

Space for Healing: \$2.9M Investment Supports Student and Community Wellness Efforts in Hawai'i and the Bay Area

Funds support wellness programs created by and for students and staff

HONOLULU, HAWAII, USA, June 27, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Our future depends upon the health and wellbeing of our youth and the professionals who help them live, learn, and thrive. To

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Supporting student and community wellness is not just about improving academic success; it's about nurturing resilient, healthy individuals who care for each other and their community.”

Cheri Souza

support the healing and wellbeing of students and the staff who support them, Stupski Foundation recently provided \$2.9M to organizations advancing student and community mental health across Hawai'i and the San Francisco Bay Area. To ensure the wellness programs align with community needs, each organization selected will provide wellness offerings informed or designed by the student or staff beneficiaries.

This boost to wellness programs comes at a critical time. In the aftermath of the pandemic, student mental health is in crisis, and it's worsening. According to a [2022-2023 Healthy](#)

[Minds survey](#) of college students nationwide, the number of students experiencing mental health challenges has increased by over 50% since 2013. It's become so severe that it is preventing many students from completing their studies. A recent [report from Gallup and the Lumina Foundation](#) revealed that 64% of currently enrolled college students considered dropping out of their program, citing emotional stress or mental health issues. Exacerbating this challenge is the strain it puts on student support staff, including faculty, administrators and health care professionals who are experiencing historic levels of burnout. In a 2022 College and University Professional Association for Human Resources survey, 60% of college staff respondents reported that they were likely to look for new employment in the next year.

Fortunately, students and support staff have ideas to address mental health needs and promote collective healing in their communities. We are proud to fund multi-year grants to the following organizations in Hawai'i and the Bay Area.

Our Partners in Hawai'i:
- EPIC Ōhana

- Kauaʻi Economic Development Board - Kauaʻi Creative Technology Center
- Mental Health America of Hawaiʻi
- University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo - Ka Pouhana Wellness Program
- Waimea High School
- Wisdom Circles Oceania

Together, these programs provide safe, restorative spaces for healing for students and staff on Oʻahu, Maui, Kauaʻi, and Hawaiʻi Island. For Bryan Talisayan, Executive Director at Mental Health America of Hawaiʻi, this means working to reduce the mental health impact on youth directly and indirectly impacted by the Maui fires through the cultivation of a culture of resilience for youth, youth serving adults, and the adults who care for them. “If there were ever a more critical time to prioritize mental health, resilience, and prevention efforts for youth it is now. Nearly a year later, the lasting effects of the Maui fires continue to take a toll on youth across the state and we anticipate an ongoing statewide response for 5-7 years. It is our privilege and honor to partner with the Stupski Foundation and their grantees as we prioritize the overall wellness for youth in Hawaiʻi.”

Our Partners in the San Francisco Bay Area:

- 5 Elements
- Arab Resource and Organizing Center (AROC)
- Asian Refugees United
- Beats, Rhymes, and Life
- Better Alternatives for Youth (BAY-PEACE)
- Healing Together
- Horizons Unlimited of San Francisco
- Youth Spirit Artworks

Bay Area community organizations will also provide students and support staff a range of community-informed wellness programs to address trauma and mental health needs. “As we prioritize the well-being of our youth and dedicated staff, we are also committed to an organizational somatic awareness and trauma-informed approach that is grounded in research-based practices,” said Karini Pereira-Bowers, Executive Director of Youth Spirit Artworks. “This approach allows us to better understand and address the unique challenges and needs of the transitional age youth we serve. By equipping our staff with the necessary tools and resources, we can provide comprehensive and tailored support that recognizes the impact of trauma and how somatic awareness supports the healing process. This funding will enable us to invest in our staff's growth and well-being, ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to effectively support the holistic recovery of the transitional age youth. Through this transformational approach, we aim to empower and uplift these young individuals, providing them with the best possible opportunities for healing and thriving.”

As funders, we believe in [investing in the supporters who we depend upon](#). The mental health and wellbeing of our youth and communities will only improve if we commit the resources and

time required to disrupt the systemic forces that have intensified the youth mental health crisis. As Hawai'i Postsecondary Success Program Officer Cheri Souza sees it, "Supporting student and community wellness is not just about improving academic success; it's about nurturing resilient, healthy individuals who care for each other and their community. When wellness becomes a priority, we lay the groundwork for a brighter, more equitable future for all."

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Stupski Foundation is a private foundation returning its assets to the communities it calls home in Hawai'i and the San Francisco Bay Area by 2029 to support just and resilient food, health, and higher education systems for all. Learn more at stupski.org.

Matthew Nagato
Stupski Foundation
+1 415-655-4434

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