



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

News Release

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

TED SAKAI
INTERIM DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 587-1288
Fax: (808) 587-1282

For Immediate Release: September 14, 2012

WOMEN INMATES PERFORM “PRISON MONOLOGUES” SERIES

Eighth journal of prison writings dedication also held

HONOLULU – Five Inmates from the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC) presented a special performance of “Prison Monologues” today in WCCC’s Maunawili Courtyard. “Prison Monologues” is a dramatic presentation of the women’s writings that they perform at schools and other organizations around Oahu.

The women are participants in the Prison Writing Project, which began nine years ago as a small creative writing class at WCCC.

“Using literature, poetry, biography, film and music, the students learn to write about themes in their own lives,” said Prison Writing Project Director Pat Clough. “They learn to address their fears, longings, anger and shame, using their own words to progress through self discovery and healing.”

Since 2003, classes have been held twice a week for both beginning writers and advanced students. Their stories are published in a journal of prison writings called *Hulihia*. The title, *Hulihia*, means “to transform.” In conjunction with the presentation of “Prison Monologues”, the group dedicated their eighth volume of *Hulihia* today.

“It’s very encouraging to see these women turn their stories of pain into stories of hope,” said Public Safety Director Ted Sakai. “They should feel proud for accomplishing an important step in their journey towards successful re-entry into their communities”.

In 2008, “Prison Monologues” was born when the creative writing classes hosted its first journal dedication in the prison facility’s courtyard. A board member of La Pietra Hawaii School for Girls was in the audience that day. Eight inmates from the creative writing class were invited to give a dramatic presentation of their writings at a Hawaii School for Girls assembly, which was featured in local television and print media.

-MORE-

The group currently consists of five inmates who have to meet rigorous criteria in order to be chosen for a place in the monologues cast. They must do well in the creative writing class, maintain good behavior at the facility, work hard on their presentation skills, and earn a status that allows them to leave the prison for performances.

“The creative writing class, through the voices of Prison Monologues, has become its own successful program,” said WCCC Warden Mark Patterson. “It’s transforming the lives of the women within WCCC”.

So far, the “Prison Monologues” has presented 30 performances at high schools and universities, and more recently at conferences on Oahu for youth services, parole officers, probation officers, mental health case workers, a coalition against domestic violence, and the `Aha Wahine Conference— a gathering of Native Hawaiian women from the community.

Next, “Prison Monologues” will travel to Maui in the near future.

###

For more information contact:

Toni Schwartz
Public Information Officer
Department of Public Safety
Office: 587-1358
Cell: 683-5507
Toni.E.Schwartz@hawaii.gov
<http://hawaii.gov/psd/>