

WANTED: FAMILIES FOR WAITING KEIKI

As another school year gets underway, Hawaii Family Forum is continuing its efforts to bring awareness of the needs of children in Hawaii's child welfare system. We are often asked, "who are these children?"

They are the thousands of children in Hawaii who have been abused and neglected. Those who are not able to reunite with their birth parents are taken into the permanent custody of the state. At that point, the state needs to find for them a permanent family—hopefully through adoption.

HFF has a special concern for these precious keiki. Because of this, we will continue to work with the Governors office, the Legislature, other non profit faith-based and community agencies, and the Department of Human Services to make a difference in the lives of these suffering children.

This is where we, the people of faith, come in. Many of these children are, indeed, the modern day orphans among us. We cannot avert our eyes to their needs. We must open our hearts and our homes. Many faith-based families in our state have already opened their homes to care for the children who are often forgotten by society. We believe that there are many more families out there who may be willing to do the same.

HFF will continue to help educate and encourage the community to play a crucial role in helping to meet the needs of the least among us, particularly children.

If you are, or know of, willing families interested in finding out more about foster care or adoption of these keiki, please contact our office at (808) 230-2100. Or, you may call HOPE INC., Inc. at (808) 668-9251 to get more information.

Tonight, there are children in Hawaii who will go to sleep wondering if they will ever have forever families to call their own. Could their new family be yours?

To find out more about Hawaii Family Forum, visit our website at:
<http://www.hawaiifamilyforum.org>

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HAWAII FAMILY FORUM

Ohana News in Brief

August—September, 2005

Make a date for dinner.... every day!

Ono food, great pa'ina and loads of laughs—that's what dinners with the ohana are made of. If busy schedules are making it hard for your family to sit down and eat together on a regular basis, take a "time out" to consider all the benefits of gathering around the dinner table because family dinners are about more than just sharing an 'ono' meal.

Did you know that eating dinner frequently with your children reduces their risk of substance abuse? Research by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University has found that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs. The conversations that go hand-in-hand with dinner will help you learn more about your children's lives and better understand the challenges they face.

In 2001, CASA created Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children, a national effort to promote family dinners as an effective way to reduce substance abuse among children and teens. Family Day is celebrated on the fourth Monday in September. This year the **September 26th** Family Day has been endorsed by our own Lt. Governor Duke Aiona.

Family Day emphasizes the importance of regular family activities and encourages Americans to make family dinners a regular feature of their lives. Parental engagement is the single most potent weapon in preventing substance use and abuse among youth!

Begin making family dinners a regular feature of your daily routine!

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