At some point in time, physician role models and mentors have impacted many of our medical students. Physician role models may never know how their interactions affect the lives and career decisions of hundreds of students. Whereas, mentoring involves conscious effort to maintain a relationship supporting the development of the mentee. The NHCOE sponsors two mentor mixers a year. One of the 2017-18 mentor mixers invited Ahahui o na Kauaʻi Native Hawaiian Physicians to meet with the Native Hawaiian medical students. Eight Native Hawaiian physicians met fourteen of the Native Hawaiian students. The following story by Noa Yee illustrates the impact of two Native Hawaiian physicians on his decision to pursue a career in medicine. — Dr. Malia Lee

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By Noa Pulama

On January 6th, 1866, the first Hansen’s Disease patients arrived in Kalaupapa, Molokai. Flanked by miles of ocean, and cliffs too tall to scale, the Kalaupapa Peninsula forced Hansen’s patients, mostly Native Hawaiians, to live the remainder of their condition-to-die-in complete isolation. Despite being a place of deep despair and hopelessness, Kalaupapa represents what it means to persevere and survive.

During a summer research trip to Kalaupapa, I met Dr. Kalani Brady and a few of the remaining patients at church. While there, I felt driven to visit an ancestor’s grave who was once a patient at Kalaupapa. Surrounded by thousands of graves of Hawaiians who were not privy to good medicine and who never got to fulfill their potential or find their purpose, I strummed the ukulele and offered a prayer. I vowed that the graves, weathered by salt, wind, and rain, would stand strong in my mind. I held my breath until my lungs turned indigo and exhaled with a soft gaze over the ocean.

I thought of my uncle, Dr. Noa Emmett Aluli, who worked with the people of Kalaupapa, and I realized that the work of a physician is larger than oneself and transcends generations. The summer experience helped me to understand my calling to work for a healthier Hawaii and to become a physician.

My family instilled in me the importance of serving others before myself. While growing up in Hawaii, I worked one summer on a Kava farm. The low hum of my cousin’s pickup truck approached the front gate of the farm as I hunched over and cleared weeds from the base of a Kava plant. I stood to greet him, exhausted from the beating sun and thick humidity, and asked, “Why are we doing this?” He replied, “Because when we take care of the land, it takes care of us.”

That summer, I learned to value the daily hard work that went into nurturing and caring for the life that sustains us, I internalized the vitality of a healthy foundation for the plant’s growth. Without the right soil and sunlight, even the most resilient plants cannot thrive. I understood there that health is the foundation upon which all else is contingent.

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“‘Hānai ke keiki, hiki ke ho ‘oūnauna.”
Foster the children and they will become able

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Without good health, it would have been impossible for my parents to hold their jobs, send my sister and me to school, and provide a home with food on the table. Good health is a privilege that I have been fortunate to receive. Without the right medical care, I would not have survived two bouts of Kawasaki’s Syndrome as an infant or the 8 surgeries I have undergone as an adult, and my sister would not have survived her three-month premature birth.

In Hawaiian, “Noa” means to remove the kapu, or set of taboos. In 1975, my Uncle Noa Emmett Aluli was one of the first Native Hawaiians in the first four-year graduating class of the University of Hawaii Medical School, defying the stereotypes of Native Hawaiians I had grown up with. While shadowing him, I was struck not just by how much he knew about the conditions of his patients, but also how much he knew about everything else in their lives—their family, friends and aspirations.

I do not consider it coincidence that I was born on the same date that patients arrived at the Kalawao settlement nearly one hundred and fifty years ago. Or that Dr. Aluli, a Native Hawaiian whom I share both a name and family, continues to serve the people of Moloka‘i through medicine. As a physician, I endeavor to learn and acquire the tools and resources required to build and repair the health foundations of all communities, but especially those that need it most.

The story of Kalawao parallels outcast and underserved communities around the world. My understanding of this history has helped me confirm my purpose and unite my passions for both the scientific approach to treatment and the creation of meaningful personal connections in the pursuit of healing. As a physician, I will carry this understanding wherever I go and use the knowledge and resources garnered along the way to provide the best care possible and strive to relieve whatever suffering someone is experiencing. Both knowledge and tradition are learned. I continue to learn from those who come before me and the giants in medicine whose backs I stand on. Ahahui o na Kauka, NHCOE, and the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at JABSOM have undoubtedly been a source of empowerment and nurture in my beginning steps of this journey. I humbly dedicate my journey through medicine to those who have come before me, and to those who will eventually come after with the help of these organizations and beyond.

Greetings from the rising sun at Ha‘eha‘e to the depths of the most westernmost island of Lehua, Aloha! Here we are, the children of Hawai‘i from the 9th and 10th grade, sharing our story from our visit to the John A. Burns School of Medicine:

Ke Kula ‘o Samuel Manaia‘akalani Kamakau, a Pre-K to 12th grade Hawaiian immersion public charter school in Hā‘i Ku Valley, Kāne‘ohe, serves about 100 families of which 96% are Native Hawaiian. This school year, teachers searched for ways to get our older haumāna (students) more engaged as active participants in their learning. As a new face on the Kamakau campus helping with papa Ola Kino (health class), and a Graduate Assistant of the Department of Native Hawaiian Health at JABSOM for a first-hand experience at the medical school. My hope was to show them that they have a future here if they want it, and that with hard work anything is attainable. This article is written by some of the students who attended the Ola Kino field trip.

