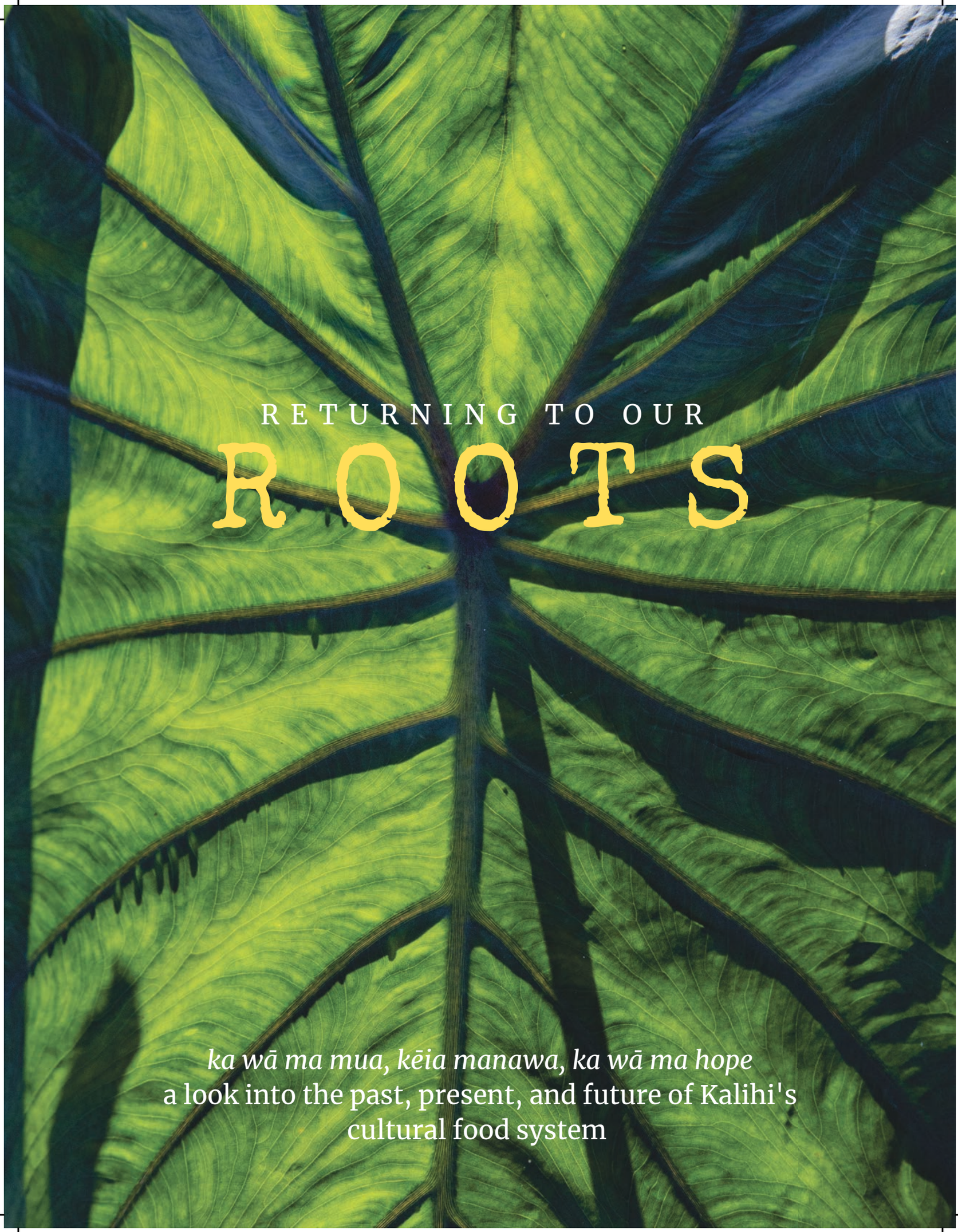


RETURNING TO OUR

ROOTS

ka wā ma mua, kēia manawa, ka wā ma hope
a look into the past, present, and future of Kalihi's cultural food system

"I want the next generation to be able to climb the trees and pick the fruit."

AZAMA FAMILY

Long-time Kalihi Residents

Bishop Museum Archives.

"And all of these things were eaten together with the sticky poi made from wild taro. Truly and exceedingly delicious!"

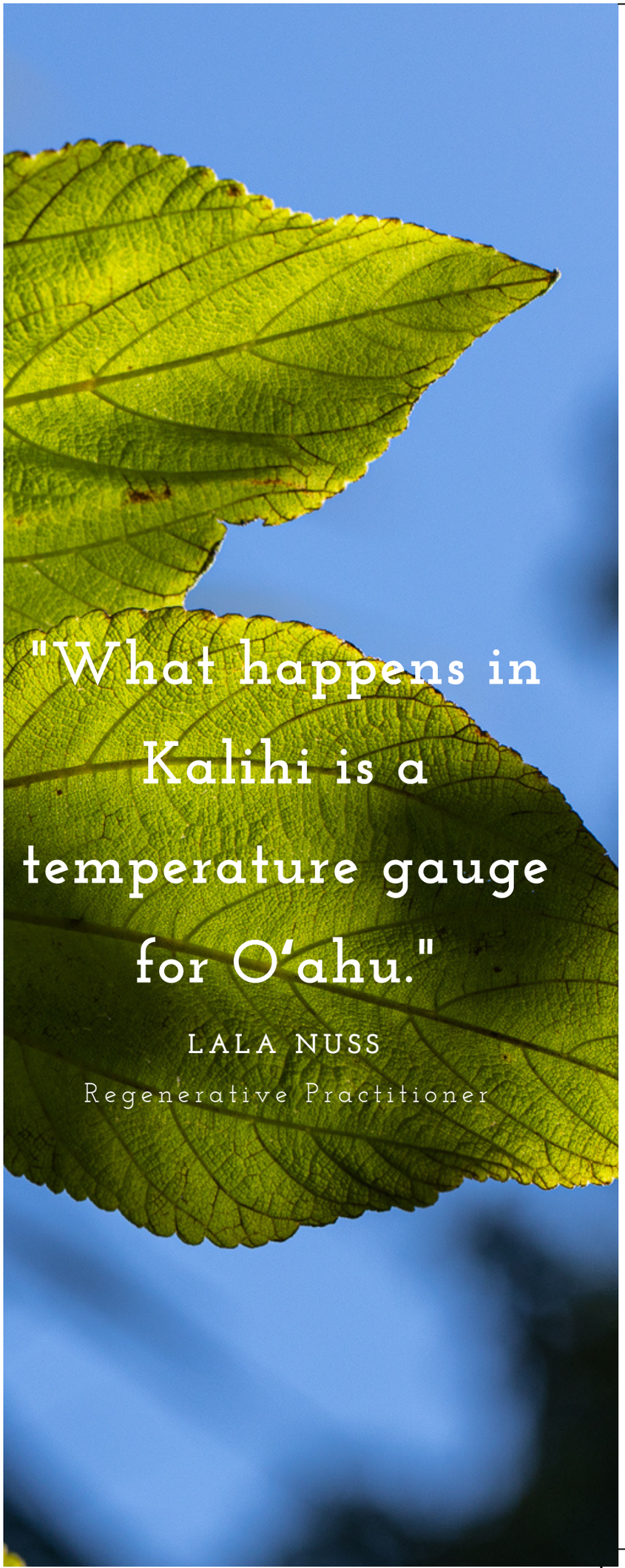
ANCESTRAL HOME

Ia laua e noho ana ma keia wahi, ua loaa ko laua ola, ma na mea o keia nohokino ana ma o na maia palaku i ka nahele, na uhi punapuna moe lepo o ka uka, na kalo aweu manalo a lilo i poi uouo ono; na hooio [hōʻiʻo] me na kikawaio e lomi pu iho ai me na opae kala ole o ka uka waokele; na lawalu oopu momona i hele a ala i ka lauki, ame na wahi luau palupalu o ia uka iuiu. Pela nohoi me na alamihi kai aala o na kai kohola o kai ae nei o Kalihi, e laa na papai momona a pela nohoi me na wahi hua opihi mai o na Koolau, ame ko laila mau lau limu. A o keia mau mea a pau inai pu iho me ka poi aweu uouo, he ono mai hoi kau a koe (Poepoe, 1906).

