



Mālama  
Learning  
Center

a private non-profit organization founded in 2004

Mālama = to care for, to protect

**Vision:**

The Mālama Learning Center is a place in West O'ahu that brings science, art, conservation and culture together to promote sustainable living throughout Hawai'i.

**Mission:**

To teach and inspire communities to create healthy living environments

**Financial Objective:**

The Mālama Learning Center proposes an initial \$6million funding request toward its capital campaign of \$10.5 million. More than \$2.5 million in local funds have been secured to date and other grants and requests are in process.

**Use of Funds:**

1. Complete planning and design documents for an innovative "green" learning and outreach teaching center that integrates Hawaii's rich natural and cultural environment
2. Begin construction in 2010 and complete within 18 months
3. Provide and sustain educational programs for the community in the areas of conservation, science, technology, and visual and performing arts

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## **Summary**

The Mālama Learning Center (MLC) is a Hawai'i-based nonprofit organization that is working with communities in West O'ahu, a rapidly growing part of the island and home to a large native Hawaiian population, to create a mixed-use educational facility that serves as a laboratory for creating sustainable and healthy environments for island living. Through classes, exhibits, performances, and educational programming linked to Kapolei High School and other schools in the region, the MLC will offer participants experiences that build an awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the concepts of *mālama* (to care for, to protect) and *ho'okuleana* (to take responsibility) that will have lasting impacts upon the environment and culture of Hawai'i.

The MLC will be a 22,220-square-foot facility encompassing 10,920-square-feet of interior space and 11,300-square-feet of exterior landscape built on a three-acre site near the entrance to Kapolei High School. It will have classrooms, an indoor/outdoor performance theater, office and program space for like-minded nonprofit organizations, a nursery and native plant gardens, a multi-media outreach broadcast facility, and outdoor work and meeting areas. The MLC will be a "green" facility, certified under Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, becoming a 3-D textbook to teach youth and the community about environmental and cultural sustainability through both its physical design and its educational programming.

## **Our Vision and Mission**

Vision:

- The Mālama Learning Center is a place in West O'ahu that brings science, art, conservation and culture together to promote sustainable living throughout Hawai'i – a place where students, teachers, residents and businesses can explore environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Mission:

- To teach and inspire communities to create healthy living environments – to instill a lifelong ethic of guardianship and care for one another, our community and future generations.

## **Our Core Activities**

The Mālama Learning Center will:

- Be located in a rapidly growing urban region that has strong links to business and civic growth, and ties to the land through neighboring rural and conservation areas.
- Serve as a physical bridge between the school and community organizations (for- and nonprofit) that have a shared interest in the "green" skills of young people
- Extend its services to the larger community through workshops, performance events, and educational programs like professional development in teaching and conservation.
- Demonstrate, through both its design and programs, green and sustainable technology that is feasible at an institutional level.
- Use nature as its extended "laboratory" for learning where participants can help save native and endangered species.
- Nurture the creativity of local youth, providing them with opportunities to explore and exhibit the synergy of nature, culture and art.
- Bring together wise elders (kūpuna) and youth (ʻōpio) in creating solutions to problems affecting island living
- Combine earned income and charitable funds to make the MLC and its programs financially sustainable.

While in the pre-construction phase, MLC has created an array of pilot educational activities as part of its WOW (without walls) program to build community interest in the MLC and to trial partner relationships. Some of the activities MLC has offered to date include: workshops on invasive alien species, growing native plants, growing edible gardens, xeriscape gardening, and solar dry box making; classes on art using recycled materials; symposia on sustainability for island living; and performances by high school students to elementary school students on native Hawaiian legends.

Partnerships are key to the Center's implementation strategy. Core community partners of MLC will include the 'Iliahi Foundation. Having worked in the same region for the past five years and sharing overall goals toward conservation and education, MLC welcomes 'Iliahi Foundation as a program provider to reach students and adults in mountain-to-sea activities.

