

Oahu's "fresh mist" for women in recovery

New transitional housing facility dedicated in Honolulu.

by Daniel De Castro –



Shown untying the maile lei to symbolize the opening of the new transitional shelter are U.S. Representative Neil Abercrombie, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hanneman, Commissioner Philip Swyers, Major Edward Hill, Hawaiian Governor Linda Lingle, Lelani (program resident) and Kahu Kordell Kekoa.



The dedication of The Salvation Army's new transitional housing facility—designed for homeless women recovering from drug and alcohol addiction—took place Feb. 2 at the Army's Manoa Campus in Honolulu with Western Territorial Commander Commissioner Philip Swyers in attendance along with some of Hawaii's leading public officials.

Ka 'Oahu Hou O Manoa (translated from Hawaiian as the "fresh mist of Manoa") is a program run by The Salvation Army Family Treatment Services. Through it, 12 homeless women and their children receive clean, sober and affordable housing. Two newly renovated brick bungalows make up the facility, each with six bedrooms, an office and shared living, dining and kitchen areas.

During the dedication ceremony, Swyers said, "This project is helping people become what they ought and should become." The transitional program will allow women in recovery to get back on their feet while having a roof over their heads.

“This is a great day and this is a great facility, said Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle. “I know that the women who come here and their children are going to take what they receive here and share it with others.”

Major Edward Hill, divisional commander of the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Division, extolled the collaborative efforts of many businesses that made the venture possible. “Without the help of our partners in the community who contributed monetary and in-kind services, this would not have been possible,” said Hill.

A primary requirement for admission to the program is that women have to be homeless, pregnant or parenting and in stable recovery. Women currently in residential treatment may apply if they were homeless prior to entering treatment. The residents must be capable of independent living and willing to go to work or school. Girls under age 12 and boys under age 10 may live with their mothers. Residents can live in the facility for up to two years.

As in most places, affordable housing has become scarcer, says Linda Rich, executive director of Family Treatment Services. “In the past three years, the number of women who are homeless upon admission to The Salvation Army rehabilitation program has grown from 15 percent to 27 percent.” Providing them with additional help after graduation by way of a transitional shelter makes their chances of staying clean and sober a much more reachable goal.

Providing major funding for the transitional housing program were the City and County of Honolulu through a HOME grant, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Two West Foundation, and in-kind donations received from major Honolulu businesses. Architects Hawaii Ltd. donated architectural services. Estimated building costs, including financial grants and in-kind donations and services, total \$2.2 million.