

Growth evident as IHS marks 33rd birthday

Sustainability is the key at homeless shelter

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The Institute for Human Services observed its 33rd anniversary Friday with its annual Founder's Day celebration. During a tour of the kitchen, meal assistant Earl Tino, left, showed Eric Reading, Kate Record and Roberta "Tutu" DuTeil some of the herbs that were picked from the gardens outside IHS.

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About 60 people spent five hours installing sheet mulching, re-staking hibiscus plants, adding a fence to the gardens and harvesting fruits, vegetables and herbs.

"I'm just thrilled to be at these types of events," IHS Executive Director Connie Mitchell said. "I really think it's in line with Father Claude's (du Teil) values and visions."

Thirty-three years ago, du Teil opened a shelter in a small space on Smith Street and welcomed four homeless people with peanut butter sandwiches and coffee. After volunteering at the Salvation Army Alcoholism Center, du Teil felt that there needed to be a safe place for everyone, Roberta du Teil, his widow, said yesterday.

IHS, with shelters on Sumner and Kaaahi streets, houses 250 people today and serves 600 meals a day.

"My husband had an amazing ability to relate to people," said du Teil, 89, who now lives in Bartonville, Texas, but comes to Hawaii every year to celebrate her husband's legacy. Claude du Teil died Jan. 22, 1997, of complications from Parkinson's disease.

Gordon Ortiz, IHS director of facilities and operations, said IHS does more than feed the hungry.

"We do more than most agencies; we give them a place to stay, we help them find jobs and most importantly we help them get on their feet again," he said.

Part of helping people stay on their feet is providing them with education and skills they can take home after leaving IHS, Mitchell said.

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anniversary Friday with volunteers improving gardens at its two Iwilei shelters while learning how to incorporate sustainability into their daily lives.



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At Friday's Founder's Day celebration, volunteers learned the benefits of "green" urban living. Damian McPherson, 26, who works for the The Green House, a Sustainable Learning Center, was at IHS helping to harvest tomatoes and sweet potatoes. He explained to volunteers the advantages of growing their own vegetables. "We all need to learn how to nurture something, and then we can see how powerful that is."

Since last year the gardens have produced vegetables and herbs used in meals served by IHS.

Friday's event also included the dedication of a memorial to John Sousa, a former clinical director of IHS.

"(Sousa) was an accomplished man," Mitchell said, "a rugged individual who was a compassionate nurse and an accredited substance abuse counselor."

Kate Record, IHS director of community relations, said she was touched by the number of volunteers who came to lend a hand.

"The bigger picture here is that it's all in honor of Father Claude and his work to ending homelessness," Record said.

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