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3 questions with Julie Morikawa of ClimbHI

"Over the course of the last year, we have been privileged to do all this great work for our state and to reach over 71,500 students," Julie Morikawa, president and executive director of ClimbHI, told PBN.

CLIMBHI



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ClimbHI, a Hawaii-based nonprofit organization founded in 2009, aims to inspire young people to finish high school and pursue post-secondary education or employment through a range of workforce development and hiring programs. Pacific Business News checked in with the nonprofit's President and Executive Director Julie Morikawa to discuss its latest initiatives, goals, impact and more.

"It's a great privilege to do this work for our state and to really help our keiki get exposed," Morikawa told PBN.

Could you tell me about some of ClimbHI's latest initiatives and their impact? Some of the new things that ClimbHI has been doing over the course of the last year have been ... in providing full-service resources for workforce development events, and that means everything from planning, creating, managing and executing events for schools. ... We've planned over 20 events for elementary through high school [students] throughout the year, and we foresee this moving into many more events in the next school year. ... Most exciting was our hiring blitz we did with Honoka'a High School. This event took place on April 28 when the school reached out to us because they have a high population of students that had nothing lined up post graduation. ... We lined up 10 entities that represented a good, well-rounded view of what was there on Hawaii Island: one in finance, one in hospitality, one in healthcare. Then from there, we brought them up to the school and we did an event. We had over 70 high school seniors and some juniors that were interested in working over the summer attend, and we had [the] businesses do

quick pitches on what was available and why they should be working for those companies.

Another area of movement for us was in ... redefining workforce development. ...There is a wide spectrum of opportunities where businesses would like to engage with a potential workforce and it spans between an internship and a field trip. So they're not cookie cutter by any means, and they're custom for each business and each school. And the beauty in all this is that they're really easy to implement in as little as a few weeks.

How many students and businesses have been reached by ClimbHI? Over the course of the last year, we have been privileged to do all this great work for our state and to reach over 71,500 students. And that is with over 600 events. ... So we had three major events, which included the Leadership, Exploration, Inspiration program, which is now in its 11th year and reached over 800 students. We then had our ClimbHI Service Excellence Certificate program that reached over 700 students and generated over \$56,000 from businesses. ... And then the last area would be the ClimbHI Bridge, which we launched in January of 2021. And just this past year, it engaged over 70,000 students with over 600 events. But in total, we've had almost 118,000 students that have been engaged because of the launch of the portal, and that has engaged over 550 businesses and 220 schools. That initiative has really been scalable, and it's truly an effort of aloha by our state, by our businesses, and our educators coming together. We're just the conduit for that. It truly is a testament to our ohana and values of aloha across Hawaii.

What's on the horizon for ClimbHI? On the horizon is continuing these new initiatives that we launched this past year. We're looking for businesses to come in and define what their interests and pipeline goals are and for us to help them execute on that. With this whole platform and this network that has come together, any opportunity can be successfully pushed out to all of our community equitably. We want to continue with exposureships, we want to continue with the powering of more and more initiatives to bring everyone together in the same place at the same time, and we look forward to continuing to grow this across our state. It's very simple to get started, and again, no cost to businesses at all.