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## ClimbHI, HLTA launch new award for Hawaii educators

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Workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI and the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association have teamed up to create a new award to provide learning experiences and mentorship in hospitality to Hawaii educators.

The award will grant recipients a \$1,000 stipend funded by HLTA, as well as immersive experiences in hospitality, including job shadowing and on-site learning at Hawaii hotels and other opportunities that highlight different aspects of the industry. Teachers will also receive briefings from HLTA, as well as the Hawaii Tourism Authority and the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau, and will be paired with a mentor from HLTA's Women in Lodging & Tourism committee.

ClimbHI and HLTA announced on Tuesday that this year's winners are Alyssa Alcos, a teacher at Waianae High School, and Fern White, a district resource teacher for Career & Technical Education programs on Hawaii Island.



EUGENE TANNER | PBN

A view of Waikiki as seen from Tantalus Drive

Julie Morikawa, the president of ClimbHI, told Pacific Business News that the two winners “stood out for their proven track record of leadership.”

Alcos advises a school club that works to strengthen leadership and entrepreneurial skills in marketing, finance, hospitality and management, and serves on the board of the Hawaii Association of Career & Technical Education, which promotes career readiness. White has taught a range of subjects including English, guidance, health, physics, computer science, and engineering design.

“We have selected wonderful teachers who are not just teaching about hospitality, but are wonderful teachers in general who wear many different hats,” Morikawa said.

Morikawa said the idea to create the award was born out of reports of teacher fatigue amid the pandemic. She hopes that the program will enhance “teacher education as well as student education that will then blossom into interest for the [hospitality] industry and the career paths available in it.”

“What better way to educate our youth than by educating our teachers?”

**Christina O'Connor**

Reporter

*Pacific Business News*

