



Hello Everyone and Welcome to Fall!!!!

For most of us, school has started in some variation, whether it be online, face to face, or a hybrid of both. This unsettling year has continued with many changes and unanswered questions. During this time of healing and transition, we hope that everyone finds the power of our collective voices to overcome these COVID challenges and move forward with a positive attitude toward a new future. By being patient and kind to everyone, including self, we can work to keep good health for ourselves and our loved ones, and we can continue to grow in our learning.

Helen Keller said, *"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."* We decided to follow Helen's lead with this newsletter by focusing on what various people are doing to continue learning and finding comfort in each day.

"Make It" is the theme of this edition. It seemed like a perfect time to share what some of our families and friends in Hawai'i and across the Pacific have been creating with their time. Folks have been making a variety of things, from face masks to gardens. One has made music playing drums; some have made memories through daily walks. You'll read about kids across the Pacific learning on iPads, and others being active by swinging, having fun at the beach, and doing construction activities. Additionally, you can read about what PBUCE is doing in the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas and meet Deaf-Blind advocate Keao Wright, who shares her experiences at the Helen Keller Center.

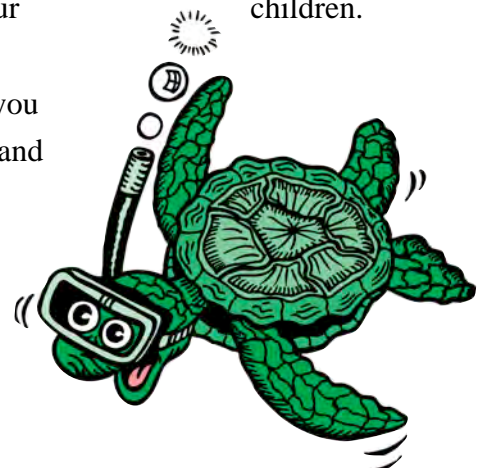
One common thread in these stories is "resiliency". With a definition that includes "hardy" and "elastic", resiliency is demonstrated through strength in these ever changing times, which these stories reflect. These photos and articles were submitted by people wanting to help create a community of support for others facing similar challenges. We hope you find at least one relevant idea to use and share that will make a new possibility of learning and joy for you and your children. *"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"*.

Read on and enjoy! Please remember that we welcome all ideas you might want to share. Contact me at mellanie@hawaii.edu Your thinking and ideas are appreciated!

Mahalo to those who contributed to this newsletter!

Megan Andrade
Carol Bigelow
Stella Chang
Randee Golden
Roberta Hoeffler
Joanne Hopper
Rosalind Kia
Mellanie Lee

Esmerelda Santos Lomeli
Liz Martin
Sandy Scanlan
Evalani Siquig
Kiriko Takahashi
Jennifer Tarnay
Keao Wright



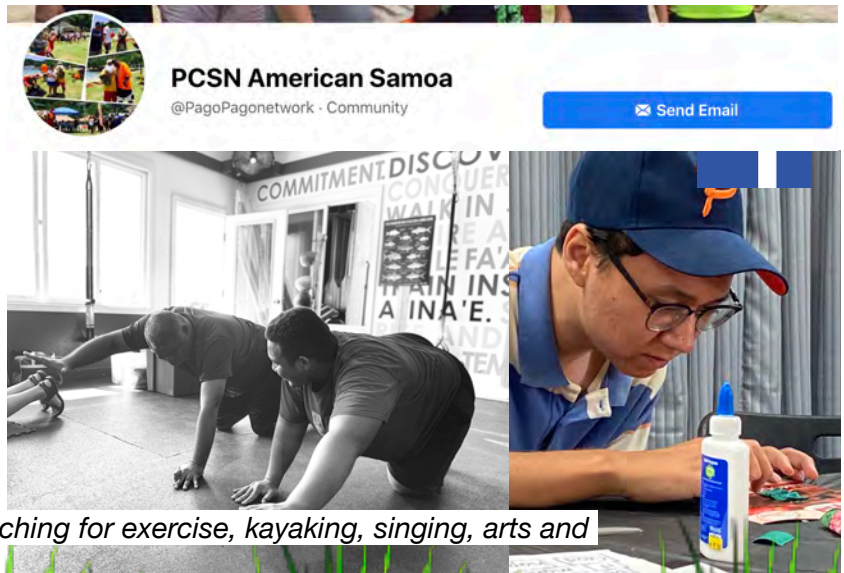
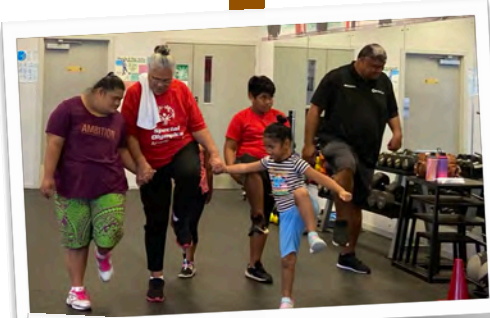
PCSN SUMMER CAMP

