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Local schools to benefit from free ad campaign

By Erika Engle

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Ad 2 Honolulu has selected [Community Helping Schools](#) as the recipient of its 2009-2010 free public service campaign.

-- ADVERTISEMENT -- The nonprofit Ad 2 comprises industry professionals age 32 or younger, and the organization has been preparing free campaigns for nonprofits for more than 30 years. It is "such an important aspect of the organization," said public service committee co-chairwoman Maile Takashima. "It really gives our members a chance to use their professional skills to make a difference in the community."

It also makes each nonprofit recipient grateful, as the campaigns have been valued at more than \$1 million in print space and broadcast time, as well as exposure on other platforms, such as online.

"I can't tell you how grateful I am because of the difference they're going to make in the schools. I have tears in my eyes, I feel so thankful," said Kathie Wells, founder, president and executive director of Community Helping Schools, which receives and coordinates donations to public schools.

Wells, a full-time Realtor with Coldwell Banker Pacific Properties' Windward office, founded the little nonprofit that could in 2000. Within months she was diagnosed with cancer, so the fledgling effort had a rough start, but it made news in 2002 when Hardware Hawaii responded to a small ad she placed in Midweek (a Star-Bulletin sister publication), stating a need.

The kamaaina company stepped forward to fill the need with paint — a lot of paint, which required warehousing. Space was secured, and CHS distributed all \$100,000 worth of paint to 44 schools.

Wells wields a wealth of real estate connections, and they come to her to donate to schools and help get the word out about CHS. A mortgage lender donated office furnishings from desks to file cabinets to a copy machine.

Realtor Mark Pillori stumbled upon a piano that was donated to Waipahu High School and was delivered, free, by Two Guys and a Truck. Company owner Richard Shimon's mother is a school guidance counselor, so he is well aware of schools' needs. The needs are posted on the CHS Web site, but Wells is still collecting wish lists via schools' Parent Community Network Coordinators, or PCNCs.

The organization is small and volunteer-driven and has largely focused on the Windward side, but Wells wants all Hawaii schools to benefit.

"In order to grow, we have to have a lot more volunteers. That's the first thing we're working on ... (because) if everybody does just a little, it becomes a lot," she said.

Recipients write thank-you letters to the donors, and each case creates a bond between donor and recipient, between school and community, Wells said.

Ad 2 was especially moved by Wells' passion, Takashima said. "She's so passionate about what she does ... it makes you passionate, too," she said.

Economy-driven budget cuts will have great impacts at the student level, so "our goal for the campaign is to raise awareness in order for her to get that community support. ... We want to raise awareness to further develop the relationships she needs," Takashima said.

"Once people find out what (CHS) is, I think everybody's going to be completely

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supportive, and I think it's going to 'blow up' ... or do wonders," she said.

▶ Letters to the Editor



A combination campaign kickoff party, fundraiser and Ad 2 40th-anniversary celebration Oct. 8 will begin at 6 p.m. at Tsunami Bar and Grill at 1272 S. King St. The public is welcome, and the suggested \$10 donation will directly benefit the public service campaign.

ON THE NET:

- » www.communityhelpingschools.com
- » ad2honolulu.org

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