

Stories that Shape Tomorrow

2024-25 Impact Report – Hawai‘i



Kristi Yamaguchi's
ALWAYS DREAM

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, one truth stands out: **the small, everyday moments families spend reading together truly shape tomorrow.** Whether it's a bedtime story after a long day or five quiet minutes flipping through a favorite book, these moments nurture curiosity, confidence, and connection, laying the foundation for lifelong learning.

This year in Hawai'i, we were proud to partner with 19 schools across four islands—O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, and Hawai'i Island—serving **over 2,400 pre-K and kindergarten students and their family members through our Always Reading program.** We deepened our roots in longtime partner communities and expanded to new schools on the Leeward Coast of O'ahu, in Lahaina on Maui, and at Nā'ālehu Elementary in Ka'ū. Across the islands, our Book Coaches, local educators who reflect the families they serve, walked alongside caregivers and teachers to turn access into action and create joyful reading routines at home.

In a time of uncertainty for many public schools, we were humbled by the trust placed in us, including **a transformational \$500,000 gift from the Tsuha Hawai'i Aloha Fund,** helping us deepen and expand our work where it's needed most across Hawai'i. **Together with supporters like you, we're strengthening early literacy, family bonds, and a lifelong love of reading across Hawai'i.** Mahalo for believing in the power of stories to shape a brighter future for all keiki.

With gratitude and aloha,



Kristi Yamaguchi
Founder and Board Chair



Aarika Riddle
Executive Director

Our Year in Numbers

A Record-Breaking Year for Early Literacy Access

Our mission comes to life through real numbers and real families. In the 2024–25 school year, we **expanded our reach, deepened our engagement, and celebrated thousands of reading moments.** Here’s a snapshot of what your support made possible, and the lives we touched along the way.



**Students
Enrolled**
953

**Students + Family
Members Served**
2,415



Schools
19

Classrooms
78



Books Explored
132,533

Minutes Read
721,791



**% Free/Reduced
Lunch Eligible**
78%

**Hard-Copy Books
Gifted**
9,705

Demographics

39%	Native Hawaiian	4%	Hispanic/Latinx
22%	Asian	4%	Other
19%	Other Pacific Islander	3%	Prefer Not to Answer
8%	White	1%	Black or African American

Families at the Center

Families Are Their First Teacher— We Just Equip Them



At Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream, we believe **every family has the power to spark a lifelong love of reading—sometimes, they just need a little support to get started.** Through our **Always Reading program**, we partner with caregivers as their child's first and most important teacher, offering tools, encouragement, and personalized guidance that fits into real life.

For us, success isn't measured only in numbers, it's seen in everyday victories: a parent sending a proud photo, a child asking for "just one more story," and families discovering that even small moments spent reading together can make a big difference.

98%

said they understand the importance of their role in creating reading routines

96%

report they are better able to help their child develop a love of reading





A Habit That Changed Everything

This year, we brought our Always Reading program to Wai'anae Elementary on the westside of O'ahu. It was here we met Brae-Lyn and her mother Erica. With the support of Book Coach Jen, Brae-Lyn's teacher Ms. Fujino, and family members, Erica worked diligently to build reading into Brae-Lyn's every day routine. Before long, Brae-Lyn was a Super Reader and her progress took off, transforming her learning journey and setting her up for success in first grade and beyond.



Scan here
to watch
the video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zqfejjlvso

Engagement in Action: Building Reading Habits

Small Routines, Big Impact



Reading routines formed in early childhood lay the **foundation for lifelong learning**. When families regularly share stories, keiki strengthen their language skills, expand their imagination, and build emotional bonds that support school success.

By combining weekly encouragement from Book Coaches with access to thousands of diverse books, we help transform reading from something families feel they should do into something they look forward to doing together.

91%

of caregivers report
greater interest in
reading from their child

90%

of families found that
participating in Always
Reading made it easier
for them to find time to
read with their child

73%

said they read more often
with their child



“The Epic library originals really made our daughter interested and she loved it! This is such a generous program and it truly helps make a difference in families. Thank you so much for your investment into the future generations.”

