

MidWeek

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By Nicole Kato

For more than 15 years, Aloha Harvest's mission has been to feed the hungry in Hawaii. Its programs focus on reducing food waste and recycling, which fall in line with Hawaiian Electric Company's goal to help community programs aimed at promoting economic growth and environmental sustainability.

To help the nonprofit further its efforts, HECO awarded a \$10,000 grant to help with general operating needs last December.

"We recognize the critical service that Aloha Harvest provides by rescuing excess food from hotels, restaurants, food distributors, caterers and many other establishments, and delivering the food to agencies that feed the hungry," says HECO community relations manager Lori Hoo.

But the donation to Aloha Harvest is part of a bigger philanthropic effort.

HECO, along with Hawaiian Electric Industries Charitable Foundation, provides grants and donations throughout the year to various nonprofit organizations.

"As a company, (we) are committed to making our communities a better place for our island residents and being good stewards of our island resources for our future generations," she adds.

Employees take it upon themselves to volunteer with STEM programs, help clean and restore public lands, serve meals to the homeless and more. In fact, employers already have begun collecting shampoo, soap, brushes, wet wipes and more to support Aloha Dream Center's collection drive for Hawaii's homeless population.

HECO also was presenting sponsor of the Hawaii VEX State Middle School Championship (which took place Jan. 15-16) for the third year in a row.

"Through the students participation in the VEX robotics competition and their work within their team, students gain academic and life skills in addition to having a great time and building amazing robots," says Hoo.

Also slated for HECO is a community project partnership with Hawaii 3Rs to create a playground for students at Pearl City Highlands Elementary. Nearly 100 volunteers will help cut and plant sod across a 5,000-square-foot plot of land that currently is too muddy for children to play on.

And to help Aloha United Way, the company now has on sale (for \$14) its 2016 Hawaiian Electric Cookbook, featuring more than 120 favorite recipes from its employees.

Visit hawaiianelectric.com for more information.