While Papa and Wākea resided at this place (Kilohana), they obtained their life from the food needed in physical living, such as the perfectly ripe bananas in the forest, the firm and mealy yams laying in the soil of the uplands, the wild, tasty taro turned into delicious sticky poi; the hōʻiʻo and kikawaiō ferns mixed together with the mountain ʻōpae of the upland rainforest; the sweet ʻoʻopu cooked in bundles (lāwalu) until fragrant with ti-leaf; and the soft, tender lūʻau of these majestic uplands. With that was paired the ambrosial alamihi from the reef flats of the oceans of Kalihi, also with the fatty crabs and the meaty ʻōpihi from Koʻolau, as well as the leafy limu of that area. And all of these things were eaten together with the sticky poi made from wild taro, truly and exceedingly delicious! *(O'Connor, 2019).*

IN THIS ISSUE

IN THIS ISSUE



"And that's what Ke'ehi means. Ke'ehi means to embrace with your feet. So that's why I keep telling everyone if you want to be connected to a place, you have to understand from a kupuna lens, and raise your kupuna vibrancy, your frequency, to their frequency, because the only way we're going to see through their eyes is if we know all the place names, we know all the mountain names, we know all the mo'olelo that goes with it. It's knowing the mo'oku'auhau (genealogy)of the 'aina (land).

KEHAU KUPIHEA

Executive Director, Mauli Ola Ke'ehi


KŪKULU
building the foundation

ROOTS

Roots is an ʻāina-to-table initiative that aims to strengthen the Kalihi Valley community through the growing, preparing and sharing of food. Inspired by the resilient spirit of the Kalihi community, Roots was created around traditions that the community values - the sharing of food, culture and connecting to one another.

Under Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services (KKV), Roots mission is to revitalize the community's access to quality food that reciprocally sustains the health of the land and people.

Through its work, Roots was created to address the social determinants of health. The program brings community together over a meal to discuss food-related topics in a safe, loving environment.

"We bring people together to garden. We bring people together to share knowledge. We bring people together to serve food to eat and to talk about commonalities that we have to bridge the gaps," Odom says.

Through organic farming techniques and connections to ancestral practices, Roots uplifts community through the sharing of stories, knowledge, and generational abundance around food.

"Food connects us to our land. It connects us to our kūpuna. It connects us to our spirit and to our culture, it connects us to our next door neighbor," says Roots Director Kaiulani Odom. "And when we become disconnected from these things, these disconnections lead to poor health."

Many cultures make up beautiful Kalihi - Micronesian, Hawaiian, Samoan, and Filipino. Strolling through the urban core, there are gardens everywhere in cramped, tiny spaces flourishing with taro, breadfruit, eggplant, chayote, and marunggay.

Families have found space to grow food and have brought their traditional farming practices to their new homeland.

"We need to use the strengths of these cultures (because) each one has the ancestral wisdom to be healthy. It just (sometimes) needs to be reawakened."

Back in the day, everyone ate together, and it was around those tables that I would hear the stories of who we were as an organization, inter-woven with "what are you eating" and "tell me about that food" and "how does that reflect on your culture?"

There was joy and pride in the food you're eating from your culture, but also that real strong desire to have other people love the food you eat, you know, that's one thing that humans consistently anywhere I've been in the world wants other people to love - their food.

And if you love someone's food, the bond is instantaneous, you've broken down walls that could otherwise take forever and that was absolutely the case at lunchtime at KKV with our Filipino staff, our Vietnamese staff, our Laotian staffers. Our Samoan staff. Our Caucasian staff.

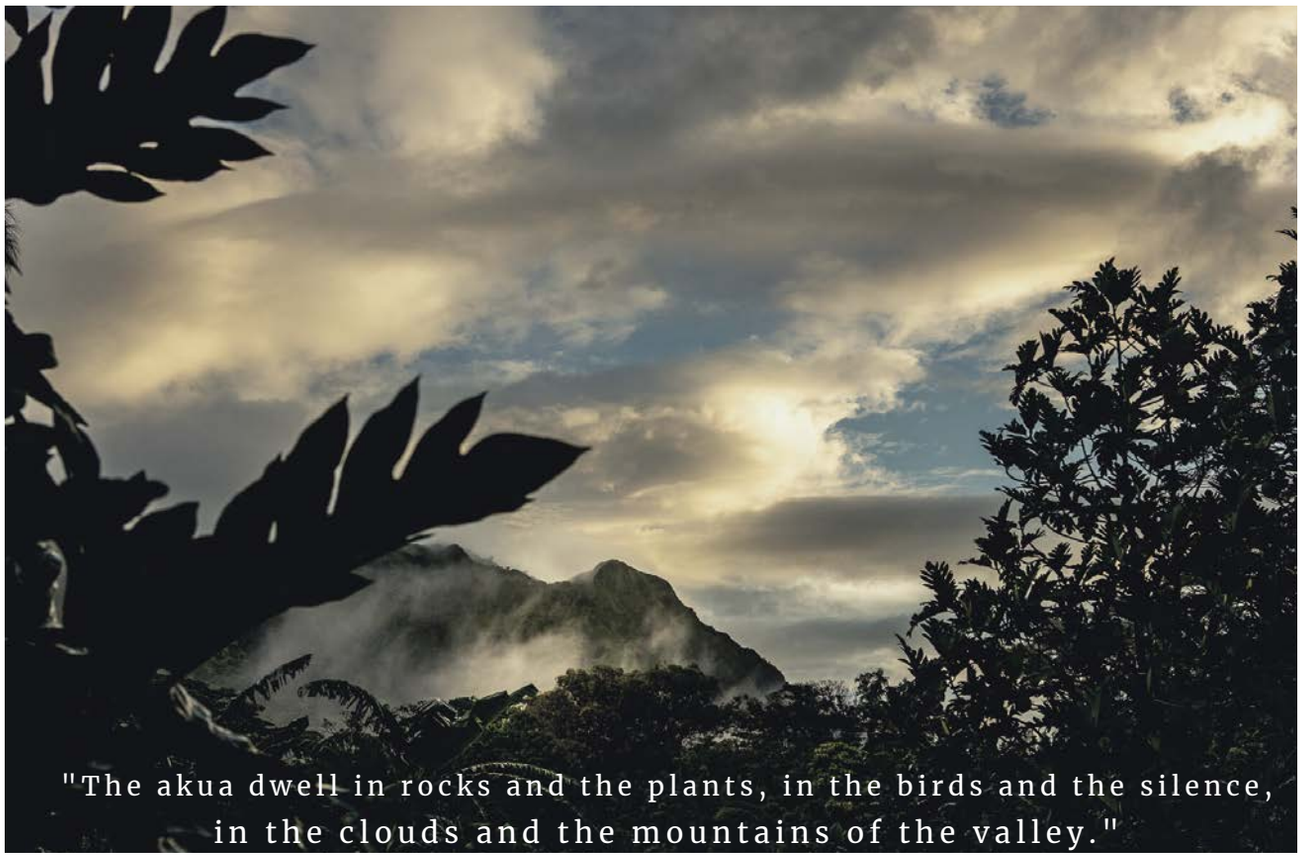
When you're with foods you love, stories come more naturally. Your taste buds are being piqued and your bellies, happy, and you're relaxed, and the story starts to flow. And of course we have a lot of storytellers. No one had to teach me about what it was to be a KKV employee or what it was to live and work in Kalihi. All you had to do was be at that lunch table, day after day, it was just the most natural way to learn about the culture of this organization. It seemed to me. There was never anything in the least bit didactic.

"When you're with foods you love, stories come more naturally."

No one set out to tell a story, thinking they were teaching you anything. There was never that intent. The stories were funny. Usually, oftentimes self deprecating people making fun of how they had screwed up so many times in the past.

The hallmark of the stories really was one of people who were extremely modest, never pretending they had figured anything out particularly well. It's just about always exploring and trying new things and doing things differently and screwing up!

DR. DAVID DERAUF
Executive Director, KKV



ANCESTRAL HOME

In the story of Papa and Wākea, Kalihi is the sacred place and ancestral home to many of our akua. These gods were known to have lived in stone dwellings near the upper reaches of the valley where mist would float down from the skies to brush the mountain ridges. This sacred realm is where gods tread, birdsong is met with silence, and stillness envelops this magical place known by the ancients as wao akua. "The akua dwell in rocks and the plants, in the birds and the silence, in the clouds and the mountains of the valley" (O'Connor, 2019).

A visitor to the uplands of Kalihi will notice a peak on the north eastern side of the valley known as Kilohana. It is the home of the god, Wākea, and his wife, Papa, who is an ancestral kupua (a supernatural being possessing many forms).

Many stories surround these deities, but one moʻolelo in particular takes place in Kalihi. The legend describes Papa in her mortal shape shifting form, Haumea. The central themes in the legend concern "the food supply for the life of the ʻohana to ensure the continuation of family bloodline or lineage" (OʻConnor, 2019).

AHUPUA'A

land division

In this aerial photo, there are views of traditional fishponds and the Kalihi salt ponds. All were destroyed when the area was dredged to expand the airport reef runway.

