

## The Wāhine Hui: An Executive Retreat for the Mind, Body and Spirit by Kau‘i Kanaka‘ole

Wāhine are a force. Our ‘ohana (family) roles as grandmothers, mothers, aunty’s, daughters, sisters, and nieces, give us experiences that lend expertise and understanding to the other roles we play at our work places and in our communities. Wāhine are strong, caring, intuitive and intelligent and without our presence, balance is fleeting. However, in order to ensure we bring the best to our different roles we need time to pause, reflect, reboot and feed ourselves mentally, spiritually and physically.

This is exactly what happened with the Wāhine Hui Retreat, which is a small group of wāhine Executive Directors running various types of community organizations here on Maui and Moloka‘i. The retreat was



held here at Ala Kukui from January 30th - February 1st, 2020.

*From left to right: Wei Fang (Ma‘o Farms), Harmonee Williams (Sustainable Moloka‘i), Kau‘i Kanaka‘ole (Ala Kukui), Sarah Menzies (La‘akea Village), Chelsie Haunga (Maui Hui Malama), Elizabeth Fujii (Moloka‘i Child Abuse Prevention Pathways), Lipoa Kahaleahi (Ma Ka Hana Ka ‘Ike). Taking the picture Kina Mahi (KM Consulting)*

The brainchild of Kina Mahi, “a freelance consultant who supports diverse projects that contribute to the health of our land, families and communities in Hawaii;” she saw a need within the various organizations she worked with. “I’ve created relationships and worked with some amazing women who are leaders, doing phenomenal work in our community, and I knew that if they could meet, have time to connect and share in a small local support-network, this would help to maximize their impact at home and in their community and give them the time they need to decompress, learn from each other and be support systems to one another.

As the Executive Director of Ala Kukui, I am lucky to participate in this Wāhine Hui and was more than happy to help host the group in Hāna at Ala Kukui. We all met at Pi‘ilanihale Heiau at Kahanu Gardens in order to orient ourselves to Hāna, introduce ourselves to the kupuna of the place, and set our intentions for our time here together. It was a beautiful beginning of quiet, reset, and acclimation. Then we set off on our hike on Ke Ala Loa o Maui or Pi‘ilani Trail, from Wai‘ānapanapa to Kapueokahi. The ‘ehukai (ocean spray), cliff-side lava trail, cool overcast skies allowed each



of us much needed time to think, chat with the closest hiker and just take in the ocean views.

We spent the afternoon gathering plants from the Ala Kukui property and learning about lā‘au kāpala design on the deck of the main house. Utilizing the design that comes from manipulating the positive and negative



space when doing repetitive printing, we created beautiful one-of-a-kind canvas pouches.

Capping off the day with a delicious meal by chef Ryan OConnor of kalua pig fried rice, pesto mahimahi, roasted veggies, and green salad with liliko‘i

cheesecake for dessert, it was such an amazing day indeed.

We spent the second day getting down to business, planning our year ahead and prioritizing what topics we wanted to address at future meetings to help us be more efficient and impactful in our work. We created personal “wellness wheels” that had us take inventory on all the different aspects of our lives from work to family, to finance, to spirituality and beyond and really get a handle on where we’re at and where we need to be and how we’re going to get there. It was time well spent. It was a retreat that fueled the



body and mind. We are excited for the plans that we’ve made for ourselves in 2020!