MEDIA CONTACT
Teddi Anderson
President, TLC PR
(808) 535-9099
teddi@tlcpr.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ClimbHI Brings Together Over 200 Businesses to Help 3,000 Students in Hawaii

A new community initiative is connecting business and nonprofit leaders with students and teachers statewide

Honolulu, Hawaii, February 2, 2021 – Over 200 Hawaii businesses and nonprofit organizations have come together in a groundbreaking community initiative to help more than 3,000 high school students statewide, and counting.

ClimbHI Bridge, a new opportunity formally launched in December by Hawaii workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI, is quickly growing with unprecedented participation from businesses and hundreds of public and private schools. The ClimbHI Bridge online career portal takes a fresh approach to connecting business leaders with students and teachers to enhance workforce opportunities and exposure across a variety of industries. More than 500 educators are enrolled.

"This strong network of businesses is supporting students and teachers on all islands across Hawaii," said ClimbHI President Julie Morikawa. "The COVID-19 pandemic is forcing everyone to think differently about how we ensure that Hawaii's urban and rural students are prepared and skilled to fill jobs that pay living wages. By connecting businesses to schools, educators have the opportunity to expose students to careers and learn from professionals."

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.

"ClimbHI has been a game changer," said Matt Ramsey, director of the nonprofit Conservation International, Hawai'i. "It takes a lot of effort to familiarize yourself with the opportunities that exist, and a lot of effort to reach out to individual students. But with ClimbHI it became super efficient and super fun. You just put your information out there, and then you have people contact you."

Training is ongoing for all Hawaii public high schools. The portal's expansion also includes serving middle and elementary schools by the end of 2021. Support is provided by the nonprofit 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.

HIDOE West Hawaii Career and Technical Education (CTE) District Resource Teacher Fern White used ClimbHI Bridge to enhance a virtual career event in December for schools across West Hawaii. She was initially expecting a small handful of speakers and classes. With ClimbHI Bridge, participation soared to 23 presenters, 47 teachers and 522 students over two half-day live sessions. Participating businesses included Hawaiian Electric, Big Island Candies and The Queen's Health Systems.

"I have been in the classroom for decades and am always looking for ways to connect kids with fields of study, and to give them a peek at the various opportunities that are available to them," said White, who is already planning another virtual career event at the end of this month. "ClimbHI Bridge is a vital resource for us to connect schools across a large geographic district, igniting student inspiration and conversations."

Businesses, associations and nonprofit organizations in Hawaii are encouraged to visit climbhi.org/portals or e-mail info@climbhi.org to participate.

About ClimbHI: Founded in 2011, 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.

###