



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## STAR LIGHT STAR BRIGHT CHRISTMAS PROGRAM REUNITES INCARCERATED WOMEN WITH THEIR CHILDREN

HONOLULU – Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu’s Prison Ministry hosted a special Christmas gathering at the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC) today.

For the past 16 years, the Diocese Prison Ministry has been working with the Department of Public Safety to help incarcerated moms connect with their children. This year, 77 children, 43 caregivers, and 37 female inmates participated in the Star Light, Star Bright Christmas event at the facility. 15 children, along with 10 guardians or caregivers, were flown in from the neighbor islands to participate in the holiday celebration. Donations also helped provide gifts for all of the children in the program.

There was an added surprise this year. Several young men from the Saint Louis School volunteered their time at the WCCC holiday event. They also brought 20 back packs filled with school supplies for the kids.

“This program is something the women look forward to as much as the children,” said WCCC Warden Eric Tanaka. “This special day re-unites, rekindles and maintains strong familial bonds during these most trying times”.

The Star Light, Star Bright program has grown from home delivery of gifts to the children to a family gathering at the prison. Aside from lasting memories, there was a visit from Santa Claus, games, holiday season activities and even a parting gift baskets for the caregivers filled with toiletries and other household needs.

The Star Light Star Bright party made its first début at the WCCC in 2010. 2012 was the first year that neighbor island children and their caregivers were flown to Oahu to attend the Christmas party.

The Star Light, Star Bright program relies on donations. That money helps the diocese fly families from the neighbor islands to Oahu, and cover meals and lodging at St. Stephen Diocesan Center. Star Light, Star Bright also provides Christmas gifts and “care baskets” with non-perishable food and household items for families unable to make it to the Christmas party.

For more information on how you can help, contact Walter Yoshimitsu at (808) 203-6735, [wyoshimitsu@rcchawaii.org](mailto:wyoshimitsu@rcchawaii.org); or Paulette Vernay at (808) 203-6722, [pvernay@rcchawaii.org](mailto:pvernay@rcchawaii.org).

The additional partners who contributed to this program include: the Knights of Columbus, Pua Foundation, Queen Liliuokalani Trust, ACT Resilient and St. John Vianney Church.

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