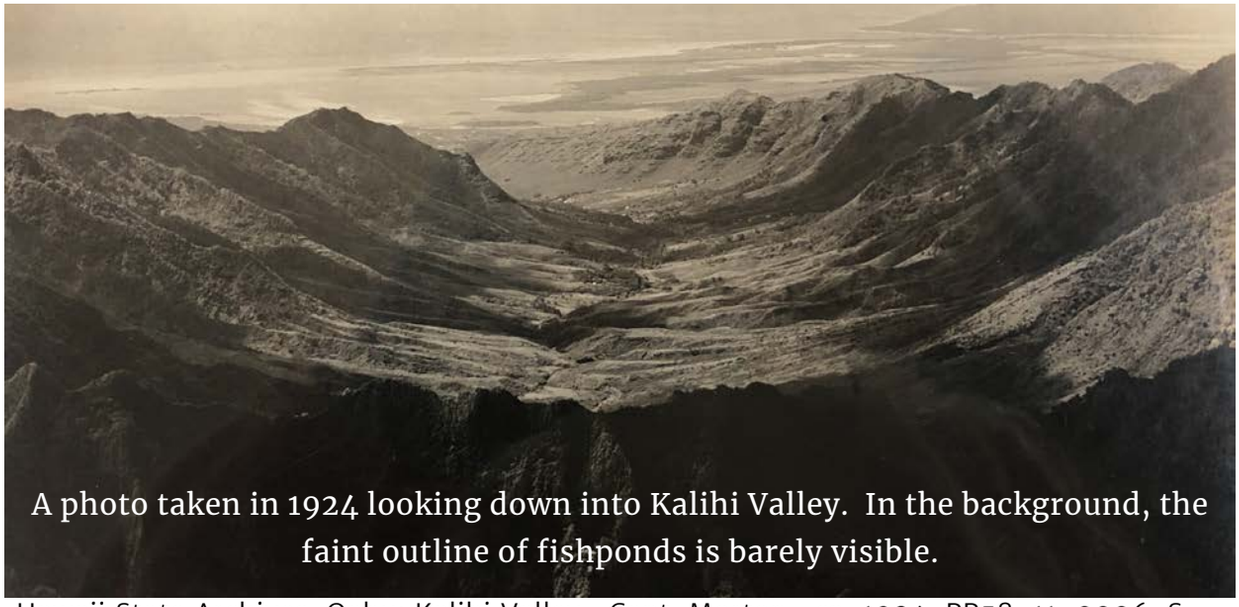
Hawaii State Archives. Oahu: Kalihi. ca. 1929. Hope Troyer. PP58-11-0005-S

Ahupua'a is a traditional land division, a wedge-shaped section that ran from the mountain to the sea.

Traditionally, there was no such thing as private property. Land was held in trust by the highest chief. Each island was divided into larger moku - with O'ahu having six - which were further divided into ahupua'a. These sections contained all the resources that the community needed. Fishermen traded with farmers, water was abundant, and trees for houses and canoes were available. It was everyone's responsibility to care for the resources.

They understood that spirituality was interwoven into all aspects of daily life. The interrelationship of humans and their environment worked together to create a sustainable food system.

The Kalihi ahupua'a consists of Kalihi Uka, Kalihi Waena and Kalihi Kai. The upper region was once heavily cultivated as evidenced by the archaeological remains of pre-contact agricultural terraces and irrigation channels. Oceanside, it was known for its many fishponds.



A photo taken in 1924 looking down into Kalihi Valley. In the background, the faint outline of fishponds is barely visible.

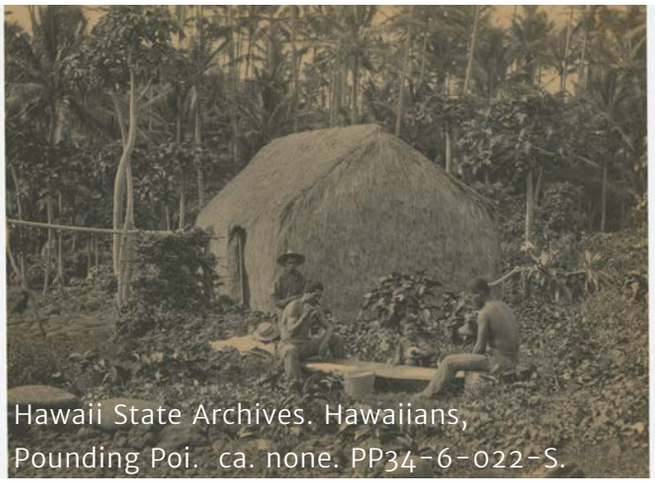
Hawaii State Archives. Oahu: Kalihi Valley. Capt. Morton. ca. 1924. PP58-11-0006-S

RESTORING UKA, RESTORING KAI

Mokauea – an island just off the coast of Mauli Ola (Sand Island) – is less than half a mile from Honolulu and is one of only two remaining traditional fishing villages in Hawai'i. It was almost destroyed in the 1970's when the state wanted to expand the airport.

Families were evicted and arrested and five homes were burned. The local community was outraged and responded with action, forming the Mokauea Fisherman's Association to advocate for the site. A subsequent historical study by the state determined that the area was historically significant.

Today, three families still live there and it is used for living and educational purposes. This story reminds us of the critical role the community plays in protecting the land that sustains us, and the importance of supporting the health of the land from the mountains to the sea.



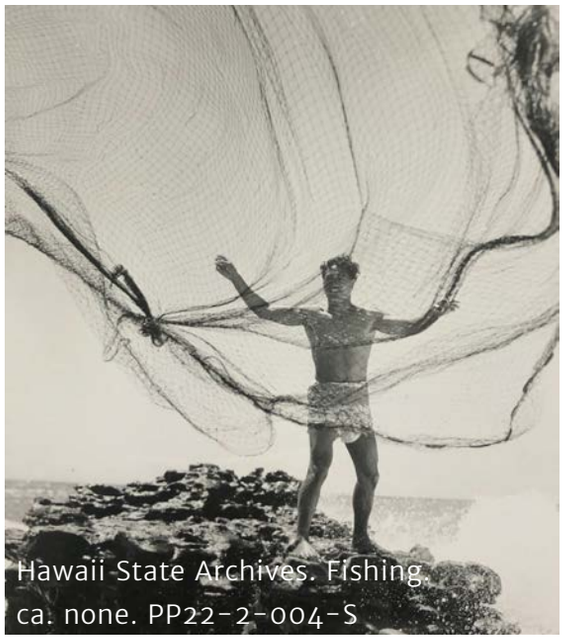
Hawaii State Archives. Hawaiians, Pounding Poi. ca. none. PP34-6-022-S.

Traditionally, lo'i kalo (taro fields), loko i'a (fishponds), and salt ponds dotted the ahupua'a of Kalihi providing a steady supply of food and nutritional balance for the community.

Hawaii State Archives. Fishing-Hukilau. ca. none. PP23-1-033-S

Reciprocal exchanges were part of 'ohana living in the ahupua'a. Those who lived ma uka would share their kalo and other food crops with those who lived in the coastal communities (ma kai) where fish and limu were abundant.

What would a modern-day ahupua'a look like?



Hawaii State Archives. Fishing. ca. none. PP22-2-004-S

How do we...

- best manage our resources and make sure our land can provide for many years to come.
- see ourselves as an integral part of a food system that is interconnected.
- ensure that we are all working for the well-being of our community.

"I look back to like, how did a canoe carver be able to carve the canoe that he was carving? It wasn't because he was so awesome, it was because he had food! He was in a system that everybody was able to bring their best gift, and in my wildest dreams, everybody's bellies would be full, and they wouldn't be hungry so that they could bring their best gift to the community. I feel like there's so much people that never got to share their gifts, because their whole life was just trying to fill bellies."

CASEY JACKSON

Forestry Specialist and Carver, Ho'oulu 'Aina

What would it look like if we were all able to bring our best gifts to the table?

OUR APPROACH

Our community assessment was conducted through the lens of time: ka wā ma mua (past), kēia manawa (present), and ka wā mahope (future).The Hawaiian word for future translates into the time past. In the Hawaiian worldview, it was understood that in order to move forward, we need to know who we are and where we came from.

Our past is rich with culture, knowledge, and practices, but it is also filled with colonization, racism, land loss, and generational trauma. How does our past help us to understand our current status? What issues must be addressed? What positive aspects can be carried forward to build a healthier future?

"But that is the time machine! We just remember it, so that we can create it again."

PUNI JACKSON

Director, Ho'oulu 'Aina

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Document Review	Surveys	Talk Story (Focus Groups)	Talk Story (Key Informant Interviews)	Other
Kalihi-Palama Action Plan (Sept 2004) for Department of Planning and Permitting, City & County of Honolulu	Community Roots Awareness Survey (N=56)	Community Health Worker Lunches (3 session, 12 participants)	Kalihi Legacy Interviews 6 KKV Super Aunties 3 KKV Neighbors	Photography of people and places
21st Century Kalihi Transformation Initiative(June 2017) for Office of Planning, State of Hawai'i	Staff Food Culture Survey (N=128)	Farmer Needs Assessment (2 session, 30 participants)	Vision for Future Interviews 62 Kalihi Leaders 27 organizations	Group poetry activities
Native Hawaiian Cultural Impact Assessment, Kalihi Valley Nature Park Project (July 2005)	Patient SDOH Survey (N=455)	Ho'oulu Aina Visioning (2 sessions, 11 participants)		Family History
	Patient Health Survey (N=699)			

Our team uses Uluhōkū, a mixed methods approach to data analysis. We constellate multiple types of data including numbers, stories, photographs, and pule (prayers) to understand and tell a holistic story including reflections on the past, present, and future from the perspective of needs and assets, and problems and solutions. To do this we went broad and deep – everything from reviewing community documents and surveying patients during our vaccine clinics to spending several hours to interview and talk story with an individual.

