

Mistakes: *A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing.* —George Bernard Shaw, Irish-born English playwright

DoD program good for Hawaii's schools

Story and photo by Doug MaKitten

The first year of a highly successful, \$5 million Department of Defense program that assists 25 Hawaii public schools is nearing completion and there is more help coming.

The program is administered by U.S. Pacific Command and is executed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Honolulu Engineer District. It covers the repair and maintenance of public schools in Hawaii with high concentrations of special needs military dependents. Special needs students are defined as those with a variety of physical disabilities.

"Because of our experience and expertise in fast-track projects, we were able to execute the contracts within a tight timeframe," said HED project manager Gordon Kuioka. "The combined team effort of PACOM, the state departments of Education and Accounting and General Services and our HED staff made it possible.

"It's very satisfying to know that we have substantially improved the facilities at twenty-five of our local schools," Kuioka continued. "This program provides a clear example what can be achieved through a coordinated federal and state partnership."

The state of Hawaii's congressional delegation, led by Hawaii U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, is responsible for the start and continuation of the program. Sen. Inouye was instrumental in including Section 8151 in the Fiscal Year 2000 Department of Defense Appropriations Act. That section allocated up to \$5 million for school systems in states that are considered overseas assignments by the DoD and Hawaii is the only state so designated. An additional \$5 million in aid is included in the FY 2001 DoD Appropriations Act. The money comes from the DoD-wide operations and maintenance account.

Eligible schools, work requirements and prioritization of projects are determined by the Hawaii state departments of Education and Accounting and General Services in conjunction with the Joint Venture Education Forum, an education advisory committee made up of military and state of Hawaii officials.

The program demonstrates the military's desire to help Hawaii schools that have a large number of students who are military dependents with special needs. However, the DoD assistance does not replace school funding from the state, but provides additional funds for the schools that qualify. For the initial year, The Joint Venture Education Forum determined that schools must have at least a 20 percent enrollment of military dependents to be included in the program.

"We love the program," said Hawaii Department of Education Superintendent Dr. Paul G. LaMahieu. "It provides more

assistance to the schools, speeds up the system's resources and allows the schools to do more repairs and maintenance."

Two school principals agreed with Dr. LaMahieu's assessment.

"We are very pleased to receive this assistance," said Pearl City Elementary School Principal Howard Humphreys, whose school received some exterior painting as part of the program.

"The painting and recarpeting at our school were very well done," said Makalapa Elementary Vice Principal Elynn Chung.

Kuioka said all of the work was scheduled and performed so



DoD support to Hawaii public schools with a high concentration of special needs military dependents includes recarpeting classrooms at Makalapa Elementary School.

it wouldn't affect school activities. In spite of this constraint, the project delivery team's contractors (Pinnacle Contracting, Master Construction, Primatech Construction, and Luersen Architects) all local small businesses, worked with the Corps so efficiently that the work was completed ahead of schedule.

The only remaining work from the program's first year is some bathroom renovations at Solomon Elementary School. That will be completed this summer, when work on the program's second also begins.

The schools that qualify for the assistance include: Leilehua, Moanalua and Radford high schools; Aliamanu, Moanalua and Wahiawa middle schools; and Aliamanu, Barbers Point, Fort Shafter, Hale Kula, Helemano, Hickam, Iroquois Point, Lehua, Makalapa, Mokapu, Mokulele, Nimitz, Pearl City, Pearl Harbor, Pearl Harbor Kai, Red Hill, Solomon, Webling and Wheeler elementary schools.

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