'ōlelo Hawai'i, the Native Hawaiian language. We also featured Natalie Ai Kamauu and her family in





concert at Palikū Theatre at Windward Community College. We recorded and livestreamed Nā Leo Pilimehana (Lehua Kalima Alvarez, Nalani Jenkins and Angela Escontrias) at Halekulani’s House Without A Key in March and produced a pledge program that included the concert which premiered in June. We recorded a Nā Mele episode featuring John Cruz in April of 2024.

KĀKOU: Hawai’i’s Town Hall

KĀKOU: Hawai’i’s Town Hall offers an inclusive, neutral platform where important issues facing Hawai’i can be discussed, analyzed and addressed. By bringing together a diverse range of voices, including government officials, private sector leaders, community activists, and concerned citizens, KĀKOU facilitates informed and balanced conversations on topics that matter to the people of Hawai’i.

PBS Hawai’i presented five live 90-minute episodes of KĀKOU: Hawai’i’s Town Hall. The programs featured panels with varied voices about the topic at hand as well as questions sent in by viewers via phone, email and social media.

The first episode was called, *Are We Really Ready for a Natural Disaster?* This show was planned before the wildfires destroyed Lahaina and

homes in Upcountry Maui. It focused on how well prepared Hawai’i residents are for what may come their way including wildfires, tropical cyclones, floods, tsunami and earthquakes. Panelists included government leaders, non-profit help agencies like the Red Cross and Hawai’i Foodbank and preparation experts. One feature of the program was an in-studio physical depiction of what two-weeks worth of food and supplies – the recommended amount – would look like.

The second episode was titled *Affordable Housing – At What Cost?* This show focused on the long-running affordable housing crisis facing Hawai’i and was born out of Gov. Josh Green’s executive order suspending numerous oversight and other laws to fast track housing construction. The panel included multiple private developers, legislators, public policy analysts, government housing officials, research experts and watchdog groups.

Episode three was called *Social Media: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly*. This was a discussion on the extreme growth in the use of, and the power of social media. The panel included high school students, a college student, teachers, social media influencers, social media marketing experts, a cybercrime expert and the state’s broadband coordinator.



The fourth episode was titled *Artificial Intelligence: Embrace It or Fear It?* In this show, we explained the basics of and the concerns about the quickly rising wave of new technology labeled as artificial intelligence. As part of the program, we demonstrated, in a live format, the speed of AI programs while using a cell phone and a laptop. Panelists included educators, a high school student, digital marketing and industry leaders, a journalist and the head of a university program that infuses indigenous knowledge into modern disciplines.

Episode five was called *De-Stressing in a Stressful World*. The premise for this show was how we as individuals and as a society deal with and overcome all the stresses of modern life from daily stressors like traffic and bad weather to the larger agitators like financial shortfalls, health and a divided society. Panelists included medical doctors, counselors, a minister, researchers, an economic justice advocate, a teenager who founded a nonprofit for people like him with speech challenges and a comedian/TV radio personality.

PBS Hawai'i Presents

PBS Hawai'i Presents plays a pivotal role in the community by offering a platform for independent filmmakers to share compelling stories that highlight both the historical and contemporary experiences of Hawai'i and beyond.

In fiscal year 2024, we showcased nine full-length films, four of which were from first-time filmmakers. *KAPU: Sacred Hawaiian Burials* is a film 20 years in the making by Keoni Alvarez. This documentary tells the story of the desecration of Native Hawaiian burial sites and iwi, or ancestral remains, by outsiders to Hawai'i going back to Western contact and continuing to this day.

Removed by Force: The Eviction of Hawai'i's Japanese Americans During World War II documents the largely untold story of Americans of Japanese ancestry who were forcefully removed from their homes and businesses following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. This film was made by Ryan Kawamoto with support from the Japanese American Citizens League.

Nation Within: The Story of America's Annexation of Hawai'i is a film made in 1998 that we were able to reshare with the viewing public. This documentary by Tom Coffman recounts the efforts by Queen Lili'uokalani and her supporters to resist annexation by the United States in 1898. The re-airing coincided with an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution that explored the imperialist expansion of the U.S. in 1898.





The Adventures of Super CW by filmmaker Gerard Elmore follows the journey of Hawai'i journalist, DJ and socialite Christa Wittmier through treatment, remission and recurrence after she was diagnosed with stage IV breast cancer.

First-time feature-length filmmaker Jocelyn Manuel produced and directed *This is Kohala*, which consolidated interviews from the Kohala Oral History Project. This film documents what life was like in this corner of the Big Island during the sugar plantation days.

Reel Wāhine of Hawai'i 4 is the fourth installment of this series by Hawai'i Women in Filmmaking. The series profiles women who have made a difference in the filmmaking industry in Hawai'i over the years. This film featured Ann Marie Kirk, Jana Kealokaokeakua Park, Stephanie J. Castillo, Sancia Miala Shiba Nash, Leanne K. Ferrer and Shaneika Aguilar.