—Caregiver, Wai'anae Elementary

Book Coaches: Support that Scales with Care

A Partner in Every Text



At the heart of our impact are our **Book Coaches**—trusted guides who build real relationships with families and schools. Through check-ins, phone calls, and curated book suggestions, they help caregivers turn access into action. Their support is what makes Always Reading truly unique.

“[Book Coach] Val was amazing. She was efficient and always communicating with us regularly. We could reach her by phone call, text, or email so it was convenient for us. She was a joy to work with. Always happy, friendly, and helpful.”

- Hawai'i Teacher



94%

of teachers found their Book Coach valuable

89%

of families found it useful when their Book Coach sent a message checking on their family's reading activity

17

personalized touch points per family on average

Moments that Mattered

Big smiles. New places. Unforgettable partnerships. This year, these moments helped bring the joy of reading to life:



Storytimes that Sparked Joy



From founder Kristi Yamaguchi to actress Kimee Balmilero and local author Lois-Ann Yamanaka, our **monthly virtual storytimes** lit up screens and sparked imaginations.

A Delicious Partnership



We teamed up for a round-up fundraiser with local favorite Rainbow Drive-In for National Reading Month. They even sponsored a year-end celebration with Pu'uhale Elementary by bringing slush floats to celebrate the great reading students did this year!

Growing Roots in New Communities



We proudly expanded our Always Reading program to **Nā'ālehu Elementary in Ka'ū**, deepening our impact in rural areas of Hawai'i Island and connecting with new families.

"I enjoyed the ready access to reading content and learning materials so even in the long drive to town the kids could read from books they downloaded."

—Caregiver, Nā'ālehu Elementary

Together, We Grew

Shaping Tomorrow with 2,400+ Stories



Record participation and meaningful collaborations helped us bring books, coaching, and joyful reading moments to more than 2,400 individuals.

This year, reading connected us to culture, community, and joy—a reminder that literacy is about so much more than just books, it's about shaping our future.



The Road Ahead

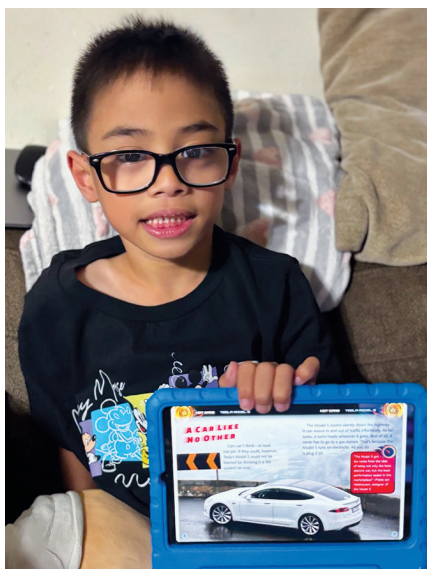
Rooted in Reality, Growing with Purpose

Next year, we'll serve over 2,900 keiki and family members across Hawai'i. We're growing thoughtfully while staying true to what matters most: empowering each 'ohana to build lifelong reading habits.

As public schools face funding cuts and uncertainty, trusted programs like Always Reading matter more than ever as we aim to provide steady support for teachers and families alike.

We are listening closely and adapting our approach for our youngest learners as well as families of neurodivergent students. We are also deepening cultural representation among our Book Coaches to ensure every family feels seen and supported.

Now more than ever, support for organizations like Always Dream is essential to help children read books today and write their own futures tomorrow.



Come Dream With Us

The Journey to 4,000 Served

We've set an ambitious goal: to serve 4,000 children and family members every year in Hawai'i. And thanks to your support, we're making great progress.

This year, we welcomed new members to our Investor Hui—donors who have made multi-year commitments and some who have made transformational gifts—empowering us to grow our reach and deepen our impact. We are incredibly grateful for this support and belief in our work.

But big dreams like ours take a community.

Join us. Help us bring the joy of reading into more homes, support more families, and build a future where every keiki can see themselves in the pages of a book and beyond.





Kristi Yamaguchi's
ALWAYS DREAM

*Because every dream
begins with a story.*

Donate Today



Contact Us

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