



## Youth Challenge Academy Graduation Ceremony

I attended the fall 2020 graduation for the [Youth Challenge Academy](#) at their Kalaeloa campus on November 25. Youth Challenge has been especially fortunate because they've been able to continue on-site operations with the cadets during the COVID pandemic. As I do at each of their graduations, I prepared an Honorary Certificate for each of the 40 graduating cadets and also presented a \$500 scholarship for one graduate from the Kalaeloa campus. I also contribute a \$500 scholarship for one deserving graduate at the Hilo Youth Challenge campus.

As background, Youth Challenge provides 16 to 19-year-old "non-traditional at promise" youth a second chance to obtain their high school diploma and become productive citizens within the community. The Academy instills discipline and a sense of self-worth by using military training to significantly improve the life skills and employment potential of young people. The program's eight core components focus on the holistic development of the youth and include: academic excellence, life-coping skills, job skills, health & hygiene, responsible citizenship, community service, leadership/followership, and physical fitness. The five-month residential phase of the program is followed by a year-long mentoring relationship with specially trained members of each graduate's community.

The Academy was founded in August 1994 and is administered by the [Hawai'i Army National Guard](#). It has campuses in Kalaeloa on O'ahu and in Hilo on the island of Hawai'i. Each cycle, the program accepts approximately 150 young people. Since its inception, the program has graduated over 6,500 students with 80 percent of them earning their high school diploma.

I love this program. We live a few blocks away from the



**Sen. Gabbard with newly elected Honolulu City Councilmember for District 9, Augie T., at the Youth Challenge Academy Graduation Ceremony on Nov. 25, 2020.**

Kalaeloa Campus, and even though their reveille bugling begins at 4:30am, I have yet to receive any complaints from neighboring constituents. Also, thankfully, I'm not a light sleeper. 😊

## Recent Stabbing in Kapolei

You might have seen me on the [KHON2 news on November 23](#) speaking about an attempted carjacking and stabbing that occurred in Kapolei. The incident took place on



**Sen. Gabbard spoke with KHON2 on Nov. 23, 2020, cautioning people to be especially aware of their surroundings during the holidays.**

November 20 in the parking lot fronting Home Depot along Kamokila Blvd. where Panda's Express and Remax are located. The 36-year old suspect was fortunately apprehended by HPD and charged with attempted murder. With the loss of jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic, people are getting more and more

desperate. Please be safe when you're out and about. Check your surroundings getting in and out of your car. Focus and don't be distracted by your phone or other things.

## Holiday Party for Keiki and Families in Foster Care

I'll be participating in Family Programs Hawai'i's 22nd Annual Holiday Party for Keiki and Families in Foster Care on December 6 at the former Kmart Kapolei parking lot. I'll assist with passing out prizes and food boxes to foster kids and their families. Up to 350 families are expected to participate in this event from 9am to 1pm that day.

As background, Family Programs Hawai'i is a 501(c)(3) social service agency dedicated to strengthening children and families involved in the child welfare system through high quality prevention and support services. Family Programs Hawai'i provides services to prevent children from entering foster care; supports children and families already involved in the foster care system; and assists youth transitioning out of foster care. They have approximately 70 employees in their office located in Honolulu and a receiving home in Mā'ili. They strengthen youth and families in the child welfare system through high quality preventive, supportive, and transition services.



## Wastewater Alternatives and Innovations (WA`I) Working on Cesspool Solutions

I participated in a Zoom meeting with Stuart Coleman, Executive Director of Wastewater Alternatives and Innovations (WA`I) and his team on November 24. WA`I is an environmental nonprofit dedicated to reducing sewage pollution and restoring healthy watersheds by providing innovative, affordable and eco-friendly solutions to waste and wastewater management. They have partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and are searching for solutions to our cesspool problem and working with top leaders at the University of Hawai`i Manoa's Water Resources Research Center, the University of Hawai`i Sea Grant College Program, the University of Hawai`i Community Colleges and the Hawai`i Department of Health-Wastewater Branch.

There are more than 88,000 cesspools in our state, which discharge 53 million gallons of untreated wastewater into our groundwater and surface waters each day. *(Yes, you should reread the previous sentence!!!)* The Legislature passed Act 125 in 2017 to mandate the conversion of all cesspools by 2050. The state's Cesspool Conversion Working Group is now figuring out a plan to upgrade all those cesspools over the next 30 years. The good news is that UH announced on November 15 that the first state-of-the-art incineration toilet in Hawai`i that uses no water and produces no sewage is now in operation on Moku o Lo'e (Coconut Island) in Kaneohe Bay at the UH Manoa's Hawai`i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB). This is a proof-of-concept project for reducing sewage pollution from environmentally damaging cesspool systems in Hawai`i and is a collaboration between HIMB, Wastewater Alternatives and Innovations (WAI) and Cinderella Eco Group. I'll be working with WA`I on legislation in 2021 to help us make progress on cesspool conversion in the coming years.

## Groves at Kapolei Coming to Makakilo

White Label Ventures LLC is planning to develop an agricultural cluster development on 85 acres of land in Makakilo called the Groves at Kapolei. The project would be located at the end of Kulihi Street. The Groves at Kapolei would be the state's first true working farm development, transforming a dry, barren ridge into a viable food source, providing produce to local markets, supporting the state's effort to improve food security here in our islands. The project would have 50.5 acres in agricultural use and 32 to 35

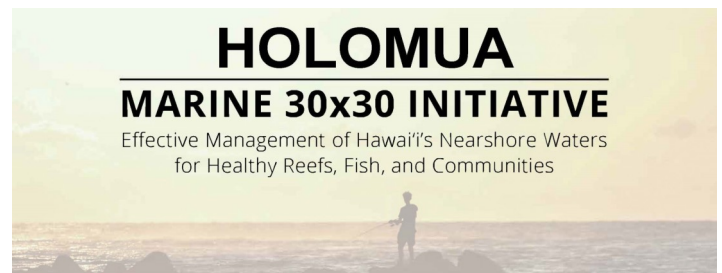
farm dwellings. They plan to grow citrus, avocado, dragon fruit, turmeric, mango, and coconut. They would use only organic pesticides and herbicides and will have a farm stand and small amphitheater. Construction of the first phase of the project will begin in the 4th quarter of 2021.

