



HAWAI'I HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hale o nā Luna Maka'āinana

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE KIM COCO IWAMOTO DONATES SEVEN-UNIT BUILDING TO RESIDENTIAL YOUTH SERVICES & EMPOWERMENT, TAKING A BOLD STAND AGAINST YOUTH HOMELESSNESS ON O'AHU

The property provides 12 new beds to Residential Youth Services & Empowerment's (RYSE) Housing Portfolio



Honolulu, Hawai'i – Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE) founded in 2018, received its single largest personal gift in the form of a seven-unit apartment building in the Ala Moana area. State Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto (D-25 Ala Moana, Kaka'ako, Downtown) has owned and managed this building in her district since 2004.

The 2,572 sq. ft., two-story building, comprised of one four-bedroom unit, two two-bedroom units, and four one-bedroom units, will serve as a vital resource for stability, offering access to

RYSE's comprehensive services, including education and employment support and mental health resources.

"We are deeply grateful for this generous donation, which represents more than just a building—it's a new home, a safe and welcoming place for up to 12 young people who would otherwise be unsheltered," said Carla Houser, Executive Director of RYSE. "Kim Coco has supported our mission since RYSE's inception."

Youth homelessness remains a pressing issue in Hawai'i, where the high cost of living and limited affordable housing inventory often leave vulnerable youth without a place to call home. In 2024 the Point in Time Count documented 217 youth, ages 18-24, experiencing homelessness on Oahu. This donation directly addresses that gap and aligns with RYSE's ongoing efforts to expand access to shelter and services across our island.

"Earlier this year, the Ala Moana - Kaka'ako Neighborhood Board unanimously adopted a resolution to support 'the establishment of a Kauhale and Comprehensive Community Support Initiative' in our district; their courageous compassion affirmed my decision to make this gift," explained Iwamoto.

The seven-unit building, which will be called Hale Koko, complements RYSE's continuum of care which includes transitional housing, outreach programs, counseling and mentoring, life-skills training and case management and advocacy. In 2024 alone, RYSE provided shelter for 107 youth on the island, with an additional 74 youth between the ages of 14 and 24 utilizing the drop-in services provided at the Kailua shelter. This new resource ensures even more young lives are impacted.

Iwamoto adds, "the timing is important for me as a new Representative: I hope the legislature will adopt good government reforms this session and tighten rules on financial conflicts of interests; I want to be sure I can vote for bills that increase housing subsidies to prevent homelessness - without profiting from these allocations as a landlord."

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