



IN THE NEWS

Helping our keiki reach for the stars

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Education is the most important path to achieving our dreams. However, accessing education hasn't been easy during this pandemic. Distance learning has challenged parents, kids, and teachers in a whole new way.

In our commitment to the families and keiki we serve, we have pivoted to best meet their learning needs. **More than 30 children live and study at our Women's & Family Shelter at Kaaahi Street.** While the debate continues about when in-person lessons will commence at public schools, our emergency shelter has become a learning space.

We have been diligent about following the CDC guidelines. In doing so, we have refrained from having all our school-age children together in one classroom setting. Instead, each family was provided with learning areas for their keiki, creating a dedicated and safe workspace for them to continue their education. Additions included tray tables, which are used as desks, and hotspots, to increase the WiFi speed in our family dorm. IHS staff also worked closely with school principals and the Hawaii State Department of Education's Homeless Liaisons to ensure each child had a device for online learning. Tech support and virtual tutoring

services are also provided by our staff as needed.

With new challenges come new opportunities. In previous semesters, we collaborated with Hawaii Pacific University (HPU) nursing students to provide preschool classes. However, this semester, we've taken a different approach to keep safety top-of-mind. Our **Early Learning Program** for ages 0-5 was born out of this new need.

HPU nursing students plan and lead a virtual program with families at our Women's & Family Shelter. During weekly one-hour sessions, parents are educated about their child's development and children are introduced to skills through activities that will prepare them for school.

The Early Learning Program also screens our 0-5 year olds for developmental delays using an assessment tool called Ages and Stages. This questionnaire provides reliable, accurate developmental and social-emotional screening for children. Parents can use this information to aid their children during distance learning and beyond.

With thanks to the generosity of our donors and community network, IHS continues to help our keiki reach for the stars. Thank you for walking with us on this journey. As always, your support means success for so many.

With gratitude,



Connie Mitchell

Connie Mitchell, MS, APRN, BC
Executive Director