

INSIDE THE RESCUE

Rescuing Food to Feed Hawaii's Hungry

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Message from the E.D.

Warning! Holidays are fast approaching!! Can you believe we are now less than 75 days away from Christmas? Where did this year go?

As we look to the holidays and all the festivities, work parties, and family traditions, much of the focus is on food! From cocktail parties to the family get together, just about everything is centered around food. I often wonder how much food we throw out during the holidays (and not even think about what is wasted). Leftovers are some of our favorites, but do we eat them all or do we have too much and throw them out? What about all the 'food' gifts you receive? Many of us are blessed with plenty. Yet, more than one in eight Hawai'i residents lack a regular and socially acceptable source of nutritious food, and one in five relies on a food bank or pantry for assistance.

Aloha Harvest's mission is to rescue excess food to help feed those in need. Since 1999, Aloha Harvest has rescued over 19,039,915 lbs. of food from entering the waste stream, to benefit the needy. Annually, we rescue approximately 2 million pounds of excess food.

There are many benefits of donating excess food to Aloha Harvest.

- Aloha Harvest picks up food that would otherwise go to waste from hundreds of food donors.
- We accept fresh food, refrigerated and frozen foods, dried food, food in boxes and cans, and bottles.
- Donated food must be prepared in a licensed, certified food business.



volunteer spotlight



International students from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's HELP Program volunteers on a monthly basis at Aloha Harvest. They label all the food storage supplies that gets distributed to the food donors. HELP stands for Hawai'i English Language Program.

- Once rescued, food is delivered to over 175 social service agencies.
- Potential tax deductions (consult your tax advisor), reduced disposal fees, positive publicity, increased employee morale, and a 'green' model by not letting excess food go to waste.
- You receive a donation receipt for each pick-up.
- NO liability! You are protected from liability under Federal and Hawai'i State Good Samaritan Laws. Handling food safely is paramount to Aloha Harvest.

This holiday season, I encourage us all to think of ways to reduce the amount of food we are throwing away. Maybe it's your office holiday party with catered food? Maybe it's a wedding or Birthday Party at a hotel or ballroom? Got an extra Turkey you can donate? Not sure what to do with those extra Christmas gifts – boxes of candies, cookies, snacks, or fruit, meat and cheeses? Extra canned or boxed goods in your pantry? Daily we are faced with opportunities to rescue food, or pay a good deed forward. How can you help to make a difference? I guarantee, you'll feel great

Kiuei Williams



Food Donor Corner

Duke's Waikiki looks out over the warm blue water of Waikiki Beach. It speaks of its namesake, Hawaii legend Duke Kahanamoku, in even warmer tones. Nearly 90 years ago, within jaw-dropping distance of the restaurant, Duke surfed a Waikiki wave 1-1/8 miles. It is considered the longest ride in modern times.



The iconic setting for such a mind-boggling memory is part of what kept the ultra-popular restaurant from connecting with Aloha Harvest years ago.

Duke's idyllic location is perfect for patrons, but short on space. For years, the restaurant had been reaching out to Aloha Harvest with one hand tied behind its back — a lack of safe space to store rescued food to donate to Hawaii's hungry.

Then Chef Bill Bruhl, with a timely push from a cocktail waitress named Samantha and the generosity of a buddy who worked in wholesale equipment, finally found a fix.

It came in the form of an extra refrigerator, donated by his friend after Samantha encouraged Chef Bill to make the Aloha Harvest connection finally work.

"Samantha said I had to do it," Bruhl recalled with a laugh and lots of conviction. "She said 'Let's do this, why are we not doing it?' We had tossed the idea around many, many times and it always shut down — we always decided it was something we can't do."

The folks in charge at Duke's have found a way. They still have huge volume and relatively small space — "We are extremely under-sized for what we do," Bruhl says. So small they are forced to make two produce deliveries and pull seven pallets of food up to the kitchen every day.

There still is almost no space to store pans with food to be picked up. But, now, there is a new refrigerator solely for Aloha Harvest food, because Bruhl convinced his friend it would solve an age-old Duke's problem.

"I just said I want you to give me a reach-in (refrigerator) for this purpose," recalls Bruhl, whose years on the Angel Network board of directors taught him how critical a need this was. "This is the right reason, let's do it. He said fine. A couple days later he showed up with it and a couple days later I was talking to Aloha Harvest.



Executive Chef William Bruhl of Duke's Waikiki

"Sometimes the smallest things are the most complicated."