by Sandy Scanlan

The Parents of Children with Special Needs Network (PCSN) is a parent to parent support group that does not wait for agencies or others to create activities for their children with special needs. For the third year now, this group has conducted a summer camp for their children and adult children with special needs to bring enrichment to the lives of their kids and support to the parents and caregivers.

This year, with COVID19 restrictions, the kids/adult kids were especially eager to get out of the house, so camp consisted of a 2 hour activity each weekday for the full month of August. Activities included Champions Club youth group designed for children/adult children with special needs; STEAM day with our local STEAM program; Fun Fitness at the ASCC Community College Wellness Center; culinary arts and geography conducted by one of our own; kayaking and ocean safety with South Pacific Water Sports; Tennis with the American Samoa Tennis Association summer fun program; swimming at the Sadie's by the Sea pool; and the Barstow Public Library for reading, arts and crafts, and songs.

For those who have graduated from school, we will continue on with our Champions Club every Monday, Fun Fitness at the ASCC Wellness Center every Wednesday, and swim class every Friday at the Pala Lagoon Swimming Center once repairs are complete. We are also hopeful to enjoy traditional crafts and siva with our local TAOA program when their new building is open. For more



Images depict group activities: dancing, stretching for exercise, kayaking, singing, arts and

KEEP IT SIMPLE ~ USE WHAT YOU HAVE!

By Liz Martin, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Hawai'i

This student joined my class in the second half of the year. There was no time to order equipment, and I knew very little about her vision. I needed to keep her stimulated and learning. She spent quite a lot of time on the floor, so I wanted to give her something to explore and play with immediately.

Would something with illumination and high contrast have been better? Yes, I'm sure it would have! Had she not transferred out quickly, I would have designed something specifically to suit her visual needs.



Often we stress the importance of a Little Room or a Cortical Vision Impairment (CVI) Sensory Booth (I like to call them cabanas). But don't hold off if you can't get or make one quickly. Get your child playing with whatever you have on hand.

Cut out the side of a box and hang things inside it. Hang things from hooks under a table. Repurpose a baby gym. You can even hang items from hooks right on a wall if you need to. The important thing is to keep your child from lying on the floor passively. Get those little hands and feet busy and learning.

Student playing in the sensory

Do you have an article, photo, or video that you would like to share with other professionals working in the Pacific with children who are deaf-blind? Send it to the Hawai'i & Pacific Deaf-Blind Project and we'll include it in a future newsletter.

Mahalo!



MINDFULNESS FOR CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

Many mindfulness activities can be adapted so that they are accessible for your child! Mindfulness activities can help your child better manage their stress, feel good mentally and physically, find new ways to relax, and it provides many, many more benefits.

Some tips for mindfulness activities are setting up the room for the maximum amount of comfort, removing distractions in the room, and creating an atmosphere that is calming. It is best to work your way up to doing long periods of mindfulness. Start with just a minute or two and work your way up. Find what is best for your child!