BROAD

Planning Documents

To build on previous iterations of Kalihi's planning processes, we reviewed three documents from 2004-2017 (please see table). Each document included input from Kalihi community members on urban development and land use related topics such as community revitalization, environmental restoration, housing, safety, community pride/culture, and economic development. Our team reviewed the documents for themes including needs and solutions identified.

Surveys

We used four different surveys to reach 1,338 individuals (please see table), including one survey of staff and parents at a local elementary school on their awareness of the Roots program, one survey of KKV staff on local food cultures, and two surveys of KKV patients on factors influencing their health and their own perceptions of their health (including how connected they felt to the four keystones of

DEEP
the Pilinaha Framework for health: connection to community, to best self, to past and future, and to place. Surveys included both qualitative and quantitative data that were analyzed using Excel.

We also hosted a series of talk-story events, inviting groups or individuals to speak more deeply with our staff. When possible, these events were conducted in-person at a restful space (primarily Hoʻoulu ʻĀina Nature Park or Kaluaopalena Community Garden) and food was provided, to create a thoughtful atmosphere for reflection and connection.

Focus Groups
Our team hosted five focus groups with community health workers (CHWs) and staff of Hoʻoulu ʻĀina Nature Park (Roots' sister program) and two with farming partners from across the island. Participants shared their extensive knowledge of the community and local food systems, and their dreams for the future. All focus groups were transcribed and coded for major themes.

Key Informant Interviews
We also conducted a series of key informant interviews. One group of interviews were focused on connection to the past and were done with 9 of KKV's Super Aunties/Uncles - long-time KKV connectors and thought leaders - and Kalihi community members.

These interviews were aimed at providing a richer portrait of our past – as a valley, as culture groups, as healthcare providers, and as neighbors.

Envisioning the Future Interviews
The other series was aimed at hearing ideas and dreams for the future. These interviews were completed with key stakeholders in Kalihi, Oʻahu's food system, and government. Some of the interviewees had a prior relationship with Roots, while others were new to working with Roots and agreed to an interview based on collective work in the food system and common relationships.

stones of our ancestors
heat the evening calm

blanketed with haliʻi
burlap to cape

feeding our ʻohana
generations to come

CHRISTEN NOELANI OLIVEIRA
Community Food Systems Planner,

"People love to be prompted to remember...They just feel like they've been given permission to go someplace. And that's important to them."

DAVID DERAUF

Executive Director, KKV

MIXED MEDIA METHODS

In an effort to represent a diversity of communication and information systems in this needs assessment, Roots also employed a few mixed media methods, including collaborative poetry exercises, photography, and a written reflection from a long-time Roots collaborator and generational Kalihi resident reflecting on Kalihi's changing food culture through time.

EMERGENT CONCEPTS

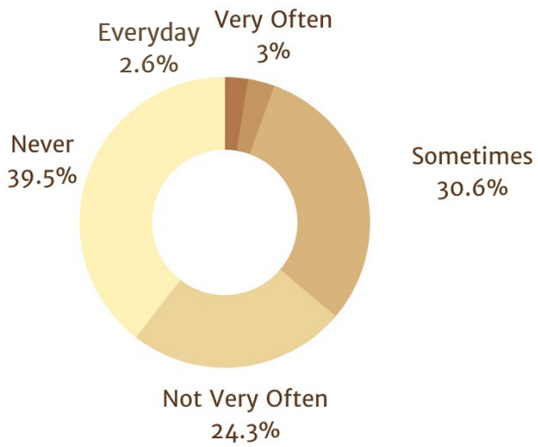
As we pulled the data together and sat in deep conversation, three distinct areas emerged. Our report will be organized according to these concepts.

PATIENT CONNECTIONS TO PILINAHĀ MEASURES

	Family	Community	Culture
Very Good	532 (67%)	413 (53%)	452 (58%)
Good	208 (30%)	260 (33%)	249 (32%)
Okay	58 (7%)	107 (14%)	80 (10%)
Bad	3 (>0%)	5 (>0%)	4 (>0%)

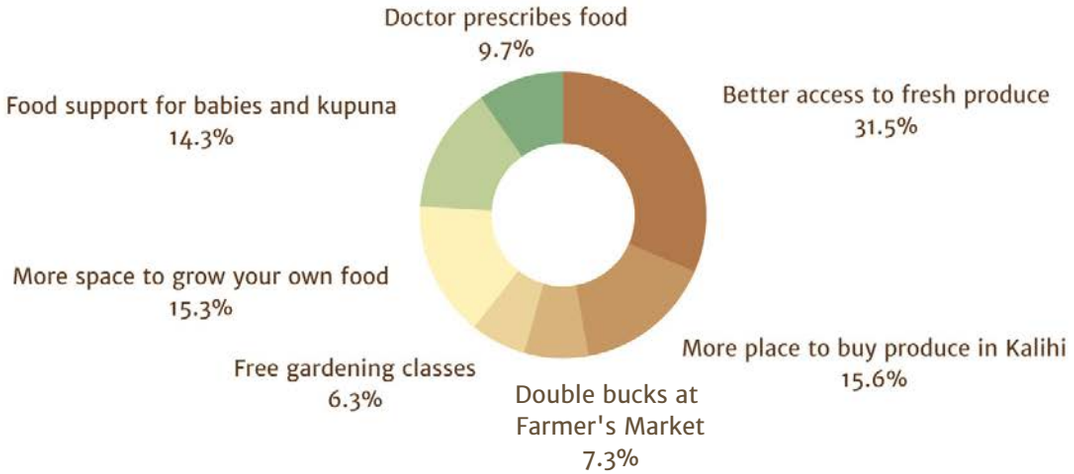
We asked 801 patients to rate their connections from very good to very bad for three of the Pilinahā connections. The majority of our patients reported strong feelings of connectedness – 92% reported their connections were very good or good to their family, 89% to their culture, and 86% to their community. We believe the strength of these connections has helped our community to weather the pandemic, as even during these trying times, 83% of our survey respondents reported that their physical health was very good or good and 85% reported their mental health was very good or good.

Community Self-Reported Stress Around Food in the Last Month



CHWs shared that food security is an important issue for many people in our community. When we asked patients about how much they stressed about food in the last month 60.5% worried at least a little. Many added that losing their jobs during COVID made putting food on the table more challenging.

Community Suggestions for Reducing Stress Around Food



During our SDOH survey with patients getting their vaccinations, the majority of participants reported better access to produce would help them reduce their stress. About 20% shared gardening education and space to grow their own food would help.

"This is what we need to do. Come to the land, sit down, talk. We need to expand our space, like around the KPT [garden]. Get our hands dirty. Let's touch the soil and plants and the food. We used to do Diabetes Group visit, every month, that was so wonderful. We're talking. Like childhood, you dream. You imagine."

NABIN OLI

Care Coordinator, Family Physician, Community Outreach


ʻĀINA
feeding the land

COMMUNITY VOICES

Kaleo Aolahiko

Kalihi Resident and Backyard Farmer

Tucked away on a narrow lane in Kalihi Uka, Kaleo Aolahiko lives quietly. His work hours were recently reduced as a result of the current pandemic, but his mood is bright and he still finds joy in life.

Kaleo talks about continuing the traditions of his Tūtū (grandfather) whose land once flourished with food and medicine. He tries to practice his Tūtū's teachings and his own upbringing by growing food.

His yard is abundant with kalo (taro), malunggay, hōʻio (fernshoot), and niu (coconut). In fact, when he harvests kalo, he makes laulau for himself, using the leaf, corm, and stem of the entire plant. There is no waste.

With the current situation our world is in, Kaleo finds comfort in knowing that everything he produces on his land, he will eat. And he hopes to pass that knowledge on to his own moʻopuna (grandchildren).

"It's (the 'aina) not in our mind anymore. I seen my Tutu - their generation. It (the 'aina) was part of them. It's not like you had to tell us or my parents generation (go help clean yard). Once you see Tutu out there, you just go (to help)."

Hana ʻiʻo ka haole!

The white man does it in earnest.

Hawaiians were generally easygoing and didn't order people off their lands or regard them as trespassers. When the whites began to own lands people began to be arrested for trespassing and the lands were fenced in to keep the Hawaiians out.

