



CROSSROADS

Holy Family Catholic Academy
March 2021

Aloha families and friends of HFCA,

My, how time flies! We have been so busy since the start of 2022 it's hard to believe that spring is right around the corner. Each new month brings another chance to reflect on the challenges we've faced this school year and how supportive and gracious our families are as we continue to navigate a water crisis on top of our Covid-19 response. I am hopeful to have more information to share on both of these issues in the coming weeks and ask that our school community continues to pray for a positive outcome for our tap water and a continuation of low Covid-19 cases throughout the state of Hawaii.

We hope all our families enjoy a restful and fun Spring Break and that you get to catch up on some time with your 'ohana. We look forward to a strong 4th quarter of learning and watching all of our students grow in their faith.

Take care, and God bless,

Celeste Akiu
Principal

March Service Project

We will be collecting diapers during the month of March for the Aloha Diaper Bank, a local non-profit committed to helping families in need keep their babies healthy and dry. They are happy to accept packages of diapers of any size and baby wipes, Pull-Ups, and monetary donations to purchase the diaper sizes they need the most. Donations will be accepted via the morning car line, homeroom teacher and the Holy Family church.



Our annual Kid's Heart Challenge was a tremendous success this year. We exceeded our goal of \$19,500, with a grand total of \$21,407.57 raised - the highest amount in school history. And equally as important, our students spent a month focused on being active and kind: two things we can all strive for.

Making God's Goodness Known. Educating for Life.

FEBRUARY COVID-19 CASES AT HFCA

During the month of February, our school community had 8 positive Covid-19 cases reported.

If a HFCA student tests positive for Covid-19, or comes in close contact with an individual who tests positive for Covid-19, parents must notify the Principal AND Health Room Coordinator via phone and email immediately: cakiu@hfcahawaii.org, 808-780-8786 and abonilla@hfcahawaii.org, 808.423-9611, ext. 305.

All Covid-19-related questions should be directed to Principal Akiu.

New Student Applications for 2022-2023

Applications for new families and additional students are available on our website now. Every year, the overwhelming majority of new families who join HFCA are referred by a current family, so make sure they list your name when applying! The New Student Family Referral Incentive Program awards a referring family with a one-time \$350 tuition credit for each new, referred family who enrolls and completes the school year. The credit is applied in FACTS to the final tuition payment. Please note, to apply for Kindergarten, the child must be 5 years old by December 31, 2022.

Class Spotlight - Second Grade

Our second-graders proudly represented HFCA at the 9th Annual Hawaii Catholic Schools Choral Festival on the morning of Thursday, March 3. They worked hard on the song "Holy Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty" for about 3 weeks, and they sound absolutely beautiful. The song was recorded in February with the direction of our Music Teacher, Mr. Foster, and will be shared via video at the choral festival, which was held virtually this year. Each school selected a song that represented this year's theme "Unity in the Trinity" and our second graders sang their hearts out for the recording, while their teachers fought back teary eyes in the Church. Please watch ParentSquare for a video of their performance! The entire festival is linked [here](#).



Staff Spotlight: Support Team

We are so thankful to have a Support Team dedicated to helping our students, staff, and parents, and helping us fulfill the HFCA mission. Mahalo nui loa for all that you do.



Aileen Bonilla - Mrs. Bonilla started her journey at HFCA as a part-time lunch monitor when her two children were attending HFCA 13 years ago! She has also worked as an after school care monitor, teacher's assistant for the preschool and academy, and is now our Health Room Coordinator. She loves watching students come in on their first day of kindergarten, and years later seeing those same students at their 8th grade graduation. When she's not checking temperatures, comforting kids who aren't feeling well, and greeting campus visitors, she enjoys family time and binge-watching shows on Netflix.



Wesley Ching - Mr. Ching is our Cafe Manager, focused on ensuring our daily lunch program runs smoothly, in addition to the morning and afternoon snacks provided in our preschool classes. He joined HFCA in January, 2021, after his employment with UH Manoa ended abruptly when their campus closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He was eager to get back to work and found the HFCA position to be a great fit for him. He loves to focus on scratch cooking as much as possible, and ensures the meals are nutritious, affordable and appealing to a keiki pallet. HFCA is a good fit for Mr. Ching, because it's less stressful than previous jobs he has had, and he admires how polite all the students are, and how the teachers and staff members ensure manners are always remembered. In his free time, Mr. Ching enjoys tai chi – an important part of his life that he has been practicing and teaching for more than 30 years.



Luana DeSoto - Mrs. DeSoto is our Registrar who has worked at Holy Family since 2011, and originally joined us as an administrative assistant for our preschool, where she handled the application process for our youngest learners. As Registrar, she now manages the application, enrollment and re-enrollment process for the entire academy each year. You will often find Mrs. DeSoto touring prospective families around campus, answering questions about our school via phone or email, and administering admission tests throughout the school year. Before she joined HFCA, Mrs. DeSoto worked as a substitute teacher for the DOE and a paraprofessional and kindergarten teacher at St. Joseph School in Waipahu. HFCA is a good fit for her because she loves her co-workers and enjoys being around all the students, who continually bring a smile to her face. In her free time Mrs. DeSoto likes trying different restaurants, traveling and family time at the beach.