## **History and Design**

Since 2001, a core group of staff and community members from Kapolei High School and the Kapolei community have been meeting regularly to create the vision of the Mālama Learning Center. The team's first success was the award of a major grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and matching grants from local businesses, foundations, and individuals to conduct an architectural design competition (total \$150,000). The competition drew international interest, with more than 230 submissions from 36 countries and 28 states from the U.S. (including many from Hawai'i).

The winner of the international design competition was Eight Inc., a Honolulu/San Francisco/New York design firm. In Eight Inc.'s design, the Center's architecture and landscapes reflected the values of MLC's educational programs while also meeting the criteria for sustainable design. As such, Eight Inc.'s design ensured that the MLC maintained a light ecological "footprint" on the land and that it will serve as a replicable showcase project.

Today, the MLC has created a top-notch local design team comprised of:

- Eight Inc, architect
- Lincolne Scott - mechanical & electrical engineering
- BASE - structural engineering
- Sato & Associates - civil engineering
- Umemoto Cassandro - landscape architects
- Pankow - design assist contractor
- Cooper & Cooper – project management

## **Organization and Management**

The Mālama Learning Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in the state of Hawai'i. It began as a concept in 2001, with Kapolei High School seeking a performing arts auditorium for the community, and The Nature Conservancy seeking a conservation learning center. The two ideas merged, blossomed, and evolved, nurtured by creative ideas and energy brought by innovative community members yearning to build a "soul" for the new city of Kapolei.

The Mālama Learning Center received its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in 2004. It is guided by a Board of Directors, supported by a Campaign Cabinet, and fueled by the spirit of mālama. Its legal counsel is Robert Takamatsu of Watanabe Ing, certified public accountant is Sally Takamine and insurance provider is Hawai'i Insurance Consultants. A core team of part-time staff (Director, Project Coordinator, Education Coordinator) works on a daily basis to move the MLC into the construction and program development stages. These staff will become full-time once the center is fully operational, joined by more staff as the programs grow.

## **Future of MLC**

The MLC is entering the West O'ahu region at a critical time, where farms are being overtaken by new homes, cost of living and homelessness are increasing, endangered species are reaching extinction, and climate change threatens coastal communities. In light of these challenges, the MLC will be in a prime position to educate students, teachers, families, other non-profit organizations and businesses on how we can work together to lead us on a better path based on honoring our natural and cultural heritage and pledging our commitment to future generations.

The MLC will become a hub for education on sustainability and individual-community-business responsibility by working with partners such as the 'Iliahi Foundation. The facility will be designed for distance learning to allow for co-teaching and webcast opportunities. The MLC will be built to allow people to innovate. It is our hope that the model offered by the MLC will provide inspiration to other schools and communities.

## **Financial Forecast**

- With funds in hand, MLC through its design team has started on design development with the intent to break ground in the spring of 2010.
- Fundraising has been difficult in the current economy, therefore the capital campaign fundraising team has created a two-phase process to complete construction. The first phase is for \$5 million, and the second for \$5.5 million (potentially more due to additional costs associated with phasing).
- With funding of \$6 million, MLC will be close to completing its capital campaign and could conceivably complete the project in one phase, saving donors' funds and allowing full programming to start sooner than later.
- Such an investment will also help MLC fundraisers focus on establishing an endowment to secure the sustainability of the organization and facilities.

## **Use of Funds**

The funds from this potential investment of \$6 million will be used for construction and furnishing of the Mālama Learning Center. Any additional funding raised would be used to complete the campaign and support program development and implementation.

## **Optimistic, Pessimistic and Realistic Scenarios**

- Optimistic – The optimistic scenario is that the MLC will be constructed entirely in one phase starting in 2010 and a core team of full-time staff will begin work by 2011.
- Pessimistic – This scenario entails just the first phase of the project constructed and the second phase to be constructed at an unknown later date.
- Realistic – The realistic scenario is that the first phase of the project would be constructed and completed by 2011 and the second phase construction will begin within 6-9 months.

## **Community Benefits from Full Funding**

The MLC will be designed to address a variety of community needs which are currently underserved in West O'ahu.

- Need for understanding sustainability and environmental protection
- Need for venues to promote culture and arts, particularly Native Hawaiian culture
- Need for environmental education and green jobs training