MARY KAWENA PUKUI
ʻOlelo Noʻeau: Proverbs and Sayings, p. 55

The historical use and context of land in Hawaiʻi has changed dramatically over the years. The Western conception of land ownership replaced the traditional system that had successfully sustained communities for centuries. Loss of access to fish and land to grow food, hunt, and live on has diminished Hawaiians' ability to procure food and to create, trade, and barter for the other essentials of life.

In a 1984 oral history project, Peter Martin described Kalihi "as an ideal place for Hawaiians because his family owned an acre of land that consisted mostly of taro. He practiced his culture with his family when he pulled taro from their patch and pounded it into poi.

The Martin family relied on their traditions and knowledge to feed members of their communities. They shared food with their neighbors and exposed others to the indigenous way of living sustainably and becoming food self-sufficient. Since Kalihi did not have public transportation, residents had to grow their own food to survive. He emphasized how he grew up seeing his parents and neighbors invite one another into their homes to share food."

What do we need to do to return balance to our ahupuaʻa so our community can thrive?

Even within the constraints of Western land ownership, access to land is radically diminishing in Kalihi and beyond. One resident observed that "Kalihi used to be all farmland, that's why it was so welcoming." Today, home ownership and the accompanying land is out of the reach of many residents, leaving many community members subject to the priorities of the landlords from whom they rent: "Home gardens have been replaced by monster houses that are all cement – no grass or yard or anything. Just using the space to make income on rent."

High-rises and public lands are no better at facilitating land access for food production: public housing residents are prohibited from growing food on their balconies, and a management-initiative to plant breadfruit trees on public housing property ended in a sudden reversal and the tearing out of all the saplings.

However, within the confines of these barriers people are still growing produce the best they can. One CHW shared:

"Development is accelerating. Everyone used to have produce, fruits, flowers in the yard, but now yards are not big enough to grow much. And sometimes there are even restrictions, and you have to get HOA approval first. But people are resilient. Many people in Kalihi are growing wherever they can and using little spaces to plant like the strip of soil by sidewalks, etc. They are also sharing with neighbors. It is smart but sad."

"I think Kalihi is very rich with food. Because it's home to a lot of ethnicities and diversity. There's an abundance of people who eat their cultural foods. And driving through, you see a lot of yards planted with edible plants."

Another CHW said, "We are so lucky to have access to Kaluaopalena (Root's community garden)... When we bring families there, we weed together, we harvest, and they're happy. And there are so many others who want to farm, they just need access."

> "My craziest, wildest dream would just to have the opportunity for me and my future generations to have a place. Like, I have no place."
>
> LALO ISHIKI-KALAHELE
>
> KKV Staff
> born and raised in Kalihi

"If a vision for the future is offering a view that I would personally like most to see it is this: the healing and regeneration for this land and coastal area, an overcoming of the destructive development of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries - a recovery into the original living systems who thrived here for millenia."

LISA ASAGI

Food Activist, Writer,
Asagi Hatchery

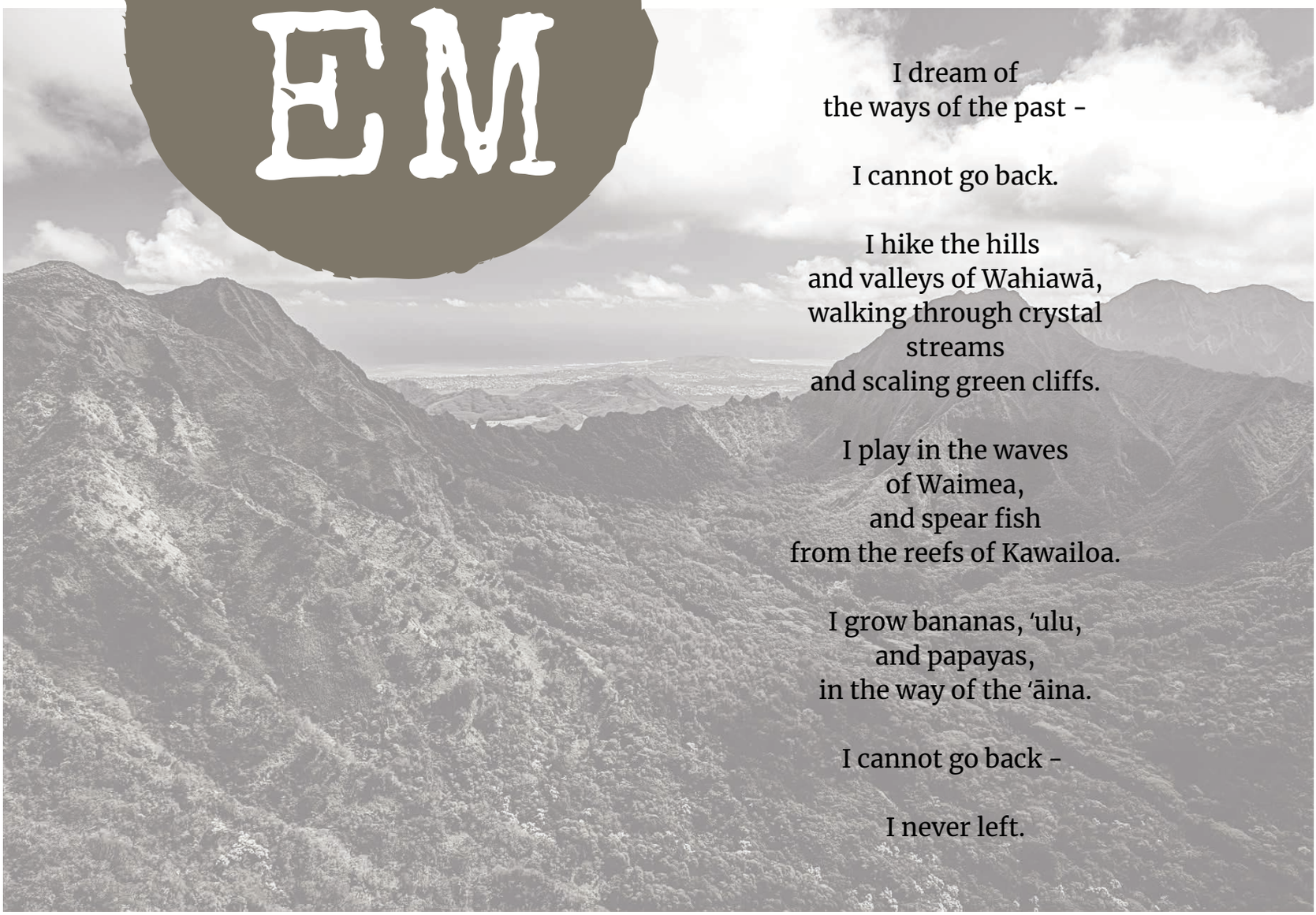
As we asked the community about their connection to ʻāina, we heard the same words many times – "kīpuka" (as a calm place in a high sea), "puʻuhonua" (place of refuge), and "safe spaces" – all ways of saying that land can provide a place of shelter and calm. The community feels healthy in these reclaimed or unclaimed natural places, especially in places where they can see familiar plants, share stories, be seen, and have their ancestors heard.

Community members expressed their desire for a future with more control over the land they call home: fewer restrictions on what they can grow, and more access to land and the resources which nourish the soils.

As one community leader asserted, "We are tired of knowing what needs to be done and told we cannot."

The community wants to grow more food, plant more trees, and have better, safer access to green spaces and waterways. This future of ʻāina in Kalihi begins with policies that entrust the people who want to nurture land with the agency and resources to do so. Moreover, we spoke with leaders who are in place at schools, health centers, government, and agriculture who are ready to vanguard this community directive for "more kīpuka and oases within Kalihi that center on culture, place and identity".

POEM



I dream of
the ways of the past -

I cannot go back.

I hike the hills
and valleys of Wahiawā,
walking through crystal
streams
and scaling green cliffs.

I play in the waves
of Waimea,
and spear fish
from the reefs of Kawailoa.

I grow bananas, ʻulu,
and papayas,
in the way of the ʻāina.

I cannot go back -

I never left.

JOSEPH P. BALAZ

Author, Poet

"My dad remembers those coconut trees that are still standing there in the parking lot of the new double drive-thru McDonald's on Paiea Street in the now industrial zone alongside the Honolulu International Airport.

That's the space where the farm was. In those early days there was a railroad track running on Nimitz Highway to the canneries. My dad remembers Damon Tract as being an area full of houses, farms, even orchards. I have come across an historical account mentioning there was a vineyard there as well. My dad remembers the remnants of the original fishpond systems that were there. He especially remembers the large salt pond that is now shrunk down to a remnant spring on the country club. He says that giant mullet used to live in that pond. He has memories of shrimp, oysters, and clams in the waterways that

reached down to the shore. He remembers how alive the coastal system was before it was destroyed, dredged up for development of that whole area, especially the reef runway. "

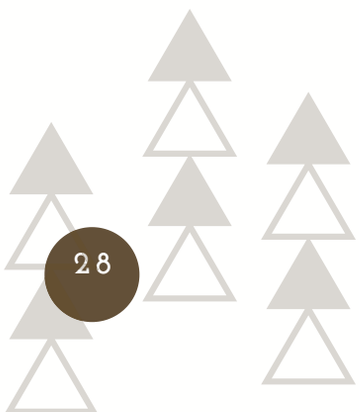
LISA ASAGI

Food Activist, Writer,
Asagi Hatchery

"Food is the thing that binds us together as people, that lets us break down all the barriers, lets you go there. I want everyone to experience that kind of community - food, joy, the sharing, the bridging of cultures, the sharing of your favorite types of food."