Keeper of the Bay profiles Cindi Punihaole, who, as the director of the Kahalu'u Bay Education Center, blends her Native Hawaiian cultural practices with scientific data to foster marine conservation and education of visitors to Kahalu'u Bay on the Kona Coast of the Big Island. This is the first feature-length film by Ashley LoFaso who co-produced the film with Christine Zalewski.

Ottomaticake profiles the eclectic life of Scott "Otto" McDonough, owner of Otto Cake bakery which specializes in cheesecake. He is a baker by day and a punk rocker by night. The film, by Gemma Cubero del Barrio chronicles Otto's struggles with crime, vandalism and bad luck in the early years of his business as well as the mark he made in the Honolulu punk rock music scene.

Wade in the Water: A Journey into Black Surfing and Aquatic Culture is a film by David Mesfin that explores the early roots of surfing in Africa to modern surf clubs and surf schools in the United States.

PBS Hawai'i Presents Shorts

PBS Hawai'i Presents Shorts serves as a powerful platform for storytelling that reflects the diverse, evolving voices and narratives of the Pacific Islands. By launching this series in June of 2024, PBS Hawai'i continues to demonstrate its commitment to fostering inclusivity, creativity and a deep respect for cultural identity.

In June of 2024, this franchise was launched exclusively on its digital platforms. The launch included a packet of six films under the banner Lei Pua 'Ala – Queer Films from the Pacific.





Most of the films have been seen before but in separate releases over the years. They are:

The Rogers – An intimate glimpse of the first visible group of transgender men in the Pacific Islands, the Rogers of Samoa.

Remembering the Glade – Showgirl Brandy Lee, 80, recalls how the Glade, a Honolulu nightclub famous for its “Boys Will Be Girls” revue, became a place of community refuge and joy for māhū, individuals of dual male and female spirit, during a time of violent anti-trans discrimination.

Lady Eva – A young transgender woman sets off on a journey to become her true self in the Pacific Island Kingdom of Tonga.

Kapaemahu – The hidden history of four monumental stones on Waikīkī beach and the legendary transgender healing spirits within them.

A Place in the Middle – The true-life story of a girl who aspires to lead her school’s all-male hula troupe and an inspiring teacher who uses traditional Hawaiian culture to empower her.

Aikāne, the sixth film, is a new animated production. This is a story about an island warrior, wounded in battle against foreign invaders, who then falls into a mysterious underwater world.

Everything changes when the octopus who rescues him transforms into a handsome young man.

PBS Hawai‘i Classics

Tapping into vintage programs from the PBS Hawai‘i archives, **PBS Hawai‘i Classics** ran most Wednesdays at 7:30 pm.

GET CAUGHT READING

PBS Hawai‘i continues to produce **GET CAUGHT READING** spots that range from 30 seconds to 90 seconds and feature people from all walks of life reading a passage from a favorite book or poem. Animation of the spoken words accompanies the read to encourage reading for all ages. This year we featured 10 **GET CAUGHT READING** videos.





What School You Went?

We entered our third year of producing **What School You Went?**, our weekly audio podcast which explores the traditions and stories that make up the modern-day culture of Hawai'i.

In addition to the audio component, on January 1, 2024, we began releasing previous episodes weekly on YouTube. Topics included pigeon-racing, haunted locations around the state, an organization that perpetuates the Hawaiian culture, a teenage entrepreneur, local Hawai'i traditions like sashimi on New Year's Day and more. This year we released 42 podcasts, of which 39 were brand new episodes.

Alanui Mele

In January 2024, we launched **Alanui Mele**, a podcast that explores the rich tapestry of Hawai'i's Hip-Hop culture. Over the year, we produced 10 new episodes that included candid interviews with some of Hawai'i's most prolific individuals in the hip-hop community. Those featured included deejays who helped pave the way for Hawai'i's hip-hop musicians, an entrepreneur who helped start a homegrown radio station, to the founder of a hip-hop dance crew, emcees, a street artist and musicians.

HIKI NŌ

PBS HAWAII

Season 15 of **HIKI NŌ on PBS Hawai'i** built on the success of our partnerships with schools and communities, providing an outlet for student perspectives. With ongoing educational opportunities and new initiatives centered around climate change, **HIKI NŌ** remains a trusted resource for students, teachers and the community.



Student Perspectives

Hearing from students about issues that affect them most and sharing their unique perspectives is one of the cornerstones of **HIKI NŌ on PBS Hawai'i**. When devastating wildfires hit Maui at the beginning of the school year, we knew we needed to help students share their experiences. Season 15 began with an episode dedicated to the work of Maui schools, hosted by Samuel Paci from H.P. Baldwin High School.

The episode featured a story highlighting Paci's stepfather, a firefighter who battled recent wildfires. It also included a special collection of student voices and a montage of student captured footage from Maui schools, offering insights into what makes Maui unique and the experiences of growing up there. Furthermore, students paid tribute to Lahaina and Maui by sharing memorable stories from our archives, which serve as valuable historical time capsules of Lahaina. This was just one example of how student voices were championed this season.