Apps for Mindfulness for Little Ones



Stop, Breathe & Think Kids (Free)



Moshi: Sleep and Mindfulness (Free)



Zen Studio Meditation for Kids (Free)



Kids Mindfulness Meditations (Free)



Feelu - Mindful, Relax For Kids (Free)



HOW TO GROW SOME PEACE OF MIND

By Evalani Squig (mother of our Mentor Shayleen Siquig)

The Covid 19 Pandemic has been a challenge for many people, including me. I worked at my job until March 18th, but by that time most Asian tourists were gone, and we were down to mainlanders and high anxiety. I'm fortunate I was able to collect unemployment when my work stopped.

As I already have anxiety/PTSD issues, available information in the past few months has not done much to ease my heart. More challenges began in early March, like crazy lines at Costco. A trip to the grocery store ended with no onions.....the store never runs out of onions. Family and friends in other parts of the world were going through extreme changes, and my nerves went kinda crazy.

While everyone started hoarding toilet paper, I started collecting things, too. I may have gone just a little overboard- my collections were Castile soaps, alcohol, bandages, flour, sugar, salt, meats and seeds... I started planting right after that! I went back to my source, and figured out what I can do... Well, not be hungry sounded good!

I've gone through 4 truckloads of compost, and a truck and a half of zoodoo- composted animal waste from the zoo. Trump allotted me a mental health budget as I see it, and you can't wait until you're hungry to plant food.

I also bought fabric planting beds, a drip irrigation system, and lots of seeds. And then I started planting... First, I ripped up all the snake plants and lau'ae from the front of my porch. Then I laid weed block and compost. I started with herbs.....mints, basil, oregano, thyme, rue, lemon balm, lavender.... there's more tucked in there... Then the veggies were planted. I just finished pulling most of my tomatoes... we had lots!

Melva, my youngest daughter who is years old, has been a lot more interested now that we've harvested things. She's more interested in some real stuff like pollinators, pests, beneficial insects, and composting.

I'm pretty sure our neighborhood will have food. My furlough garden has eased tension. All of us now have projects of our own, and we get to enjoy the results of pretty flowers, veggies, and food for our table!





KEEPING HANNAH BUSY, INSIDE AND @UT

By Joanna Hopper (Hannah's (Hanny) mom)

Aloha Everyone,

I wanted to share some of the ways that my daughter Hannah, who we call Hanny, spends her time. We try to make sure she gets to be outside as well as do different activities while at home. Here are some photos with captions to help you see what we do.

In the evenings, Hanny uses her iPad often to FaceTime with me (often from just across the room!) She can call me any time she wants to. She also facetimes with her Uncle and a few friends.

For quiet time in the evenings, Hannah uses several different applications on her iPad. She uses a coloring book app, and a game called "Cut the Rope". She also likes an app that's like a doll house where she can move the members of the family to different rooms and they can do different things. One of her favorite apps is an app that dresses all different kinds of people in all different kinds of clothes, patterns and costumes. And, of course, she has a selection of movies to choose from on her Apple TV app.

Thompson Road is a gorgeous scenic walk out in Keokea that begins where Grandma's Coffee House is on Kula Highway in Kula. To walk from Grandma's all the way to the end of Thompson Road and back is 3 miles.

There are Lots of friendly people and dogs that also walk that road and Hanny really enjoys it!

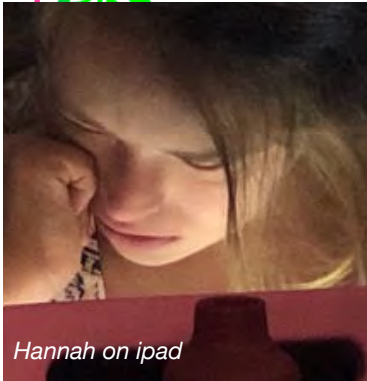
Baby Beach is in Sprecklesville off the Hana Highway. Turn onto Nonohe - follow that to the right and take a left on Kealakai Place. Right now it's difficult to find parking there as the beach parking is closed. However, it's so worth the effort as it's a very safe place for children and people with special needs to swim. There's a large breakwater running parallel to the beach, so it's always quite calm in there. There are often Honu inside the breakwater or on the beach. Cautions: There is often a current in there, particularly at high tide though its fine in the shallows. Also, as you face the ocean, there are places on the left side of the beach where it is over our head - again - particularly at high tide. Hannah Loves to swim there and hang out on the beach, play in the sand, and sit with the Honu!!\

Hannah also loves to spend time at home building things with her wooden blocks including towers, castles and little villages.

