

## IHS providing meals to more homeless

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The Ohana Family of the Living God Ministry has moved its program for feeding homeless people to the Institute of Human Services as part of new collaboration between the groups. Creighton Niwa, left, talked to a friend Friday while eating lunch at IHS.

Ten weeks after Gov. Neil Abercrombie urged charitable organizations to stop feeding homeless people in parks, demand has increased not only for meals, but for shelter and other services at the Institute for Human Services.

One sign of the shift was at IHS Friday as a ministry that once fed homeless people at Aala Park provided lunch at the Iwilei shelter, the latest collaboration between IHS and charitable groups.

Members of the Ohana Family of the Living God Ministry served plates of kalua pig and cabbage, macaroni salad and rice. It no longer serves meals at Aala Park, where for 27 years it dished up at least 100 lunches every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

"I've always been a big supporter of IHS, but I was a

little tentative of moving the program here," said Sadrian "Brother Sage" Chee of Ohana Family. "We've been in Aala Park for so long, and I was just worried about my homeless community; but now we're going to be able to connect individuals with other resources, and that's a great benefit."

Connie Mitchell, IHS executive director, said, "The movement into (getting meals at) shelters is the way for them to get the services they need."

IHS is serving about 700 meals a day, 50 more than at this time last year, Mitchell said. Its men's shelter on Sumner Street served 15,045 meals in June, compared with 13,652 in April. At the women's shelter there was a similar increase from 4,972 meals in April to 5,599 in June. About 300 people were staying at its shelters at Sumner and Kaaahi streets yesterday, 40 to 50 more than last week.

On Thursday, 140 families picked up bags of free groceries, up from the usual 100 to 115 families that take advantage of the monthly event, IHS spokeswoman Kate Record said.

"Overall we're just seeing more people in need of more resources," Record said.

IHS also provides health services and employment and housing programs.

Seth Nay, 28, who has been living at IHS for almost a month, said homeless people "need to stay out of the parks because people don't want to see that. They just don't wanna accept help."

Mitchell said she'd like to see more collaborations with

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other organizations. "We'll be able to stretch the amount of resources we have for a longer period of time," she said.

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