



An Above and Beyond Volunteer Brings a Garden to Life in Hawaii

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This month, Raymond Higa was recognized as one of USGBC's [Above and Beyond Volunteers](#), volunteer leaders whose contributions have led to outstanding achievements.

When USGBC Hawaii sought to design and plant a new garden at Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School for the 2012 Green Apple Day of Service, they called a local landscape design company for help. Ray Higa not only offered his company's services, but also assisted in sourcing the planting materials, pricing them, and coordinating their delivery. In addition, Ray was able to recruit many of his co-workers to assist in the grubbing and installation of the plants.

According to Chris Parker, Chair of the USGBC Hawaii Green Schools Committee, "Ray's hands-on approach from design to inception was a wonderful surprise, and he was all smiles throughout the process. His passion for helping the school and sharing his knowledge of landscape design was easy to see." After all was said and done, the company had donated nearly \$2,500 in time.

Ray's selfless support and passion for helping made the project a success. The event had over 70 volunteers, who raised \$5,000 in donations and engaged in a variety of school improvements, including:

- planting a new garden using native and locally adaptive plants while adding a 2' gravel edge to the building to prevent damage to the building foundation;
- adding wood chips to a playground;
- helping students paint planter boxes with concepts of sustainability; and
- providing locally grown food and refreshments from a local restaurant.

It was after the event, however, when Ray went above and beyond. When several plants were not thriving six months later, Ray found and planted replacements. Because of his efforts, native Hawaiian plants are now flourishing at Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School. These include pohinahina, lima papa, gardenia, and ti leaves.

"His work was instrumental in bringing to life our vision of a new native entry garden for Queen Kaahumanu Elementary School," said Parker. "I am so proud to hear that Raymond Higa will be featured as one of USGBC's Above and Beyond Volunteers."



Colin White

Community Volunteer Specialist
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Chapter members, USGBC staff

3 comments

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William Nutt

Associate, Marketing & Communications, U.S. Green Building Council

1 year 52 weeks ago

What an outstanding example of volunteer commitment! Ray is an invaluable member of the USGBC community.



Ryan P. Snow
U.S. Green Building Council

1 year 52 weeks ago

USGBC's volunteers are the best! Thanks for everything you've done, Ray. It is an inspiration to us all!



Brenda Lowrey
State of Hawaii

1 year 52 weeks ago

Congratulations Ray, PBR Hawaii and all the volunteers who helped make Ka'ahumanu's garden & Green Apple Day of Service a success!! The Hawaii Department of Education truly appreciates your support!

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