

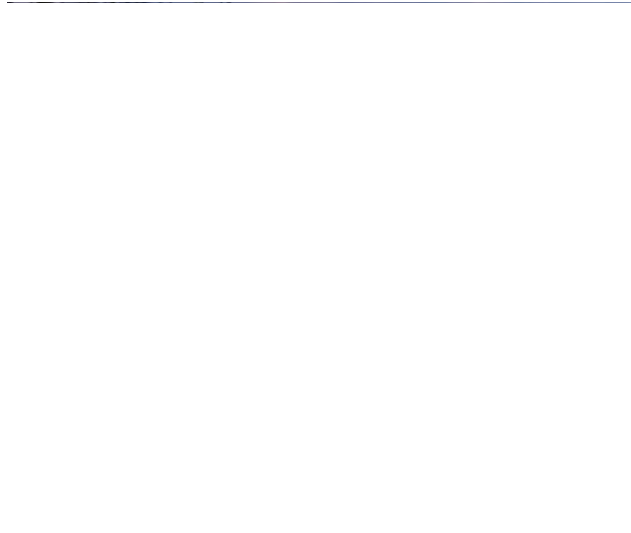
The Maui News

Program helps prepare Lahainaluna students for real world



In this still image from a YouTube video focusing on the Total Well Being Program, students learn disaster preparedness skills during one of the sessions. Approximately 300 students completed the program this year. Photo courtesy Total Well Being Program

With the goal of preparing local students to deal with whatever life may throw at them, notably future employment and disaster preparedness, approximately 300 students completed the inaugural Total Well Being Program at Lahainaluna High School during the 2024-25 academic year.



The program, which is part of Lahainaluna's curriculum, focused on preparing students for potential careers in the hospitality industry.

According to program organizers, it was both important and rewarding for the students to get away from their screens and phones and to connect with the community.

The program comprised three major initiatives — disaster readiness in light of the 2023 wildfires; a leadership, exploration and inspiration facet; and an excellence certificate from the ClimbHI/ Cornell University program, which was awarded April 17 at the Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa.

A video on YouTube seeks to capture the power the program had on the students. Choking back tears, one female student, who was not identified, recounted the frightening events of August 2023 when she and her family, looking at black smoke, packed their bags and left.



Though she said she feels more prepared for disaster relief and more in harmony with her community after completing the program, she confessed, “We still keep our bags packed.”

Organizers said 180 high school students from Maui and 25 college students interacted with industry leaders and participated in activities to showcase opportunities for career development and growth.

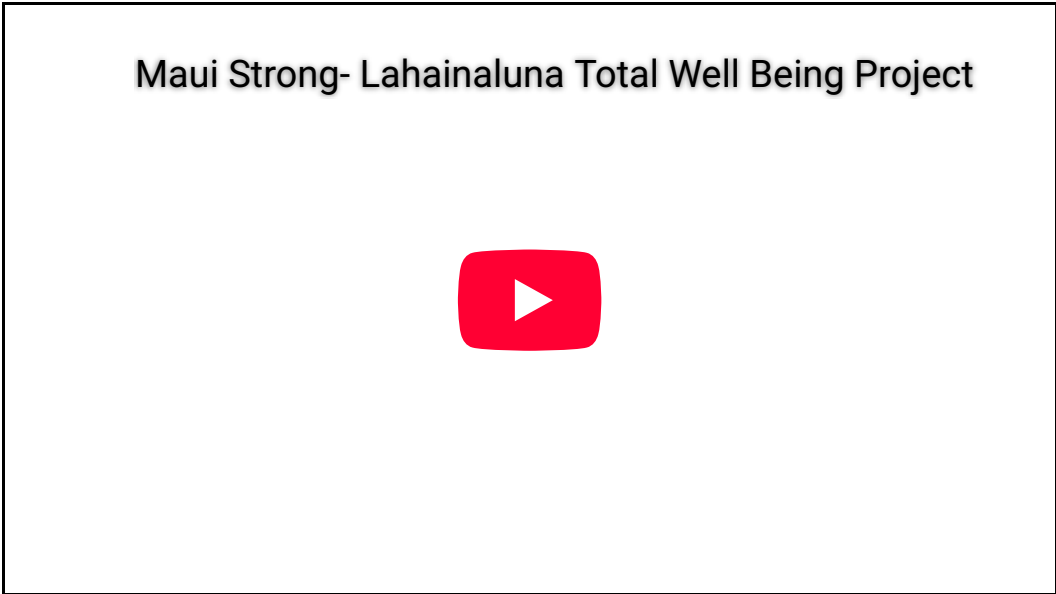
A young male student said he learned about aloha “for real.”

“It’s about giving love and doing things for your community,” he said, while adding it was valuable to meet people in the hospitality industry and to prepare for a career.

Organizers reported that in 2024, 53 Maui and Oahu public high school graduates and students received invaluable exposure to potential jobs and career pathways in Hawaii’s hospitality industry through the Hawaii Tourism Authority’s Work Wise program in collaboration with ClimbHI, with the enthusiastic support of partners including MHLA.



This summer two King Kekaulike students were reportedly hired by Malu Productions, setting the stage for careers in the local entertainment industry.



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