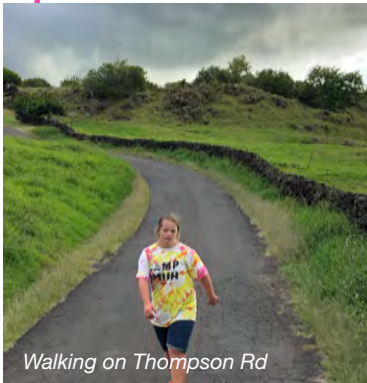
Thank you - I hope all this will indeed help others to find things to do out and about during Covid.

Blessings to you all!

Joanne and Hannah



Hannah on iPad



Walking on Thompson Rd



Sunning with the Honu

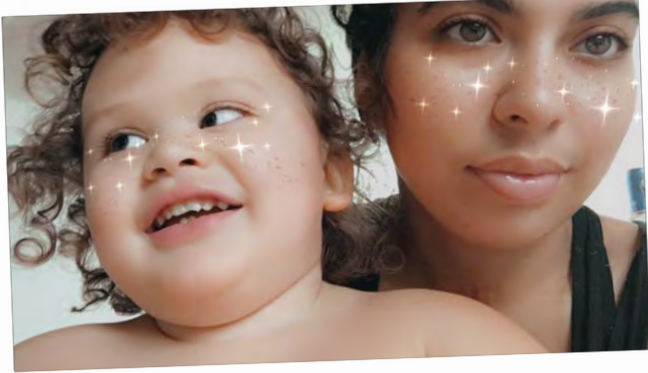


Building with Jenga pieces



TIPS FROM A MOM @N HELPING YOUR BLIND TODDLER

By Megan Andrade



Aloha Kakou,

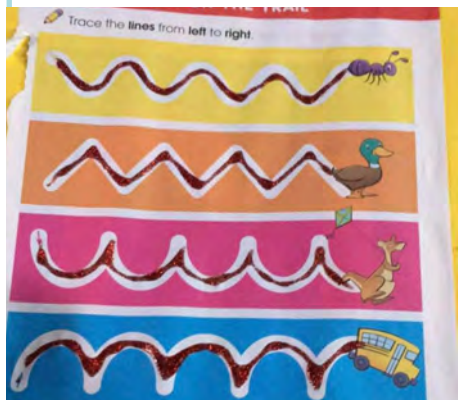
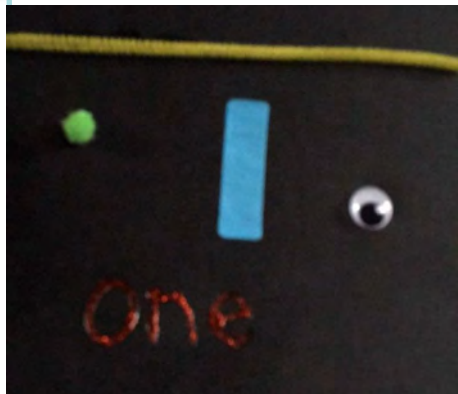
My name is Megan Andrade, and I am the mother of a three-year-old child who is deafblind. His name is Kainoa, but goes by Sonny. His diagnosis is ONH (Optic Nerve Hypoplasia). I am also legally blind with a moderate hearing loss.

I'm writing this article to share tips and ideas I came up with and found on the Internet with other parents and guardians of children with disabilities. My hope is to help other people with any challenges they may come across.