DR. DAVID DERAUF

Executive Director, KKV




KAIĀULU
strengthening community

COMMUNITY VOICES

Kalolo Tuihalafatai

Kalihi Resident and Community Caregiver

In 1993, Kalolo Tuihalafatai, moved his young family to Kalihi Uka. As a parishioner of Our Lady of the Mount Catholic Church in Kalihi, he volunteered to be the caretaker of its cemetery.

The original church was built in 1870 and became the site for the immigrant Portuguese congregation's services.

Eventually the church moved to lower Kalihi, but the cemetery remained at the original location with no one to care for it. Kalolo decided to take on the kuleana to upkeep the graveyard. Every two weeks, he makes his way to the back of the valley to mālama the cemetery.

He doesn't get paid. "It's just something I need to do for them," he says sweeping his arm across the space where all that is left are a handful of headstones.

There are many food and medicine trees on property that share the kūpuna space. 'Ulu, mountain apple, and avocado line the perimeter of the cemetery.

Originally from Tonga, Kalolo remembers making food and medicine from the same plants in his homeland. "Yah we use that one," he points to the mountain apple bark. "For stomach problems."

Kalolo remains vigilant about continuing to care for the cemetery as he's been doing for the past 27 years. He is committed to taking care of the kūpuna and the food plants that grow abundantly in the cemetery.

"Back in the 90s, I was trying to recruit elders to our exercise program. I would drive around the neighborhood to Star Market and Kalihi Valley because we needed participants. Six people came but because there was no food, others didn't want to come. Someone told me to buy one whole chicken. So I boiled the chicken for a long time and added whatever vegetables I could find. That served 12-15 people! Food helped me recruit elders to my program."

MERLITA COMPTON

Elder Care Program Director, KKV

"I just remember, we never ate out. Everything in our household was cooked. Everything was prepared. And so we never had takeout containers. I remember that very vividly and I remember, eating a lot of the Filipino vegetables growing up. Pinakbet, saluyot - all the greens- eggplants, bamboo shoots. Everything that we ate was low in cost because we were growing food in our yard."

JEFF ACIDO

Community Activist

Kēia Manawa
to understand the present

Kalihi is a large, diverse community ranging from the verdant upper valleys of the Koʻolau Mountains, down through Hawaiʻi's largest housing projects, across the H1 freeway where tightly packed houses and congested apartments merge into an industrial and warehouse district ringing the ports and harbors of the Pacific. Each section is different, but overall Kalihi is a hard working place, where early morning buses are full, immigrant families grow the plants of back home in the small patches of dirt, and Hawaiian history and knowledge continues to be shared across generations.

A conversation can begin lamenting cultural loss and end with the celebration of a tradition continued. Convenience stores dot corners and food bank lines grow long. Resilient residents are often navigating loss of land, displacement, migration, and the impacts of colonization across the Pacific and into Asia.

Today, Kalihi is the center of Oʻahu's imported food system. It hosts major ports where containers are un-loaded, big food distributors, and the world's second busiest Costco. However, Kalihi is also home to Asagi Hatchery, the oldest remaining chicken hatchery in the Pacific, several new locally sourced food hubs, an expansive non-profit commercial kitchen complex, and Hoʻoulu ʻĀina, the 100-acre nature preserve and health center where a current generation of ʻāina leaders, farmers and cultural practitioners gather to renew our commitment to caring for the land. These pieces of the system, from corporate distribution to neighbors sharing bags of mango to emerging small local producers, bump up against each other often without a clear vision.

Nevertheless, in the words of an influential manager for community development, "Kalihi has all the pieces of the food system. As a micro model it has all the potential to be the model." In addressing the needs of our food system, Kalihi's micro model can be rendered macro – for worse, or for better. As one government official told us, "What happens in Kalihi is a temperature gauge for Oʻahu".

As we asked our community, "What does Kalihi mean to you?" certain themes emerged: A longing for the recent past where all the businesses had a family name, keiki threw their slippers into trees to shake free ripe fruit, cultural bridges were often crossed by the sharing of food, and the ahupuaʻa's breadbasket history is not forgotten. In the words of Uncle Joe, "this valley can grow a lot when given space and time."

"KKV is an 'umeke to hold and cultivate leadership."

"[KKV] has been a safe place of refuge for the entire community, and using that as the hub to engage people in any conversation around food at all, is - I think that's KKV's role is to at least continue the conversations and support the things that we know to be true from a cultural lens, a pono lens."

Through our conversations, our neighbors have reiterated our foundational belief that food is a nexus for strengthening community bonds – as one CHW said, "There are a lot of ways we can connect to the community, but food is the best." Community members envision a future where food serves to bind us together: "When the land is so abundant, you'll share with everyone all around you. Just harvesting and leaving at your neighbors' doorstep;" where the 'ulu drop so heavily they're like rain on the people below.

This community-building work is ongoing – a continuous process collectively creating a food system that honors those who have come before and follow us when we are gone. It is where the innovators of today connect to the rich traditions and land management practices that made Kalihi a food basket across generations.

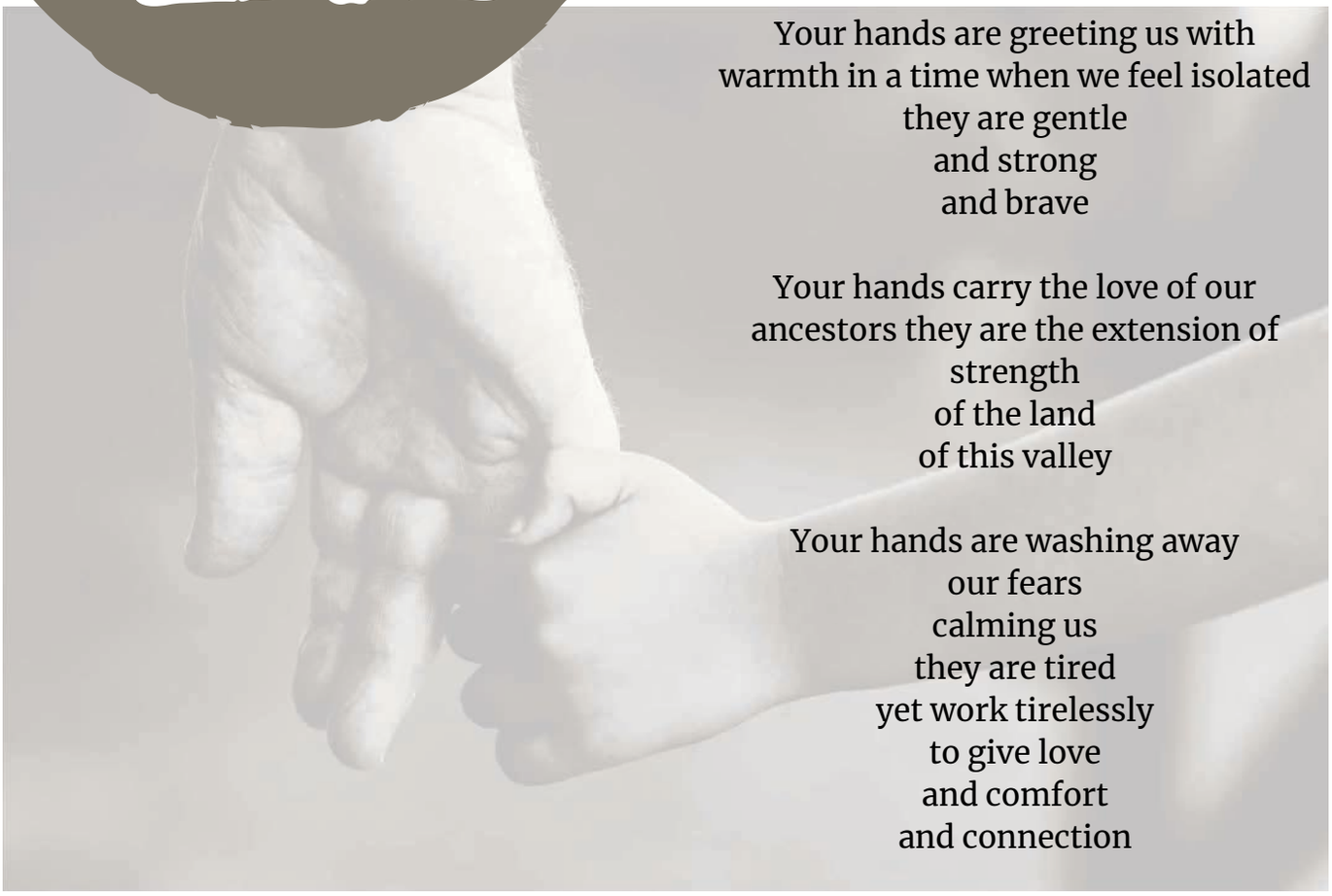
But we also heard repeatedly that the future is also a continuation of now; of KKV's current process of gathering community leaders and voices to strengthen each other and our systems becoming more focused, determined and thoughtfully curated:

As a result, we are challenged to embrace this kuleana to bring the right people to the table for the necessary conversations resulting in actions which reflect the hopes of the community. It is where the community maps our resources, our access points and relationships to power, and refines strategies to implement a better system.

