

'Aha Makua Youth Event 2015 Youth Reflections

The Youth program at the 'Aha Pae'Aina was life-changing for me. I was able to meet new people and create new friendships with them. We volunteered at the UCC transition house where we helped clean up the surroundings of the house. This allowed me to lend a helping hand to those people who needed it. I was more than glad to assist my services. This program also allowed us to experience the island of O'ahu. All of the special events allowed us to bond and make new memories. The workshops at the 'Aha Pae'Aina taught me many things. I must forgive myself and others for me to have freedom physically, mentally and emotionally. Prison is not a place of punishment but a place of healing. We are all able to transform into what God wants us to be. I believe God has brought us all together for these past few days for a reason and for that I am grateful. Thank you to the Conference for giving my friends and me this opportunity that showed us another perspective on life.

- Striesand G., First United Protestant Church, Hilo

The 'Aha Pae'aina was a great experience. I learned so many things from so many different people. One of the things I learned about was transformation. The keynote speaker(s) from the Pū'ā Foundation were so awesome. There were people from WCCC and they talked to us, shared dances, and music. They told us their stories and so the word became flesh. We got to see how they were transformed by God. They were transformed through love and forgiveness. In order to move forward, it's necessary to forgive. This is important for us to know so that whenever there is trauma in our lives, we are able to address it and keep progressing. I am so thankful for the opportunities to attend these kinds of events so that I am able to grow in my faith.

-Laura Y., UCC-Judd St., Honolulu

The 'Aha Pae'Aina has been very informational. I have now learned that trauma of any kind can be transformed into something new... something different. That's important because you can move forward and forgive yourself and others after the mistakes you've made. I met many new people at the 'Aha and at the 'Aha Youth Event and now, those strangers have turned into good friends. I am planning on coming again as a youth to the 194th 'Aha Pae'Aina. It has been a fun three days!

-Iain T., Church of the Crossroads, Honolulu

The most important thing I learned during the 'Aha Pae'Aina was how important forgiveness is. It's really important because we can't be held back by the past. If we should hold onto a grudge, we can never really move forward. I realized all of this during the presentations by the Pū'ā Foundation. Their stories helped me realize just how much forgiveness can transform you.

John N., Church of the Holy Cross, Hilo