So, first things first, especially if you have an infant to toddler age child. You want to remember that school isn't always about teaching straight up Math or English. What I witness as a mother is so that many parents jump over all the baby steps that need to be worked with first before getting into what we are all dying for our children to learn. It takes a lot of patience and time for a visually impaired child to really process new things. Introducing activities to promote sensory skills, memories, motor skills, language and more is a slow process.

With the COVID situation going on in this world, many people are having a harder time. I, myself, discovered there aren't many resources to help families with toddlers with vision loss. For example, it's hard to figure out where to start with homeschooling without the help of a therapist and teacher. I was so bummed out that the exact day my son was to attend his first day of preschool, everything got shut down and put into lockdown. That is when the creative work began for me.

I got flash cards, coloring books, many color pens (markers with different smells) and paints. Like many of you might know, we can never find anything in stores made for vision impaired kids, at least here in Hawai'i. I spent hours in Target looking through supplies and busting my brains to figure out what I can do to make the perfect activities for my son's education.



For one project, I bought alphabet flashcards in large print and some glitter glue. What you want to do is get your toddler used to touching different textures. I traced the outline of the alphabets with the glitter glue. After a few hours to dry, the glitter turned to hard raised lines on each letter. Your child doesn't need to learn the actual alphabets, as the focus is getting used to touching the raised lines. The good thing is that once they are ready to learn the alphabet, you will have the cards made and the child will be confident in touching the raised lines.

I will be writing more articles to share more ideas and activities I do regularly with Sonny, so keep an eye out. Just remember that your toddler is still young, and these kids are processing their motor skills and overcoming a lot of sensory issues.

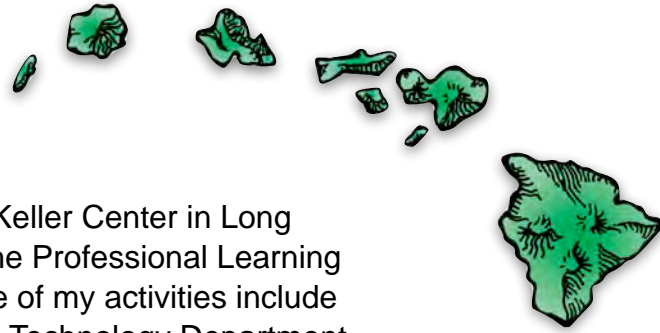
There is no limit to what you can try or timeline for your child's growth. Do not let anyone tell you what your child should be doing. The biggest thing I regret is during the first year of Sonny's life, I was listening to people who put me down as a mother, making comments where my child should be at. Let your child grow and learn at their own pace and give them time and all your love. You're doing great!

SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF THE DEAF AND BLIND

By: Keao Wright



In November 2019, I went to the Helen Keller Center in Long Island New York for an internship with the Professional Learning and Leadership Institute Program. Some of my activities include things like working as an instructor in the Technology Department teaching deaf-blind students technology. I taught students how to use the iPhone, braille displays, and computer software.



However, I wasn't only participating on the teaching side. I was also a student for a short time. I attended classes such as independent living, mobility, creative art, technology, and job training. I was almost finished with my internship when the Coronavirus hit in the middle of March. Unfortunately, I had to head home to paradise without completing the program. We are all facing obstacles during this difficult time. The inability to go out to the beach, malls, doctor's office, work and doing other recreational activities. However, there are some positive sides to being quarantined at home. At home I can attend virtual concerts on Face-book such as Fiji's birthday party and Pau Hana Fridays with Maoli.

Other virtual events I have attended are the graduation class of 2020 show for Maui High School, virtual party's and meetings on Zoom, a virtual church service every Sunday, and I even got to meet a talking book narrator from the American Printing House for the Blind. His name is Gary Tipton, who is not only a narrator, but he is also a singer, actor, and artist.

