



**MEDIA CONTACT**

**Teddi Anderson**  
President, TLC PR  
(808) 535-9099  
[teddi@tlcpr.com](mailto:teddi@tlcpr.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ClimbHI to Host First Regionally Focused LEI Program for West Oahu Students**

*180 students from six high schools will participate in the hospitality industry workforce development event*

**Honolulu, Hawaii, December 4, 2019** – Hawaii workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI is hosting its first-ever regionally focused Leadership Exploration Inspiration (LEI) program for high school students on the west side of Oahu from 9 a.m.-noon on Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019, at Ko Olina. The event will include special guests, and media are invited to attend a career fair and luncheon starting at 10:15 a.m. at the Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina (Ko Olina Ballroom).

LEI is a Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)-sponsored workforce development project created by ClimbHI in 2011 to inspire Hawaii's youth to pursue careers in the state's visitor industry by providing them with the means to achieve success. During the upcoming half-day program, students will meet with hospitality leaders and tour hotels and restaurants. Students were selected for the LEI program based on their Career and Technical Education (CTE) curriculum.

Participating high schools are: Waianae, Nanakuli, Pearl City, Kapolei, Campbell, and Waipahu, for a total of 180 students and 12 teachers. Participating hotels and restaurants are: Marriott Ko Olina Beach Resort, Four Seasons Resort Oahu at Ko Olina, Monkeypod Kitchen, the Ko Olina Beach Resort Association and Residence Inn by Marriott Kapolei.

"This first regionally focused LEI event provides the opportunity for our students to connect with the hospitality leaders closest to where they live and go to school," said Julie Morikawa, president and founder of ClimbHI. "We are thrilled to introduce them to a variety of career pathways in our state's No. 1 industry that are right in their backyard. Our participating hospitality partners have enthusiastically embraced their role in educating and supporting our next generation of local leaders."

ClimbHI will expand its regional LEI events throughout Hawaii while continuing to host larger island-wide programs, which draw hundreds of students. The last Oahu LEI event was held at the Hawai'i Convention Center in April. In 2019, LEI events also took place on Maui, Kauai and the Island of Hawaii, involving more than 100 businesses and over 100 volunteers.

Workforce development programs like LEI can help businesses in Hawaii's visitor industry attract and develop successful managers and employees. Businesses and post-secondary schools interested in participating are encouraged to e-mail [info@climbhi.org](mailto:info@climbhi.org).

**About ClimbHI:** Founded in 2010, 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](http://climbhi.org).

**About LEI:** Leadership Exploration Inspiration (LEI) is a Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)-sponsored workforce development project created by ClimbHI to inspire Hawaii's youth to pursue careers in the state's visitor industry by providing them with the means to achieve success. The program exposes high school students to potential careers and provides college students with hands-on experience through internships. For more, visit [climbhi.org/lei](http://climbhi.org/lei).

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