



NEWS RELEASE

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Kōkua Champions rewarded with grants to their favorite nonprofits

HONOLULU, Jan. 19, 2018 – Hawaiian Electric employees Mari Cardines, Barney Choy and Nathan Yuen are recipients of the 2017 Kōkua Community Champion Service Award from the HEI Charitable Foundation (HEICF). The recognition honors the employees for their outstanding volunteer service in the community during the past year, and enables each winner to award a nonprofit charitable organization with a \$1,000 grant from the foundation.

Mari Cardines, an executive secretary for customer service and public affairs, was recognized for her multiple volunteer activities in the Leeward O‘ahu community. As a member of Nānāikapono Church, Cardines spends her weekends in Nānākuli alongside church volunteers assisting with monthly food distributions, homeless shelter outreaches, back-to-school supply drives, weekly meals to *kupuna* and more.

“I would like Nānāikapono Church to be the recipient of the HEI Charitable Foundation’s generous gift because of all the wonderful contributions our volunteers support throughout the year in the community,” said Cardines, a Hilo native who today lives in Kunia. Cardines, who holds a business degree from the University of Phoenix, has been with the utility since 2007 and part of the HEI family of companies going on 26 years.

An environmental compliance supervisor with 28 years at the utility, Barney Choy was recognized for his commitment to helping Hawai‘i’s young athletes succeed as players, students and good corporate citizens. He is founder of the nonprofit Na Keiki Mau Loa volleyball club which rigorously trains young volleyball players while instilling in them a sense of responsibility to care for their team, family, communities and environment through service projects and educational workshops.

Choy, a Saint Louis School alumnus and Waiālae Nui Valley resident, plans to use the HEICF grant for Na Keiki Mau Loa’s annual collegiate volleyball coaching clinic. The venue introduces Hawai‘i high school athletes to top volleyball coaches from around the country and gives them a shot at receiving scholarships or financial packages to fulfill their dreams of higher education. Choy himself holds a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

Nathan Yuen, a renewable energy contract manager with 15 years at Hawaiian Electric, was recognized for his dedication to advancing Hawai‘i’s next generation of skilled technology workers through his work with the nonprofit Hawaii Society of Professional Engineers Educational Foundation (HSPEEF), also Yuen’s choice to receive the HEICF grant. HSPEEF will use the funds for the annual O‘ahu and state MATHCOUNTS® competitions which promote middle school math achievement.

For more than a decade, Yuen has been coordinating the numerous details involved in the MATHCOUNTS events, even using personal vacation time to travel to national planning conferences where coordinators learn ways the math enrichment program can be improved and relevant for the students. The 20-year Mānoa Valley resident earned his civil engineering degree from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and a master in mechanical engineering from Naval Postgraduate School.

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