Cont’d on pg 4.
By Mālia Purdy, MPH and Samantha Ai, Kumu Nā Leo o nā Haumāna Kamakau: Perspectives of Kamakau Students

Greetings from the rising sun at Haʻehaʻe to the depths of the most westernmost island of Lehua, Aloha! Here we share the story from our visit to the 9th and 10th grade, sharing our story from our visit to the John A. Burns School of Medicine: Students at Ke Kula ʻo Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau.

By Sachi Kaulukukui, MS, Kelli-Ann Voloch, MD, & Malia Lee, MD

Nānākuli STEAM Fair adopts the Nānākuli Pathways to Health Spring Fair

The Nānākuli Pathways to Health (NPH) originated in 2013 as an expansion from the Kuaola Community Health first year elective at the John A. Burns School of Medicine’s Native Hawaiian Center of Excellence (NHCOE). The goal of the NPH program is to assist Nānākuli High and Intermediate School (NHIS) in growing their own healers. JABSOM first year community health electives, Kuaola and Healthy Keiki Can! (now known as Na ʻOpio o Nānākuli), combined to form NPH which now serve students in grades 7 through 12. Both programs bring in JABSOM medical students to motivate high school and intermediate students to envision the best futures for themselves through interactive classroom discussions and service learning activities.

The original NPH Health Fair supported tiered-mentoring, adolescent health topics, academic development, and health career interests. The health academy teacher, Peggy Yoshida, led high school student groups to select health topics and worked with medical students to develop presentations for the middle school audience.

NHCOE faculty, Sachi Kaulukukui and Dr. Kelli-Ann Voloch, worked with NHIS administrators, Peggy Yoshida, and the Athletics Department’s, Tony Jones and Kainoa Hopfe. Though Peggy retired in 2015, she returned the following two years to facilitate the NHIS faculty and student participation for the 3rd and 4th spring events held in April. Named, E Ola Pono, the Health Fair presentations included CPR training, use of an automated external defibrillator, concussions, stroke, choking, nutrition, infection prevention, diabetes prevention, heart disease and more. Community groups shared information about cultural learning, student education and career development and the athletics department coordinated field events demonstrating Native Hawaiian sporting events and popular forms of physical activity.

The initial health fair generated a contagious enthusiasm among student and faculty participants and provided an energetic and interactive way for the high school students to share the science behind illness and injury.

Within the first four years, interest in the NPH Health Fair grew to include students and teachers from other fields including agriculture, culinary science, media, engineering and more. In November 2017, the NPH was adopted by NHIS and incorporated into a newly formed, school-wide, all-grade STEAM Fair. Students from Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math fields prepared for the state science competitions by demonstrating their experiments and understanding in selected areas. Kainoa Hopfe and Marcus Speidel coordinated participant stations which grew nearly three times the size of the first E Ola Pono Spring Health Fair. The health fair was previously held in a single courtyard rotunda and on the field. The new STEAM fair presentations, community-supporters, and E Ola Pono demonstrations were now spread to the auditorium, gym, and science class rotunda. Over 70 NHIS faculty recruited 290 students to present to the entire intermediate and high school student body. Peggy Yoshida was acknowledged for inspiring the school to take on a larger role in showcasing the students many talents and accomplishments.

NPH expresses their deepest appreciation for the support provided through Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Kamehameha Schools, James and Abigail Campbell Family and Pacific Links Foundations.
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“When we went to JABSOM, I had just expected some kind of boring tour of some random medical facility turned into a sort of teaching place. That is to say that I thought it would be a waste of time but at least would get me out of school. However, it wasn’t that at all, what I found was a top-notch medical facility and a university at the same time.” “The JABSOM huaka’i exceeded my expectations, I thought we were just gonna go to the college and some of the students and teachers were gonna talk to us, but when we went to the college and got to actually do things.”

When asked what their favorite part of the huaka’i was, they responded: “My favorite part of the trip was most certainly using the $75,000 medical mannequin. It amazed me the things that technology can do… I learned plenty on the trip as well, I learned to suture a wound, I learned how to do CPR, and much much more. It was all very educational.” “My favorite part of the huaka’i was the stitching, I’ve always wondered how they stitch cuts on you and it looked like it was painful.”

Effects of this huaka’i include:

“JABSOM impacted me by showing me the importance of knowing the basics in case one day I need to use what I was taught.” “It was fun learning about a Pneumothorax and seeing the plasticated body parts. I also learned that going to Medical School and becoming a doctor is hard work and takes a lot of responsibility and time. Becoming someone in the Medical field takes a lot of bravery knowing that you’ll have someone’s life in your hands.” “I think that visiting JABSOM would be an supremely valuable experience.” One 10th grader is considering being a nurse and shared: “Before this huaka’i I really wanted to be a nurse and after the huaka’i I’m a little scared but I have to be more prepared. I still wanna be a nurse but I just have to prepare myself for a lot of things. I really liked the huaka’i, it was an amazing experience and I really hope that if I do consider a career in nursing I want it to be an amazing experience like the field trip.”

For Our Native Hawaiian Students

NHCOE is pleased to offer stipends supporting NIHJABSOM students prepare for USLME Steps 1 and 2. Preference will be given to MS1s. Stipends up to $1000 for MS1s and $500 for MS2s/MS3s are disbursed through reimbursement to NH JABSOM students only and not a third party. Funding for this fiscal year will be for expenses incurred from July 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018.

5-10 hours of community service in Native Hawaiian initiatives are required and need prior approval by NHCOE. Hours can be completed from July 1, 2017 through December 2018.

Deadline to submit receipts for reimbursement is April 30, 2018. For more information contact: Sachi Kauaihakulani, MS at sachi@hawaii.edu

“Support is dependent on availability of funding

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