Partnerships

Partnerships are what make **HIKI NŌ on PBS Hawai'i** successful. From ongoing collaborations with teachers and students to industry mentors and organizations like Mental Health America of Hawai'i, our community engagement is what makes it so valuable. This year, we entered into an official agreement with the Hawai'i Department of Education to become an endorsed provider of



educational opportunities for students and teachers, supported by the superintendent’s office. It was also the first year we partnered with STEMworks Hawai’i to participate in its annual Hawai’i STEM conference; setting criteria, providing feedback for the video highlight competition participants and determining the winning entry.

Education

Education has always been a primary focus for HIKI NŌ on PBS Hawai’i. To better serve our teachers and students, we added additional industry mentors who bring fresh perspectives and real-world knowledge into the classroom.

Our newest mentor from Hawai’i Island provides us with the opportunity to more easily offer in-person mentorship to students and teachers in remote locations. This year, we had a large influx of new teachers and made it a priority to provide better online resources to support them. To that end, we have created a suite of tutorial videos

and corresponding lesson plans for PBS Learning Media to help both new and seasoned teachers equip their students to begin creating impactful HIKI NŌ on PBS Hawai’i stories successfully.

Climate Change

As part of PBS Hawai’i’s new Climate Change Initiative, the theme for this year’s challenge was “Climate Change – Mauka to Makai: Our Kuleana.”

The turnout exceeded our expectations, with 61 students participating and 15 schools submitting stories. Workshops were held before and after to provide students and teachers with skills to help them succeed and feedback on areas for improvement. The stories from this challenge shone, creating amazing content featured on our Mauka to Makai website landing page to kick off PBS Hawai’i’s Climate Change Initiative. Sharing stories from the generation who will inherit the consequences of climate change is a key reason we were among just 23 PBS stations across the country to launch a statewide climate change story initiative.



Connecting and Engaging with Our Community

We continued to engage and connect with our community near and far through virtual screenings and in-person events throughout the year.



PBS Hawai'i Presents Screenings

We maintained active engagement with our community through 5 virtual screenings, allowing us to amplify our reach. These screenings transcended geographical boundaries, attracting participants from our local community, across the nation and worldwide. Two of the five screenings included discussions involving filmmakers and individual figures from the documentaries.

The varied range of stories showcased our continued commitment to sharing inclusive and diverse content. This included addressing the sensitive topic of the desecration of Native Hawaiian burial sites and ancestral remains; shedding light on the untold story of Americans of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly removed from their homes and businesses following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941; the personal struggle and journey of a Hawai'i journalist and deejay; the preservation of the rich oral history of the sugar plantation days in Kohala; and a profile about the efforts to protect Kahalu'u Bay on the Kona Coast of the Big Island.

Nā Mele 25 Rewind

As part of our yearlong celebration of our Hawaiian music franchise **Nā Mele**, we showcased



two Nā Mele 25 Rewind events. These virtual events included 'rewinds' to **Nā Mele** programs from yesteryear. In the first quarter, we showcased Melveen Leed and in the second quarter, we featured Brother Noland. The event included a virtual screening of the **Nā Mele** program, along with a talk story and live performance by the musical artists. Viewers from across the world were able to tune in virtually to these special shows and can continue to do so, online on our digital platforms.

Donors

Community engagement with our donors is an important aspect of the work that we do at PBS Hawai'i. Forging meaningful relationships with them has allowed us to share their impact with us and the community. Some of the events that we hosted with donors were a sneak peek of the creation of our **Nā Mele** concert series with Natalie Ai at Paliku Theater and with Nā Leo Pilimehana at Halekulani's House without a Key.

We also opened our doors to the community to share the current and exciting work that is taking place at PBS Hawai'i with our Fall Presentation. Here we hosted studio tours, shared updates on our broadcast and digital content and invited donors who were impacted by our programming to share their stories with others.

In partnership with Hawai'i Community Foundation, we were asked to host their Legacy Event at PBS Hawai'i. To approximately 80 guests, we provided station tours and shared with the audience the importance of public media in our communities.

Keiki and 'Ohana

A key part of our station's mission is to use the power of media to open worlds of possibilities for all children. Over the year we have worked hard to engage with our smallest of donors—our keiki—by providing ways to connect that are both meaningful to them and to us.

This included our Annual PBS Hawai'i Keiki Club Trunk O' Treat where we invited children and their families to join us for a safe, interactive experience on the grounds of our station.

We also went out into the community and for a second year in a row, participated in the

Candy Crawl at Pearlridge Center reaching more than 6,000 children and their families.

We traveled to Kaua'i for the annual Kaua'i Parent & Child Fair where we connected with keiki and parents about the importance of composting, recycling and more.

We also took to the schools during Read Across America with a book reading to elementary school students at Lincoln Elementary.

General Public

We participated in two career fairs at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa during the Fall and the Spring, where we engaged and interacted with college students. We also took female attendees for a walk down memory lane at the Wahine Forum, where we set up a booth with nostalgic memorabilia from Sesame Street and shared information about the importance of our role and their role in supporting public media.