Now, Aloha Harvest picks up food from Duke's daily. The restaurant donated more than a thousand pounds in the first 11 days, as if it were trying to make up for lost time. Aloha Harvest drivers pick up during the week and volunteers and agencies take over on weekends.

It might not be sending Kimo's Original Hula Pie to those who are hungry, but it sends practically everything else Duke's serves for its buffets and off its menu.

Any food exposed to guests and uneaten, from french toast to oatmeal and miso soup, has to be thrown away in the morning — unless it can be donated to a food rescue organization. Same with lunch and dinner.

At Dukes, that is a massive amount of food, which all used to go to waste. Not now.

"We follow all the procedures and food safety standards," Bruhl says. "It is cooled properly before we put it into pans, before it is stored in the refrigerator designated only for Aloha Harvest."

What does Samantha have to say about all this? "All the employees think it's great," Bruhl says. "The line cooks, pantry cooks, runners, prep cooks, dishwashers ... they've all bought into it and do it right. "We treat it as any other food handling. The reach-in is at a location where we disposed of food prior to this, so it's not really much more work. Instead of throwing it in a can, we put it in a pan and label it and the next morning the good folks from Aloha Harvest pick it up."

Duke's is part of TS Restaurants, which also has places in Southern California, Lake Tahoe, Maui and Kauai. TS has been onboard with the food donation since the start. It calls its charitable efforts — usually designated for "locally based organizations with causes that are close to our hearts such as combating hunger" — a "Legacy of Aloha."

What better place to perpetuate the legacy?



Agency Highlight

In the midst of the grief, sadness and chaos after the Marco Polo fire, Salvation Army's Family Services was there to try and provide the basics — empathy, aid and, most simply, sustenance.

For a whole week after the fire, which killed three, damaged 80 units and caused more than \$100 million in damage, Salvation Army was able to feed the folks suffering most. Its affiliation with Aloha Harvest began in 2001. The need is so great that the groups hope to work together every week now, particularly after the donation of an outreach van. After the July fire at the 36-story Marco Polo on Kapiolani Boulevard, they worked together every day.

"Aloha Harvest brought us food every day of the week we were there at the lobby," recalls Anna Stone, Salvation Army's Director for Pathway of Hope/Family Services here. "It ranged from meals from the Hilton Hawaiian Village to items from Down to Earth. Everything was appreciated. Residents, fire department crews, building staff were welcomed to eat."

Their need was great, a feeling Salvation Army is all too familiar with. Its programs include adult day care and rehabilitation, alcohol and drug treatment, emergency financial assistance and food and nutrition programs along with its drop off locations.

Stone introduced Aloha Harvest to her organization after working with it on other programs.

"The Salvation Army has a long history of serving the community and Aloha Harvest is a great partner especially during our community outreaches," she says, "when we go to encampments or visit low-income households. The truck either delivers food to the site or brings to us the items the day before our outreach."

Stone's Family Services Office provides food, clothing and emergency financial assistance for rent and utilities to families facing crises. The food pantry clients have doubled in number since 2015.

"It is heartbreaking to see hard-working families face challenges," Stone says. "We give away an average of 400-500 bags of food every month."

The huge need inspired Salvation Army two years ago to implement "a long-term approach to intergenerational poverty and cycles of crises" with the introduction of Pathway of Hope. The case management program focuses on housing, employment and directing families to supportive communities.

Aloha Harvest is a partner there as well, delivering prepared food to supplement the dried goods that are funded by cash donations. It doesn't sound like much, but it can create remarkable results.

"Aloha Harvest food can be warm when it is supposed to be warm, and cold when it is supposed to be cold,"

Stone says. "This is great for those who do not have cooking facilities or refrigeration. It is safe to say that we raise the quality of life for some people when they can eat fresh food prepared by some of the finest food establishments in Honolulu."

That was absolutely true after the Marco Polo fire, when so many lost so much in a matter of minutes. Stone did not hesitate to ask for Aloha Harvest's help.

"The friendliness of the staff makes me feel welcome to ask again and again," she says. "They know they are making a difference, though they may not see the faces who receive the items. It couldn't get any better than that."

Aloha Harvest is available to help any 501(c)3 non-profit organization on O'ahu with a feeding program. Agency applications are available online (alohaharvest.org) or by calling the office (537-6945).



Donations being dropped off by Aloha Harvest staff at the Marco Polo building. L-R: Yessica, Mele Pepa Latu, Kayla Emineth and Anna Stone.



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