



## **JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

### **KEIKI O KA 'ĀINA FAMILY LEARNING CENTERS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **KID'S DAY AT THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CORRECTIONAL CENTER HELD TO SUPPORT THE CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED WOMEN**

HONOLULU – Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers hosted a Kid's Day this afternoon at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) to bring incarcerated moms and their children together to celebrate Mother's Day. 30 inmates and 50 children participated in this year's event.

WCCC has partnered with Keiki O Ka 'Āina Family Learning Centers (KOKA) to hold Kid's Day since December, 2005. The time is used by mothers and children to interact in a positive setting, within a prison environment, through food, games, crafts and activities.

“Keeping parents and children connected can really help ensure that the women never return to prison,” says KOKA Executive Director Momi Akana. “Children worry about their mothers and what is happening to them while they are away. Being together and having fun in this setting helps to reassure them that mom is ok. Research shows keeping the family connected during incarceration is good for both the children and their parents. It also helps to reduce anxiety, reducing children's mental health challenges and can help parents' successfully transition back home.”

While incarcerated, mothers were able to spend some positive time with their keiki, playing, hugging, talking and eating within the 3-1/2 hours allowed. They also engaged in specially designed games, made a craft together, and played volleyball and football with their moms. An early education area was provided with books, blocks, and playdough.

“The women and their children need this quality time together to strengthen bonds and mend relationships,” said WCCC Warden Eric Tanaka. “Having this important visit during the Mother's Day weekend makes it even more special for them. We appreciate all of our community partners, like Keiki O Ka 'Āina, who devote hundreds of hours organizing these family visits”.

“Strengthening families is a cornerstone of Keiki O Ka ‘Aina and this event is one that is near and dear to our hearts. We applaud WCCC as a leader in making efforts to keep families connected,” added KOKA Executive Director Akana.

31 community volunteers spent their Saturday at the facility making sure the women and their children had a good time. A select group of WCCC inmates’ prepped, bar-b-que’d and served the lunch. Bake-A-Blessing Outreach Ministry from Inspire Church in Waikele provided enough cupcakes for the moms and kids, as well as the entire prison staff working today. The Laulima Giving Program donated toys for this special event, and keiki were allowed to choose 2-3 items to take home at the end of the day.

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**About Keiki o ka ‘Āina Family Learning Center**

The Mission of Keiki O Ka `Āina Family Learning Centers (KOKA-FLC) is to *Educate Children, Strengthen Families, Enrich Communities and Perpetuate Culture*. We fulfill our mission by communicating the vital importance of education, advocating for literacy, learning and life readiness, supporting parents as the first and best teacher, and empowering families to undertake leadership roles in their communities. All of this is done within the context of culture-based education and family engagement (CBE.FE). More information at [www.koka.org](http://www.koka.org)

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