Even though I am back in Hawaii, I'm still participating virtually with the Helen Keller Center in their virtual classes. I attended classes such as emergency and disaster planning, taste of technology, and banking and budgeting. The Emergency and Disaster Planning class was especially important, due to the current pandemic crisis we are all experiencing. The Taste of Technology class taught me about what kinds of devices are available for the deaf-blind community. Lastly the Banking and Budgeting class taught me different ways to manage my money and save. Despite my trip being cut short by the coronavirus, my overall experience at the Helen Keller Center is one I will never forget. I learned a lot there by being able to teach deaf-blind students and take classes alongside them. I have made lifelong friendships and hope to go back soon. Thank you all for reading about my experience and what I am doing during this quarantine.

WALKING IN @AHU

by Stella, Selina's mom



Since the stay at home order in late March, Selina and I have made a new daily routine of taking walks in the late afternoon. We used to walk just two to three days a week, but as the pandemic progressed and we were unable to go places, we found walking in the neighborhood a safe and good outdoor activity for our body and mind. Selina enjoys seeing people walking their dogs. We look at trees and flowers along the sidewalks. One time we were half way on our route and a passing shower came. We turned around and ran home laughing. I think we will keep this daily walk, even after the pandemic is over.



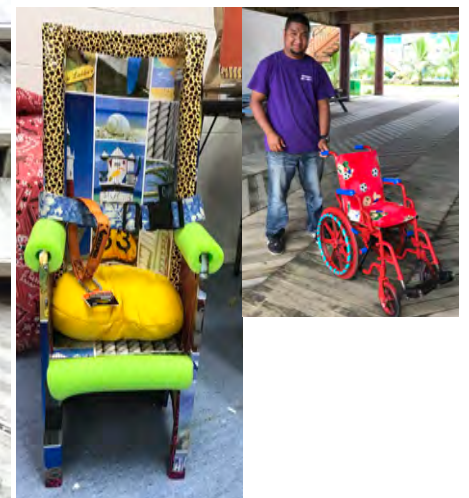
NSSP SCHOLARS MAKE GOODNESS!

Students in the Severe Disabilities Advanced Certification (BAEE) Program, which is called *Navigating Student Success In the Pacific* (NSSP) have been makers for the last 3 years! NSSP is a collaboration between the College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) and University of Hawai‘i

Manoa, Center on Disability Studies (UHM-CDS). This program is in its fourth and final year.

Students have been spending their summers in Majuro taking courses. When classes are finished, they return to their home islands of Ebeye, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap to do their practicum and practice what they learned.

Throughout the summers, students have been learning to make and build adaptations for helping children to walk and sit. They’ve also learned to create toys from locally available materials. Here are some photos of the “goodness” they have been making for their students.



VIDEO SERIES: THE BLOSSOMING JOURNEY OF A DEAF-BLIND GIRL



The Hawai'i & Pacific Deaf-Blind Project (HPDBP) is pleased to present a video resource for those working in a classroom with youth who are Deaf-Blind. We have been using them internally and now would like to share. These short videos were made in collaboration with a Deaf WorldTeach Teacher who lived in the Marshall Islands teaching at the Majuro Deaf Education Center.

This video series, The Blossoming Journey of a Deaf-Blind Girl: Kristiann Kalles, has 6 parts:

- 1/6 The Story of Kristiann Kalles
- 2/6 Making Your Classroom Accessible
- 3/6 Expressive Prompts
- 4/6 Inspiring Friendship
- 5/6 ASL 1-5 Number Story

6/6 Message from KK's Mom

Here is the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSuBnkF_5ig

We hope you will enjoy and would love to hear your thoughts. You can email us at mellani@hawaii.edu.



"I Am Kamakoa" is the first in a series of interviews of Deaf-Blind individuals by the Hawai'i & Pacific Deaf-Blind Project, this video features Kamakoa Almasin of Maui, Hawai'i. Spend a few minutes with us to meet this incredibly well spoken young man as he explains about Alström syndrome, his vision and hearing loss, and more. This video can be viewed on the HPDBP website.