Debbie Gibo - Mrs. Gibo is our Teacher Mentor who has held many positions at HFCA, dating back to her first role as a kindergarten teacher in 1984! Mrs. Gibo later developed and directed the After School Care program, worked as a Reading Enrichment Teacher for grades K-8, 3rd grade teacher, RTI Coordinator and Director of Student Services before her current position as Teacher Mentor to new and returning teachers. Her current position allows her to provide support for our teachers to build a foundation towards becoming a better teacher. Together they reflect and refine, share stories, and problem-solve. Her goal is to build confidence while striving for competence, and helping to sustain their passion for teaching. Mrs. Gibo loves to read, shop, and chat with her grandsons on Zoom.



Julia Hudson - Mrs. Hudson is our Director of Development, and loves to promote all the wonderful activities happening at our school via this newsletter, social media and traditional media opportunities. She is constantly seeking out unique storytelling opportunities, and working on strategies to attract and engage with new families to help HFCA grow. Mrs. Hudson appreciates the community feeling and the work/life balance the school environment offers, as a mom of two young boys who also attend HFCA. In her spare time she loves to cook and entertain family and friends, and spend as much time outside as possible.

Staff Spotlight: Support Team Continued



Tofi Lopez - Mrs. Lopez recently joined us as Administrative Assistant, and we are so thrilled to have her at HFCA. Every day she is busy answering phone calls and emails, planning with our administration team, and keeping us organized. In her short time at HFCA so far, she has found her coworkers warm, welcoming and willing to jump in and help her; and she appreciates the diversity of our school community as well. In her free time Mrs. Lopez enjoys hiking and beach time, playing board games and watching movies, and singing in St. Elizabeth's Samoan Choir.



Simeon Pascua - Affectionately called 'Mr. Simeon' by students and staff members, Mr. Pasuca joined the HFCA family in 2006 as a Maintenance Technician. He is often first on campus, making sure that everything is in order before the students and staff arrive. Mr. Pascua has graciously taken on additional tasks to help HFCA navigate the extra vigilance needed to manage both a pandemic and the temporary lack of running water on campus - no small feat! He is quiet by nature and has a knack for keeping plants alive. Mr. Pascua enjoys being part of the HFCA 'ohana and loves that his walk to and from work is also good exercise.



Malia Paulos - Ms. Malia manages all of our Accounts Receivable/Payable needs, and we have been fortunate to have her at HFCA for 24 years! She first joined us as an administrative assistant for our preschool, where she worked for 10 years before moving to the business office during a time when her own three children attended HFCA. Ms. Malia is known to wear many 'hats' at HFCA, and is especially great at organizing staff events and morale boosting activities. She is grateful her children received a Catholic education, and is particularly proud that two of them teach at Hawaii Catholic Schools; and her youngest is currently a senior at Sacred Hearts. In her spare time she likes to attend her children's athletic activities, whether they are participating or coaching, and enjoys binge-watching Netflix with her two daughters.



Noriel Pitpit - Mr. Pitpit is a Maintenance Technician at HFCA, and we are so blessed to have him as part of our team. His positive, can-do attitude makes him a perfect fit for our current situation. He diligently manages the workload of extra cleaning during a pandemic without the temporary use of running water; two issues we hope are resolved in the very near future. In his free time Mr. Pitpit enjoys playing basketball, watching YouTube videos, and spending time with his wife and young son.



Reid Yagi - Mr. Yagi is our Cafeteria Assistant and also joined HFCA as a result of a pandemic-related job loss when his family's saimin restaurant closed unexpectedly. He too was anxious to get back to work and sees a silver lining in working school hours: his evenings and weekends are free, and he now has holidays off that he never imagined he would. He finds HFCA friendly – a place he immediately felt comfortable at. He learned restaurant management skills from his mother, and an appreciation for bbq and smoking meat techniques from his father, and credits them both for his love of cooking. When he's not helping prepare an average of 175 meals per day, you may find him out fishing on his boat - a family activity he has enjoyed for as long as he can remember. He loves to cook what he catches, and often sells the excess to friends.

Let Us Pray

Almighty God who delivered his children from slavery in Egypt and led them to the Promised Land: in solidarity with your chosen people who wandered the desert for forty years, your Son entered into the desert for forty days. May our forty days of Lent be for us a time of repentance and prayer, as you continue to lead us from this world to our eternal home. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- Father Rheo Ofalsa

Holy Family Catholic Church

Monday - Friday

Mass - 8am

Saturday

Confessions - 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Mass (Sunday Vigil) - 5 pm

Sunday

Masses at 8:30 and 11 am, 7 pm

Seating is limited to 250 persons with social distancing. Masks are required. We don't require reservations, and invite you to join us on a 'first come, first served' basis. We invite parents, grandparents, and friends of HFCA to join us for mass any time!

2022 Lenten Season

HFCA families received a Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl on Ash Wednesday; this simple cardboard box is a tool for collecting Lenten alms—and comes with a calendar that guides families through the 40 days of Lent with activities, reflections and stories. Lenten alms donated through the Rice Bowl supports the work of Catholic Relief Services in more than 100 countries each year, and 25% percent of our donations stay in the Diocese of Honolulu, supporting hunger and poverty alleviation efforts.

Parents and guardians may also notice more fish and non-meat options on the school lunch menu during Lent, and although the obligation is for Catholics aged 14 and up, it's a simple way for students to continue to understand the sacrifices of the Lenten season. For any readers who would like to review the 2022 Lenten Regulations from the Diocese of Honolulu, the Hawaii Catholic Herald has provided a summary, [linked here](#).