POEM

Your hands have been chosen
all that you have been through
makes them stronger
makes them move with purpose
and love
and gratitude

Your hands are holding
Our community
Our elders
Our families
Our children



Your hands are greeting us with
warmth in a time when we feel isolated
they are gentle
and strong
and brave

Your hands carry the love of our
ancestors they are the extension of
strength
of the land
of this valley

Your hands are washing away
our fears
calming us
they are tired
yet work tirelessly
to give love
and comfort
and connection

Your hands have been chosen
they are healing us
and we are grateful.

MEGAN INADA & PUNI JACKSON
KKV Staff

"It is awesome thinking about our community. Our people. And we appreciate that we're always blessed here at KKV. When you have the food, it's nice to share. Yesterday we had a local harvest. I made 20 bags to share with the community. I just stand outside and everybody wants. Oh my goodness. I don't even have to announce it. They love the cultural foods ʻulu, bananas, papayas, taro."

REBECCA SEUMANU

Public Housing Coordinator, KKV

"But I feel like if KKV continues to have conversations around food resilient systems and food sovereignty and keeps talking about that, then we're doing it because nobody else is."

CASEY JACKSON

Forestry Specialist and Carver

"Feed the native population its own food first."

KILIPOHE MILLER

Kalihi Uka Resident


'AI PONO
eating traditional foods

COMMUNITY VOICES

Kehau Kupihea

Executive Director, Mauli Ola Ke'ehi

Gusts of wind encircle us blowing lids off of food containers as we huddle together on beach chairs surrounded by rows and rows of racing canoes. Kehau Kupihea is animated as she describes her family's connection to Kahakaaulana – a tiny islet just off the coast of Mauli Ola (Sand Island) in the industrial area of Ke'ehi, O'ahu.

Every few minutes a plane takes off from the airport runway requiring us to pause in mid-conversation.

Ke'ehi was once a thriving community of subsistence fishing. Families would share and exchange their catch with others from the uplands. Traditional fishponds also dotted the shores – all of which have been dredged to make way for the Honolulu airport.

"The amount of mea'ai (food) being produced here was so amazing," Kehau says as she points to a map. "That's the airport right now. Every time you go to the airport you're driving over those fishponds. They were the largest fishponds on this side of the island and produced so much food."

Kehau remembers her grandmother telling stories about the area, and how she would gather generous amounts of limu (seaweed) and fish on the reef flats.

"Grandma talked about the abundance of food walking the reef, and that she didn't have to go to stores. Whatever she needed was out on the reef."

Kehau is committed to protecting the lands of Ke'ehi, and she's hopeful for the next generation.

"The stream is the vein of the land. If it's not healthy, then all of this," she says sweeping her arm in the direction of Ke'ehi "is not going to be healthy. We must come together as a community to heal our lands and educate our youth."

"We worked with a lot of families whose grandparents took care of their grandchildren. Their sons and daughters were absent, working multiple jobs. I'd do a home visit, and there was the grandmother, grandfather, and the three grandchildren - all in a circle in the middle of the floor. They were all eating out of one plate that was filled with spaghetti. Canned spaghetti. I realized that this has gotta stop. We need to bring healthy food back into our community."

VAILIMA WATSON

Youth Community Outreach Coordinator, KKV

As with most indigenous diets, traditional foods in Hawai'i were those that helped to sustain health and well-being. Kalo was the primary crop, and seen as the elder brother of the Hawaiian people. From him we are taught that if we take care of the land, it will take care of us – like siblings care for one another.

Kalo is a highly nutritious food and one the healthiest carbohydrates. Kalihi once contained a cornucopia of kalo, other produce, and animals. It was often referred to as a breadbasket as it could sustain all those that lived here. Food has always been an important connecting factor here.

"Heal the relationship our kino (body) has with food. Create that 'ono for local healthy food.That's the challenge."

Ehuola

Vigor

Ke malama pono 'ia ke ola kino, he ehuola ke kino no ka wa lo'ihi o ke ola `ana.

When you keep your health in good condition, your body will have vigor for a long time in your lifetime.

"The last time that I went [to the public housing garden], the ʻulu was ready to eat. So we were sitting to talk story... and a grandma came out. She just walked and looked at the ʻulu. She never looked at us, just the ʻulu. And she kept watching, so we invited her in. And she apologized, and asked if she could have ʻulu. And I feel sorry for her, because maybe everyday she looks at that big tree. So I told her, we have to ask Izzi. And Izzi said yes, we can. So she joined our circle. And she was so happy... But I feel so bad, because everyday she came and just looked at the ʻulu."

RONA MANGAYAYAM

Youth Services Coordinator, KKV

There is no single story to tell the essence of the current Kalihi food system. The reality is that every angle has a twist and the solutions to ʻāi pono are varied. Kalihi consumers juggle costs with quality. While one generation may long for home grown healthy staples, another equates canned and processed foods with prosperity. Some immigrant ethnic groups maintain healthy food traditions while others lack access to cultural favorites. Kalihi maintains a high rate of diet related illness, and the food system struggles to provide enough affordable healthy options.

For food businesses, operational costs are high, cheap fast food is everywhere, and the ability to make a profit while remaining affordable to their neighbors is a challenge.

Simultaneously, local food aggregation and distribution hubs are opening, but struggling with high overhead costs, poor internet service, and a lack of commitment from larger or institutional buyers. While it is good politics to talk up local food and small business, Kalihi merchants are seldom asked what they need to feel supported.

Sustainability goals and local food sourcing benchmarks don't usually have a clear implementation strategy. Suppliers want to aggregate more local protein but processing capacity is limited. Farmers want to grow more produce, but worry if they will find buyers. In the words of a Kalihi-raised farmer, "For us to be sustainable, we all gotta work together."

"We don't want to re-invent the wheel. We want to keep the momentum flowing so that we can actually make changes for our future and become self-sufficient and not rely on outside resources for food."

FARMER NEEDS ASSESSMENT DINNER

When we think about what it means to eat well, to eat healthy, to strengthen the body with food, we are not alone. We are the products of a generation asking these questions, identifying the challenges and finding answers in the land, in the food traditions of their ancestors, in a renewed relationship to creating the food system we want. These small farmers, cultural food practitioners, food hubs and aggregators have already built a movement. As we look to the future of ʻāi pono our task is to build out the models and relationships that have been emerging in our lifetimes.

The community wants us to support those who have been doing the work by building better systems to maximize the efforts of this movement. They ask, why shouldn't Kalihi be the model? Why should a community that contributes far more of its share of industry, congestion, pollution, and labor to getting food to the people of Oʻahu have the least access to healthy cultural foods, fewest green spaces, and insufficient investment in the potential of our people? Kalihi wants to dream big, elevate our visionaries and continue this emphasis on cross sectoral cooperation and communication to make Kalihi a model for the future of an urban working-class food system.

POEM

Food is generational
connection to abundance
nourishing us
with knowledge, health,
and love.

Passed through recipes
and laughter
roots to our kūpuna
our memories
bringing us comfort
and contentment

Kalihi dreams
drenched in coconut milk
of fertile land and ʻulu trees
looking down at plates
grown in Hawaiʻi
full of banana, kalo, ʻuala
fish with coconut milk and baked
ʻulu

connected to our cultures
we flourish in health,
sovereignty, and resilience in
our food
our people
our traditions.

JESSE LIPMAN, MEGAN INADA
AND KKV STAFF

CONCLUSION

The H1 freeway plows straight through the middle of Kalihi, rushing people to their jobs, homes and hotels. Its constant movement distracts us from the memory that Kalihi was once a fully connected ahupua'a integrated around a food system. This daily commute and struggle to just get by limits our view of ka wā mamua and vision for ka wā mahope. However, we can no longer just follow the traffic and ignore the imbalances of our system. We have an opportunity in kēia manawa to coalesce a growing movement to restore our connections to land and food.

Kalihi is a community whose present state is the result of economic and historical forces that have rarely taken into consideration the wellbeing of our community. As we plan our long-term strategy, we can only succeed by following our community's knowledge and capacity to create its own solutions.

