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Nareit Hawaii \$25,000 Grant to Hawaii Literacy Funds Expansion of Adult Digital Literacy Programs on Oahu, Kauai and in Kona

HONOLULU – Aug. 2, 2023 – Nareit Hawaii today presented Hawaii Literacy with a grant of \$25,000 that will support the nonprofit organization in expanding the reach of its successful adult digital literacy programs to underprivileged communities on Oahu and to offer new programs on Kauai and in Kona.

According to Hawaii Literacy, one in six adults in Hawaii is considered to be functionally illiterate, which creates challenges in achieving success in life and work and addressing fundamental issues with daily living. Basic literacy is a prerequisite for learning digital skills and utilization of the internet.

This lack of digital skills and access to digital resources contributes to unemployment and the inability of many Hawaii residents to utilize education, workforce, healthcare, and government resources. Residents most affected are ethnic minorities, older adults, women, those experiencing poverty, and those living in rural areas.

Hawaii Literacy Executive Director Jill Takasaki Canfield noted the impact of the Nareit Hawaii grant in helping to enhance adult literacy statewide through a greater understanding of utilizing digital resources to benefit themselves and their families. “This grant from Nareit Hawaii will help us reach and better serve the adult learners in our community, especially those who may be disadvantaged by multiple barriers – and empowers them to use technology to improve their lives,” said Takasaki Canfield. “Adult literacy is vital to increasing individual self-sufficiency and strengthening the community as a whole.”

Nareit Hawaii’s grant will increase the number of adult digital learning sessions that Hawaii Literacy can offer to residents needing support, and to also purchase digital devices for use by adult learners in new programs being introduced on Kauai and in Kona.

Nareit Hawaii Executive Director Gladys Quinto Marrone commented, “Hawaii Literacy is doing an amazing job with its adult digital literacy learning program. I have seen first-hand and talked with community members participating in the program and it becomes immediately apparent how inspiring and life changing that improving their literacy is to their self-confidence and future outlook.

“Literacy is essential for all adults to achieve success in today’s world and live the life they want for them as individuals and for their families. We are proud to continue our support of Hawaii Literacy’s commitment to educate adults in developing the skills needed to thrive in the digital age and use these tools to overcome daily challenges.”

This grant to improve adult digital literacy is a continuation of the successful collaboration between Nareit Hawaii and Hawaii Literacy initiated two years ago that provided 150 underserved families in Kalihi and Waipahu with digital devices and broadband access to improve their reading comprehension.

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In the prior Hawaii Literacy program funded by Nareit Hawaii, more than 500 educational sessions were conducted on a variety of topics, such as writing emails, filling out job applications, preparing resumes, completing online forms, conducting online banking, participating in telehealth sessions, and searching for information online. Participants also completed more than 200 community health assessments seeking government support for a variety of daily living needs, such as food assistance, housing, health insurance, and COVID-19 vaccines.

Also participating in Nareit Hawaii's \$25,000 grant presentation today to Hawaii Literacy were:

- Hawaii Literacy Board President Doug Shimokawa
- Honolulu Councilmember Radiant Cordero (District 7)
- Dana Harvey, Director of External Affairs for Alexander & Baldwin, a REIT that supports numerous charitable giving programs statewide, including those supported by Nareit Hawaii.
- Lika Baugh, Assistant Director and Digital Literacy Manager for Hawaii Literacy.
- Lawrence Chavez, Instructor, English Language Learner and Digital Literacy for Hawaii Literacy.
- Julianne Baker-Mattern, Adult Literacy Manager for Hawaii Literacy.
- Kerby Michael, Tutoring and Program Assistant for Hawaii Literacy at the Family Literacy Library in Mayor Wright Homes. She participated in the digital learning literacy program, then began working for Hawaii Literacy to help other adults improve their literacy skills.
- Lane Matsumoto and Sandy Matsumoto, brother and sister retirees who are currently participating in Hawaii Literacy's digital learning literacy program.

About Hawaii Literacy

The mission of Hawaii Literacy, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, is to empower Hawaii's children and adults with essential reading, writing, and lifelong learning skills to strengthen themselves, families and communities. Founded in 1971, the organization provides adult literacy tutoring programs on Oahu, Kauai, and Hawaii Island, and a youth Bookmobile program on Oahu and Hawaii Island. To learn more, visit hawaiiliteracy.org.

About Nareit Hawaii

Nareit Hawaii represents the interests of REITs in Hawaii and their participation in civic, community, and policy initiatives to benefit residents statewide, while also supporting community and charitable organizations that address social issues of importance. REITs are long-term property holders that own, renovate and manage affordable housing projects, commercial buildings, medical facilities, shopping centers, cell phone towers, public storage facilities, and hotels in Hawaii. For more information about Nareit Hawaii and REITs in Hawaii, please visit www.nareithawaii.com.

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