## Supporting the National Goal of Protecting 30% of Lands and Ocean By 2030

I signed on to a letter, along with legislators around the country, sponsored by the [National Caucus of Environmental Legislators](#), on November 16 expressing my support for establishing a national goal of protecting 30% of lands and ocean by 2030 (30x30). This is consistent with the [Hawai`i Sustainability Initiative](#) launched by Governor Ige in 2017, which includes commitments to protect 30% of priority watersheds by 2030 and to effectively manage 30% of our nearshore ocean waters by 2030.

According to the NCEL letter, "Nature is indispensable to the health and prosperity of every community. We depend on our forests and streams for clean drinking water and clean air. Our lands are a place of cultural, ecological, and sacred resources that have sustained humanity for generations. Our ocean supplies wild fish that feed our country and provide endless wonder and enjoyment. Our rivers, mountains, and deserts are where families unplug and reconnect. Our parks, open spaces, beaches, trails, and public lands enrich communities' quality of life and power America's outdoor recreation economy. Our very existence depends upon the survival of a rich diversity of natural life.

Achieving 30x30 will require an ambitious and inclusive movement that engages local, state, national and Tribal leaders, as well as private landowners, as part of the solution. I support a national goal of protecting and restoring 30% of land and ocean by 2030 and commit to taking action now in our communities and states to reach it. Our nation is at a pivotal moment. We cannot continue down the current path and watch as our nation's land, water, and biodiversity disappears. Instead, we pledge to confront America's nature crisis and pursue a national goal of 30x30. Together, we can and must protect nature for generations to come."



## Fuel Tank Advisory Committee Meeting



**Sen. Gabbard attended a Zoom meeting of the Fuel Tank Advisory Committee on Oct. 30, 2020.**

I attended a virtual meeting of the Fuel Tank Advisory Committee on October 30. The Committee was set up in 2016 by Act 244, which mandates a permanent, “advisory committee that shall study issues related to leaks of field-constructed underground fuel storage tanks at the Red Hill Fuel Storage Facility, Kuahua Peninsula, Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands, Hickam Pol Annex, and Schofield barracks Military Reservation.” I’m a member of the Committee as the Chair of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee. The impetus for the creation of the Committee was the 2014 leak of 27,000 gallons of fuel at the Red Hill Fuel Storage Facility operated by the Navy.

The Red Hill facility houses 20 underground storage tanks that are over 75 years old and hold over 200 million gallons of fuel only 100 feet above the primary aquifer serving people from Moanalua to Maunaloa. A Navy study from earlier this year shows that the Red Hill tanks have a 27.6% chance of leaking 30,000 gallons of fuel every year. In 2015, the Navy signed an agreement with the EPA and Department of Health called the Administrative Order on Consent aimed at holding the Navy accountable for upgrading these fuel tanks by 2037 or requiring them to close them down. On September 9, 2019, the Navy selected the least expensive, least protective option for upgrading the tanks, including applying a thin epoxy coating to the inside of the tanks and committing to “double-wall equivalency” or removal of the fuel around 2045. I was pleased that on October 27 the EPA and DOH rejected the U.S. Navy’s plan to address the Red Hill fuel tanks, saying the proposal failed to demonstrate how it will prevent and mitigate future fuel releases over O’ahu’s primary drinking water aquifer. At the October 30 Committee meeting, the Navy thankfully reversed their do-nothing approach and have now committed to design and construct a double wall tank prototype at Red Hill by 2024.

## Hawaiian Humane Society Ewa Campus

DR Horton announced on March 31, 2015 that it donated five acres of land to the Hawaiian Humane Society for a

new facility and dog park in Ewa. The facility will be located on Fort Weaver Rd. about a half-mile from Queens Hospital – West O’ahu at the corner of Old Ft. Weaver Rd. It will cost about \$9 million to build and will have about 25 employees. The Humane Society received a \$300,000 state Grant-in-Aid from the Legislature in 2018 to assist with the construction of the project. I received the following update from Steph Kendrick, a Public Policy Advocate for the Humane Society, in November on this important project in our community.

- ◆ Construction drawings are 100 percent complete and under final review with their architects.
- ◆ Their mass grading permit and environmental assessment are in process.
- ◆ They recently received a much-appreciated donation of \$1 million of fill-dirt from DR Horton. This will allow us to raise their site to the necessary level to mitigate drainage and flooding concerns.
- ◆ Their building permit application is expected to be submitted late this month or early next month.
- ◆ Groundbreaking is scheduled for March of 2021, pending permit approval and the timing of the soil donation.
- ◆ Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2022, with the campus opening to the public late 2022 or early 2023.

As this effort proceeds, they will be opening their first ever temporary satellite location in January, 2021, in recognition of the immediate need for services in Central and West O’ahu. In order to get boots on the ground as soon as possible, the Hawaiian Humane Society’s Board has released six months of funding for a temporary location at the Filipino Community Center. Called Pet Kōkua by the Hawaiian Humane Society, the location will focus on meeting the needs of low income and homeless residents who are struggling to care for their pets.



**Anna Neubauer, president and CEO of the Hawaiian Humane Society . (Photo credit: Star Advertiser)**