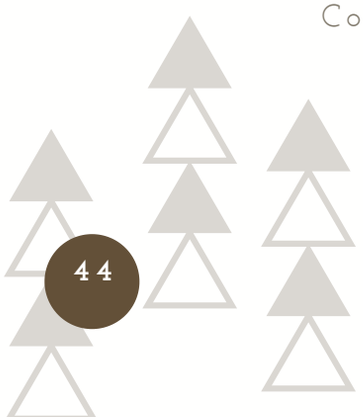
This community engagement process has demonstrated collective desire for KKV to assume more responsibility in navigating Kalihi forward. People from all across our auhpua'a have shared similar visions of future generations accessing the foods and lands of our ancestors. They expressed the strong aspiration to protect and grow places to live, farm, and practice cultural protocols. This sharing of story illuminated the importance of ancestral knowledge, highlighted the present day, successes, sacrifices, and struggles of our community, and made space for emerging visions for our future. We will continue this iterative process of listening and reflection to turn hopes into action. In the next two months our team will create a 7-year plan for Roots. Our goal is to implement the ideas and visions surfaced during this process and move towards a vibrant food system. It will involve layers of facilitation and curation to move with the pulse of the community and elevate leaders and visionaries.

We are grateful to be living on this edge, where food once again binds us together; where the resiliency of Kalihi will guide the development of a modern auhpua'a; and where the balance of community is restored.

Circle table pray
To eat well with family
Fills more than belly

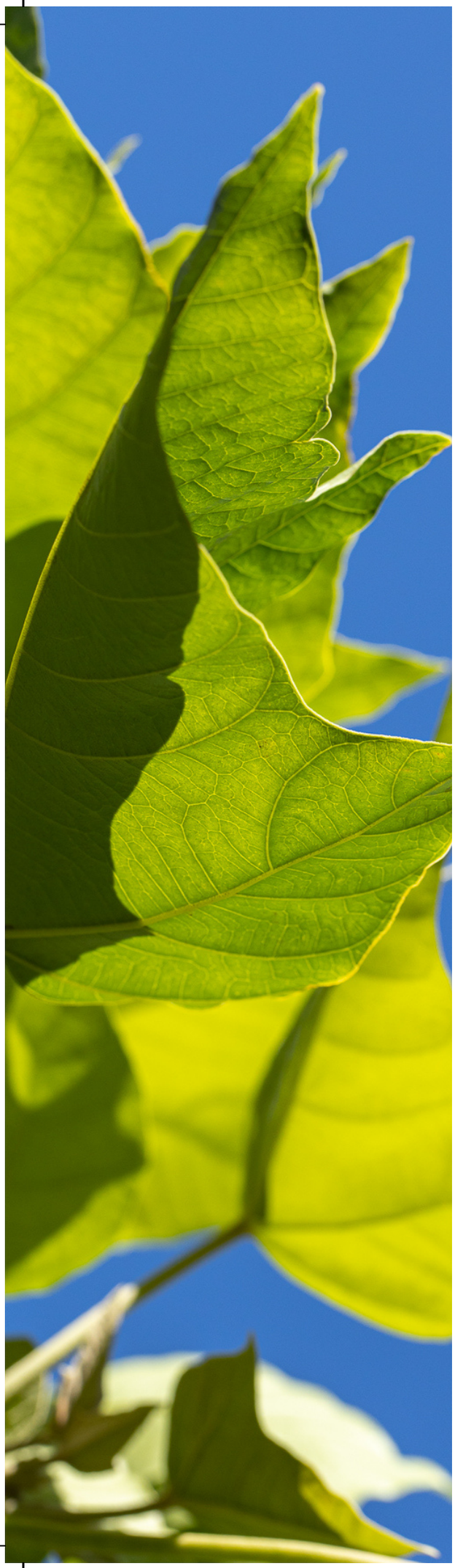
JESSE LIPMAN

Community Food Programs Coordinator, KKV



MAHALO

acknowledging our community



KALIHI LEGACY INTERVIEWEES

- Jeffery Acido - Community Activist
- Vailima Watson - Youth Community Outreach Coordinator
- Merlita Compton - Director of Elder Care
- Michael Epp - Collaborative Projects Coordinator
- David Derauf - Executive Director of Kōkua Kalihi Valley
- Rebecca Seumanu - Public Housing Coordinator
- Kehau Kupihea - Executive Director, Mauli Ola Ke'ehi
- Lisa Asagi - Community Food Advocate and Writer

KALIHI FOOD SYSTEM ENVISIONING INTERVIEWEES

- Azama Ohana – Kalihi Residents
  - Debby Azama-Park
  - Cassandra Park
  - Chelsea Park
- City and County of Honolulu – Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency
  - Laurien "Lala" Nuss – Climate Resilience & Equity Manager
- Farmer Needs Assessment
  - 30 Farmers from across Oahu's Ko'oluapoko, Ko'olauloa, and Kona districts
- Farmlink
  - Rob Barreca – Founder and CEO
- Fern Elementary
  - Glen Miyasato – Principle
  - Mr. Lau – Vice Principle
- Hawaii Foodbank
  - Marielle Teribo - Director of Community Engagement and Advocacy
- Hawaii State Legislature
  - Sonny Ganaden – House Representative, District 30
  - Grace Jean-Pierre – Representative Ganaden's Chief of Staff
- Hooah Farm
  - Simeon Rojas – Farm Owner and Kalihi Resident

KALIHI FOOD SYSTEM ENVISIONING INTERVIEWEES

- KVIBE – Kalihi Valley Bike Exhange
  - Rona Mangayayam - Youth Services Coordinator
  - Josh Kim – Bike Shop Manager
  - Waiwai fellows – Summer Interns
- Kamehameha Schools
  - Kanakolu Noa – Manager of Strategy and Development
- KPT, Public Housing Providers - Kōkua Kalihi Valley
  - Rebecca Seumanu – Public Housing Coordinator
  - Nabin Oli - Care Coordinator
  - Amenina Opet – Seams Wonderful Coordinator
- Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center
  - Suzanne Chun Oakland – Program Coordinator
- Miller Ohana – Kalihi Residents
  - Mary Ellen Miller
  - Joe Miller
  - Kilipohe Miller
  - Joey Miller
  - Aolani Higgins
- Oahu Fresh
  - Matt Johnson - Founder and CEO

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- Carol Ann Carl
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- Scott Garlough
- Ku'ulei Freed
- Maricelle Shirai
- Emilygrace Kaaiakamanu

- Puni Jackson
- Casey Jackson
- Kanoa O'Connor
- Fiore Anderson
- Lalo Ishiki-Kalāhele
- Lefanoga Stanley
- Casey Chikuma
- Bernice Musrasrik

VOCABULARY

- Ahupua'a – Land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea
- 'Āina – That which feeds, land, earth
- 'Aipono – healthy eating that is connected to our culture, spirituality, environment, and stories that nourish our land and our bodies
- 'Ili'āina – a division of land smaller than an ahupua'a
- Kai – Sea, sea water, area near the sea, seaside, lowlands
- Kaiaulu – Community, neighborhood, village
- Kalihilihiolaumiha – the edge, traditional name of Kalihi Valley
- Kaluaopalena – ili 'āina of middle region of Kalihi ahupua'a
- Kauhale – Group of houses comprising a Hawaiian home, formerly consisting of men's eating house, women's eating house, sleeping house, cook-house, canoe house, etc.
- Kīpuka – Variation or change of form, as a calm place in a high sea, deep place in a shoal, opening in a forest, openings in cloud formations, and especially a clear place or oasis within a lava bed where there may be vegetation
- Konohiki – Headman of an ahupua'a land division under the chief; land or fishing rights under control of the konohiki
- Kuleana – Right, privilege, concern, responsibility title; business, property, estate, portion, interest, authority, claim, ownership, tenure
- Papa and Wākea – Mother Earth and Father Sky
- Pu'uhonua – place of refuge, sanctuary, asylum, place of peace and safety
- Mālama – to take care of, to preserve, protect, save and maintain
- Mokauea – Broken turtle place, island off Sand Island, Honolulu Harbor
- Moku – land division
- Mana'o nui – Big thoughts
- 'Ohana – Family, relative, kin group; related
- 'Ōiwi – Native
- Pono – Moral, excellence, well-being
- TūTū – grandmother or grandfather
- Uka – Inland, upland, towards the mountain, shoreward
- 'Umeke – Bowl, calabash, circular vessel, as of wood or gourd
- Waiwai – Abundance, wealth
- Waena – middle, between, center, central, intermediate, medial

MAHALO

"Food is powerful. Through preparing and sharing food, we strengthen the roots that connect us to the land, the sea, our cultures, our community, our family, and to each other. "

ROOTS STAFF

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Mahalo nui loa!

"Also our forests - our akua. Feed our souls and spirit. Keep the ʻaina intact and fed."

MILLER ʻOHANA

Kalihi Valley Residents