

# SUCCESS STORY

## PILOT PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE FAMILY AWARENESS ON CANCER CAUSING CHEMICALS IN THE HOME

By Wanda Louis, RN

### Cancer Kine Tings Home Kit

#### SUMMARY

Cancer has affected everyone in some way or form. You likely have heard about the risk of cancer from smoking cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and vaping. Did you also know there are many chemicals in our homes that may increase the risk of acquiring cancer? Cancer in Native Hawaiians is one of the top health disparities.<sup>1</sup> Fran Drescher's Cancer Schmancer program was the inspiration for Hui Mālama Ola Nā 'Ōiwi to put a local twist on detoxing homes from harmful cancer-causing chemicals. At Hui Mālama the Cancer Kine Tings Home Detox Kit teaches, encourages, and brings awareness to the Hawai'i Island community one household at a time.

#### CHALLENGE

In 2020 it is estimated that there will be more than 1.8 million newly diagnosed cases of cancer in the United States and 6,800 new cases in the state of Hawai'i.<sup>2</sup> Native Hawaiians along with various Pacific Islanders are among the highest races diagnosed with cancer.<sup>3</sup> The goal of this pilot program was to bring awareness to Hawai'i families about the potentially harmful chemicals in their homes, ways to reduce their everyday exposure to toxins by making simple changes, and the dangers of vaping and using e-cigarettes.



Display table showcasing contents of Cancer Kine Tings Home Detox Kits

## INTERVENTION

The Cancer Kine Tings pilot program consisted of a home detox kit with an activity to engage the whole family. The kit consisted of a reusable bag and pamphlets for adults and children introducing the program, as well as step-by-step instructions on what chemicals to look for inside the home. Also included in the kits were checklists for room by room searches of products and hazardous chemicals in the products to identify. The age-specific children's checklist engaged the whole family, including pictures of items to look for and warning stickers to place on the identified toxic products. Healthier toxin-free cleaning product recipes and samples of these cleaners were provided in the bags. Lastly, family cancer education would not be complete if we did not include educational information on the risks of e-cigarettes/vaping, types of e-cigarettes and vape pens, and the State of Hawai'i Department of Health statistics on youth vaping in Hawai'i.

## RESULTS

Cancer Kine Tings Home Detox Kits provided age specific toxic chemical identification instructions for the entire family to do together in the home. One student shared that she did not realize how many hazardous chemicals she had in her home, stating the kit made her more aware of the toxic chemicals she purchased.

Another family member shared:

“

We did it as a family project going into each room following the checklist. After our niece passed away from a rare form of cancer, we started looking at ways we could spare the heartache of going through that kind of loss again. Cancer Kine Tings home detox did just that.

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Since the inception of Cancer Kine Tings, Hui Mālama Ola Nā 'Ōiwi gave out approximately 1,500 home detox bags throughout Hawai'i island from June 2019 to March 2020.

## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

Cancer Kine Tings started new opportunities to bring awareness of toxic chemicals in our homes. The COVID-19 pandemic currently challenges our face-to-face encounters to deliver these home kits to our community, but the pandemic will not stop this awareness project. Hui Mālama plans to continue to educate, encourage, and bring awareness to Hawai'i through the core value of kuleana, or responsibility, when caring for family. This kuleana aligns with the mission of Hui Mālama: to care for the mind, body, and spirit of the people of Hawai'i.

Wanda Louis, RN  
Community Health  
Educator/Coordinator  
wanda@hmono.org

Hui Mālama Ola Nā 'Ōiwi  
1438 Kīlauea Avenue  
Hilo, HI 96720

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