

Good Neighbor

For A Cake Life's fifth anniversary, owner Kristin Kato teamed up with Hawaii Foodbank to help provide for the hungry in the community. "We thought, (with us) being in the food industry, the Hawaii Foodbank would be a great organization to partner with," Kato says.

Summertime rings in wedding season, and many people call in for consultations. For the month of July, those who donate a minimum of five canned goods will have the consultation fee waived. The promotion has been well-received, and A Cake Life has received many inquiries about bringing in canned goods.

"One lady who saw our post (on social media) says, 'I'll just come in and donate, but I don't need anything.'"

Even brides-to-be from the Mainland are coming on board with the program.

"They're coming in later on to do their consultations, but they just pay the \$25 consultation fee to be used as a monetary donation to the Foodbank instead of bringing in food," Kato explained.



Kristin KATO

Kato's following on Instagram has greatly helped the promotion. A Cake Life (@acakelife) has more than 13,000 followers on the social media site, where Kato displays her sweet works of art. Kato was not always interested in the baking world. She started A Cake Life, located on South King Street, back in 2009 after deciding she no longer wanted to be a lawyer.

"That was about the time that *Ace of Cakes* and all those cake shows were just coming out," Kato says. "I was really inspired watching them, and to get my mind off of law I took a cake class." It was instant love.

Since opening her company, Kato said it has been a whirlwind of a journey. She enjoys the creativity her clients bring to the table.

"Customers come in and they bring us their ideas," she explains. "It's fun to work with them to develop it and see how we can create it into a really special cake."

Most recently, Kato and her staff designed a spectacular Super Mario Bros. wedding cake complete with handmade Princess Peach and Mario cake toppers.

Many people have supported A Cake Life's mission to give back.

"We recognize the community has helped to support us at A Cake Life, and we want to give back," Kato says.

Helping others always has been a big part of A Cake Life, and in the past the business has partnered with organizations such as American Cancer Society, Shriners Hospitals for Children Honolulu, American Heart Association and more.

"The atmosphere here is really family oriented, and we're all open to helping each other," adds Kato, who wants to encourage other businesses to pay it forward.

"We're all here to help each other out and give back how we can," she concludes.

- Nicole Kato



PROOF POSITIVE

YWCA Helping Women Dress For Success

By Noriko Namiki, Chief Executive Office, YWCA of Oahu

Every year, more than 500 women take advantage of the Dress for Success Honolulu program, based at YWCA of Oahu. This initiative helps women in transition prepare for the workforce by assisting them with professional clothing. But that's just the first step.

The Going Places Network continues the process by teaching workplace skills such as computers. It also helps women refine tools from the resume to the interview process, while providing mentoring all the way to employment. Participants are moving from challenging situations ranging from incarceration to surviving domestic violence. Employment not only brings income, but also stability and a sense of achievement.

Kehaulani Coleman, director of Economic Advancement Programs at YWCA of Oahu, says one of the unique aspects about the network is that "it's a program of women helping women help themselves, one that staff and mentors are very passionate about."

That passion has pro-

duced remarkable results in Honolulu.

Sixty-four women have taken part in Going Places Network at YWCA of Oahu since its beginning in the spring of 2013, and 56 have completed the program. Of those who finished, an astounding 70 percent have found employment. That record of success has now attracted national attention.

Earlier this month at the

the world, there are more than 125 affiliates of Dress for Success. The chapter at YWCA of Oahu is the only one in Hawaii and has served more than 4,000 women since its creation 12 years ago.

The ability of Dress for Success Honolulu to continue to help the women of Oahu depends on the donations of groups and individuals, and the extensive involvement of vol-



Kehaulani Coleman (left), director of economic advancement programs, YWCA of Oahu, receives the Compass Award for an exceptional workforce development program from Joi Gordon, chief executive officer of Dress for Success Worldwide | (YWCA) photo

annual Affiliate Conference in Boston, Dress for Success Honolulu received the 2014 COMPASS Award for outstanding outcomes related to its job readiness program. Across the country and around

unteers around the island. We are grateful for your support. Mahalo for sharing your strength with women who can put it to good use. For more information, please go to www.ywca-oahu.org.

Hawaii charitable organizations may send requests for space in either Proof Positive or the free advertisement below to dchapman@midweek.com.



WILD WEST BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE

www.bbbshawaii.org/wildwestbowl

Public service of
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Hawaii

