

Addiction Recovery on Kauai Supported by Youth Programs

By [Sean Woodard](#) - April 20, 2018



Photo Cred: Tati Leair; Courtesy of the Keala Foundation.

Hawaii state officials and program directors are discussing methods to expand addiction recovery and prevention on Kauai and other islands to treat local residents. The youth population is particularly susceptible to the influence of drugs and alcohol.

To provide children and teens with a drug-free alternative, the [Keala Foundation](#) in Lawai, HI offers free resources to help them build a support system and a healthy lifestyle. Established in 2013 by Aaron Hoff, the foundation has assisted more than 400 children and teens. Now, in its fifth year, the nonprofit recently opened up a second location on Kauai to service more of the island's children.

Co-director Rory Zambard explained that the Keala Foundation's mission is to "create community and equip people with the tools to be successful and overcome any challenge."

She said that teens often turn to drugs because of how substance use has become culturally normalized. Kauai has a large surf community; many of those people can be relatives or other adult figures kids look up to who are currently dealing with substance use disorders. Without appropriate leaders in their lives, she said, the cycle of addiction can perpetuate.

Zambard mentioned that one of the keys to the foundation's success has been in its ability to provide children with positive role models. Founder Aaron Hoff is no stranger to addiction. He and the rest of the staff offer a safe environment for children and a web of support, she said.

Zambard also said that boredom can sometimes lead children to using drugs or alcohol. There is a lack of after-school programs on the island to keep kids occupied. Children may also have limited family time due to busy schedules, so they must decide how to fill their time until they go home.

Children usually go from "home to school to 'question mark.' We fill in the question mark with the healthy environment," she said.



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The program uses three tiers to reach children: transportation, fitness, and nutrition. The Keala Foundation staff will transport children daily and have them participate in different fitness activities, including CrossFit and jiu jitsu. The foundation also provides food for the kids and teaches them about healthy diets. Afterward, the children are dropped off home.

"We provide a consistent touch and access point for kids to be a part of everyday," Zambard said. "This is a living and breathing environment that they can go to any time or day of the week where they can create relationship with adults and other kids."

While other community organizations... [\(Continue Reading\)](#)



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Description While Hawaii officials work on expanding addiction recovery, the Keala Foundation provides children and teens with drug-free alternatives.

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