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ClimbHI Honors Hawaii Businesses and Educators for Workforce Development

The new award recognizes excellence with ClimbHI Bridge, an online career portal reaching students statewide

Honolulu, Hawaii, August 2, 2021 – Hawaii workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI is recognizing three Hawaii businesses/organizations and three educators for their involvement with ClimbHI Bridge, a community initiative designed to provide workforce development opportunities to all public schools statewide.

The ClimbHI Bridge online career portal takes a fresh approach to connecting business people with students and teachers.

Since the Bridge's launch in December 2020, 275 Hawaii businesses and nonprofit organizations have helped more than 12,400 high school and intermediate students statewide through 225 events and approximately 1,250 volunteer hours in an unprecedented public-private partnership. The portal continued to grow throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with ongoing educator training, expanded features, and greater participation from businesses and other organizations. Nearly 2,000 educators are using the portal, and elementary schools will be added this fall.

"Mahalo to the hundreds of businesses and organizations for coming together during this challenging time, creating a successful public-private partnership that touches all school districts throughout Hawaii," said ClimbHI President Julie Morikawa. "ClimbHI Bridge offers a wide range of opportunities that bring unprecedented connectivity to urban and rural areas across the state, and will continue to grow as a key metric for workforce development."

With the new ClimbHI Bridge Service Award, ClimbHI and the nonprofit Hawai'i Executive Collaborative are recognizing three organizations for their excellence in providing opportunities and hosting events through ClimbHI Bridge during the program's first 8 months:

- YMCA of Honolulu
- Bank of Hawaii
- The Queen's Health Systems

The award also honors three educators for organizing nearly 60 workforce development events in total through the portal:

- Geraldine Valencia, Campbell High School
- Fern White, West Hawaii Resource Teacher
- Maria Bernard-Reantaso, Moanalua High School

"The Department is proud to have teachers like Geraldine, Fern and Maria, who are helping to expand access to engaging programs and opportunities that build on the skills and experiences that our students need to succeed," Hawaii State Department of Education Interim Superintendent Keith Hayashi said. "Mahalo to all the participating businesses and organizations for this invaluable partnership in ensuring our students and teachers have access to engaging workforce development opportunities."

Participating businesses, associations and nonprofit organizations can log on to the free ClimbHI Bridge portal and post opportunities for students and teachers, including internships, project-based learning, events and careers – all in just a few minutes. Teachers can easily search for guest speakers and send requests for class involvement, career fair participation, site visits and job-readiness activities.

Visit climbhi.org/portals or e-mail info@climbhi.org to participate.

Support for ClimbHI Bridge is provided by the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative, which has committed to funding the program for five years. ClimbHI Bridge was conceived at the 2018 Hawai'i Executive Conference.

“When we provide opportunities like ClimbHI Bridge, we are bringing together the collective efforts and talents of our students, educators, communities and businesses to ensure that we are preparing the next generation of Hawaii’s leaders for careers right here at home,” said Lynelle Marble, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative.

About ClimbHI: Founded in 2009, the Hawaii-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit ClimbHI seeks to inspire students to finish high school and proceed to post-secondary education or employment by exposing them to future career paths and the steps necessary to achieve those goals. For more, visit climbhi.org.

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