

big island

Mixed bag

Backpacks in Puna are carrying more than just books this fall. Thanks to The Food Basket and private donors, over a thousand children from low-income families received bags of healthy food and nutritional supplements. The program, We've Got Your Back, provides food to elementary school children before weekends and school breaks to ensure they'll have healthy meals at home.

The most recent donation gives relief to lava flow victims, but the program continues as long as there's funding and food donations from the public.

Learn more at hawaiifoodbasket.org/keiki-backpacks or call 933-6030 on the Big Island.



Have a great story, place, or event that makes your Neighbor Island community special? Share it with us at feedback@islandscene.com or call 948-6839 on O'ahu.

Hope, strength, and giving back

Breast cancer prevention is big at the nonprofit Hui Mālama Ola Nā Ō'iwi. They've partnered with Derek Park, founder of Paddling for Hope, to give back to breast cancer survivors and help prevent breast cancer.

Park competes in long-distance outrigger canoe races every year. On his canoe, there are names of people who've been affected by cancer and each name has a sponsor. The money he raises funds breast self-exam kits at hospitals and nonprofits on the Big Island.

Hui Mālama also works with Paddling for Hope to offer therapeutic and relaxing canoe rides to cancer survivors like Debbie Kenui. Kenui is afraid of the ocean but went on the ride

because the timing felt right. "I had so much on my mind, but each splash of water on me, the feeling of the sun – it really fulfilled something that I needed in my life," she says.

Kenui gives back, too. As a member of Hui Mālama's cancer support group, she makes comfort pillows for patients at the American Cancer Society's Hope Lodge. "Cancer survivors and warriors like myself are cutting and sewing these pillows. The goodness we received, we keep passing it on," she says.

Hui Mālama provides medical, behavioral health, and community education services to Big Island residents. To learn more, go to hmono.org or call 969-9220 on the Big Island.



Debbie Kenui and her husband.