

AN OPEN MIND

A Public-Private Partnership that Actually Works

A TRADITIONAL WAY FOR KIDS TO LEARN ABOUT CAREERS was for teachers to invite dads, moms and anyone else they knew to speak to the class or show up at career fairs. That system worked best in affluent neighborhoods where many parents worked interesting, well-paying jobs. Not as well in working-class neighborhoods.

Teachers, principals and other educators across Hawai'i built up their own contacts with people in businesses, nonprofits and government agencies. It takes years of continuous effort and some did well, while others were less successful.

The comprehensive solution is the ClimbHI Bridge, a digital platform that effectively connects public school educators with people in businesses, nonprofits and government agencies who want to help. It's a huge success after just two years and growing faster than a toddler.

On one side of the platform are 426 people at 272 local companies, nonprofits and government agencies who offer to serve as class speakers, curriculum advisors, career day participants and in other roles that help students learn what careers exist and how to prepare for them. At last count, 11,817 public school students had engaged with these working people and learned first-hand about the world that awaits them upon graduation.

It's simple for working people to learn more or join the platform; just send an email to info@climbhi.org. You could make a difference in young people's lives.

MANY POSSIBILITIES

The platform has connected me with about a dozen educators. I have spoken about careers in the media to several classes and participated in a career fair. Each event only took an hour or two of my time. But I have also been involved with other projects that indicate a few of the many possibilities for connecting with teachers and students.

Twice now, I and my colleagues at *Hawaii Business Magazine* and our sister publications plus a few outside friends have provided "externships" for teachers. One teacher was leading classes in design at Honoka'a High School and the other was teaching news writ-

ing and advising the student newspaper at Waipahu High School. Both learned from professionals in those fields what they do on the job, how they trained for their careers and how students can prepare for similar careers.

During spring 2021, I collaborated with some of teacher Michael Stephens' students at Campbell High School. The project we tackled was how to communicate personal financial advice to people ages 12 to 29 – important topics like how to save and spend wisely, budgeting, protecting against identity theft, student loans and more.

The students researched the topic, created a clever brand and created Instagram posts and TikTok videos. They learned valuable lessons about money, how to fashion strong messages and market a product. *Hawaii Business* Digital Marketing Director Joelle Cabasa and I provided suggestions and feedback to the students throughout the semester.

FEEDBACK IS GOOD

I got a lot of positive feedback to last month's column in which I suggested that Hawai'i should discourage budget travelers from coming here and instead welcome those willing to spend big – while hitting them with more fees and higher taxes to help pay for helping the 'āina recover from the impact of 1.4 million locals and up to 10 million tourists a year. Read the piece at tinyurl.com/Touristelite

But I got criticism from others. Here is what I read from Richard Koob, co-founder of Kalani Honua, a non-profit wellness retreat on Hawai'i Island:

I always read and generally appreciate your 'Open Mind' editorial. However you missed the boat in the July issue, i.e. the immigrant boat, including the initial Polynesians, as well as the visitor boat (the airplane).

What really "pays off" for Hawai'i and those of us who live and love Hawai'i is everything that conscientiously and compassionately supports the health and happiness of island life. And that can include the diversity of visitors who truly seek and further nature, culture, wellness and sustainable living in the spirit of 'ohana and aloha.

Rather than admit "deep pocket" wealthy visitors, let's welcome health (the true wealth) focused visitors. Their admission requirement could be to complete an online or other course in Hawai'i history at least one year prior to arrival. That knowledge and commitment would be verified upon arrival by passing an entrance test before being permitted to exit an airport.



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