Hawai'i & Pacific Deaf-Blind
Project

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PBUCE WELCOMES 14 UCEDD AMBASSADORS AND TRAINEES

By Kiriko Takahashi

Pacific Basin University Center for Excellence (PBUCE) Ambassador and Trainee program is a 10-month interdisciplinary program to help train professionals and students to gain skills and knowledge necessary to work with individuals with disabilities and become leaders in various fields. Ambassadors are those who are professionals who hold at least a Bachelor's degree and have been working in various fields. Trainees are students who are pursuing Associate's, Bachelor's, and/or Master's degree. Common to both Ambassadors and Trainees are that they have a desire to continue learning about, supporting, and working with individuals with disabilities, with special attention to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

In May, we had over 40 applications and selected 14 individuals (8 from the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands & 6 from American Samoa) to participate as the first cohort of UCEDD Ambassadors and Trainees. As part of the program, they received a scholarship to take an undergraduate course from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. They successfully completed an intensive 6-weeks summer online course offered from the Center on Disability Studies (DIS 380: Foundations in Disability & Diversity). The course has given them a foundational knowledge on disability studies (e.g. models of disability, people first language, etc.), policies and laws such as Americans with Disability Act and Conventions on the Rights of People with Disabilities, issues and challenges often faced by people with disabilities, and some solutions towards inclusion. During the next several months, the Ambassadors and Trainees will build upon what they have learned to explore issues in their own community and be involved in seminars, research and service learning.

For more information about PBUCE UCEDD Ambassador and Trainee Program, please contact Kiriko Takahashi, kiriko@hawaii.edu





SELF CARE AND GLAMMING IT UP DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

By Esmeralda Y. Santos Lomeli

Covid-19 May have ruined my social life but it didn't stop me from searching for my passions. During these past couple of months, my health decided to act up. I suffer from Neurofibromatosis Type 2, a genetic disorder that's basically non cancerous tumors all over my spinal cord and brain. This disorder has taken away my vision on my left eye and has last left me with not much hearing. I have balance issues and I am very weak due to a lot of spinal cord surgeries, but I don't let those things define me.

Although, this has caused me to have a lot of hospital visits and a lot of exams, that doesn't stop me from practicing what I love, makeup and skincare. These two passions have always caught my attention since I was a little girl because I've been suffering from acne and other skin problems since I was a kid.

Makeup is a way to express yourself through art, which is why it brings me joy every time I pick up a makeup brush and start to play around and create my own masterpiece. My goal is to inspire those with disabilities because I know how frustrating it could get, feeling like you don't fit in. We're all beautiful in our own ways. I wear a prosthetic eye and I used to get frustrated because it didn't move or look like a real eye, but I was able to embrace it through makeup, making them look even.

Even though I can't go out like I used to, I'm glad I have control of how I can cope with these terrible times. I hope I inspire someone who's going through a difficult time and make them believe that you can feel beautiful no matter what the situation is. Our mental health is as important as our physical health. Don't let these crazy world events stop you from trying out new things and improving your skills doing something you love.



Image depicts skin care products and pampering tools.

- *Mint green bottle is a facial cleanser, the first thing you use before applying any other product.*
- *Orange little bottle is a serum, which brightens up your face and has vitamin C, which helps with darkness on your face from sunlight.*
- *Big blue bottle is a moisturizer, which helps to even out your skin and get it ready for other products without damaging the skin.*
- *Below that is a sunscreen (yellow cap). Sunscreens help with exposure and prevent acne, sunburn, and even wrinkles if you apply it everyday.*
- *The black capped container on the bottom is a moisturizer, too. I use it before I apply my makeup, since it's very strong so my skin won't get bad.*
- *The pink & blue little containers are lip balms. They help your lips not get dry and moisturizes them at the same time.*



Our staff and volunteers have always taken the cleanliness of the CSC office environment seriously, but with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we upped our cleaning game and immediately implemented various health and safety measures.

In response to community need, we cut up old shirts and sewed masks to make sure all members of the deaf-hard of hearing, and deaf-blind community had a face covering to help protect them from the virus. Eventually, we received donations so we could purchase a wider variety of material and ship masks out so no-one had to leave their home to pick it up.



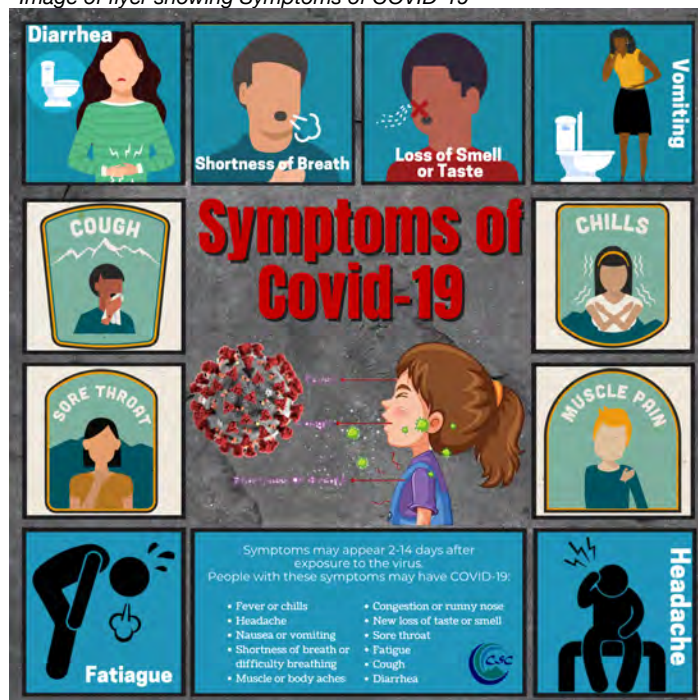
various images of material and masks sewn

We partnered with many local interpreters to ensure that important updates and articles were signed for the community and collaborated with Vibrant Hawaii to turn their book explaining the Coronavirus to children in ASL.



Video still from A little book about Coronavirus: ASL Edition

Image of flyer showing Symptoms of COVID-19



If you are looking for resources for your consumers in ASL and print format, please visit our website at www.csc-hawaii.org/coronavirus or follow us on Facebook at cschawaii.

Mahalo!

Announcements



Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity

@PacRimHawaii · Event

Contact Us

pacrim.hawaii.edu

Deaf Community

Featured Topic
Chair: Jennifer Tarnay

Pac Rim International Conference on Disability & Diversity
March 1 - 2, 2021

Jennifer Tarnay

Chair: Deaf Community

- Native Hawaiian
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Certified ASL-English Interpreter
- Passionate supporter of cultural and linguistic diversity
- Doctoral Student
- Yoga enthusiast

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March 1 - 2, 2021

Rosalind Kia

Co-Chair: Deaf Community

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- Certified American Sign Language Interpreter
- Parent Educator for Parents of Deaf Children
- Video Accessibility Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Braille Enthusiast

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March 1 - 2, 2021

Congratulations to Jennifer and Roz of the HPDBP who were selected to helm the Deaf Community portion of the 2021 Pac Rim Conference!!!

Mahalo to Myrna Medina, Family Specialist of California DeafBlind Services for your generous donations of Face Masks, shields, gloves and hand sanitizers. You know how to make a difference :)

MAHALO!



Mahalo and HUGE shout out to Randee Golden for her wonderful editing skills, you make us better!!!



Are you ready for some old-school Hawaiian music? Join a local girl who is deaf-blind, and listen to her amazing podcast on Friday's at 2 pm (HST) at <http://theglobalvoice.info:8000/broadband.m3u>



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*As always, we want to hear from you, so please feel free to email us
(mellanie@Hawaii.edu) or reach out on Facebook (Hawai'i & Pacific Deaf-Blind
Project and we will make sure to respond.*

We are migrating to a new listserv host, if you have not been receiving emails from us or would like to be included on our listserv please let us know, write [to:jtarnay@hawaii.edu](mailto:jtarnay@hawaii.edu) and we will happily add you.

Be safe and well and remember, we are here to provide information, connections, and support. Much love and strength to you and your loved ones! While times are changing, we remain committed to supporting you however we are able.

Mellanie, Jennifer, Roz, Stella, & Shayleen



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