

Tiny House Big Future



“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.” ~ Vincent Van Gogh

Above: top row: Levi Silva; second row: Daniel Erickson, Ryan Lomongo; third row: Sterling Snyder, Justin Carvalho, Darren Fernandez, Brayden Munar, Kyle Ramey, Jim Andrews, Duke Lang; bottom row: Ronald Garania Jr., Stetson Borilez, Danold Tarofmai, Keahi Kahui, Cody Abigania, Zac Gardien, Kieth Vea.

PUHI, HAWAII -- The people of Kauai know that the only way to get projects done is to work with a team, no matter how large or small. At Kauai Community College, four programs -- Carpentry, Sustainable Science Management, Facilities Maintenance, and Electrical Installation -- have combined to build what they call the Tiny House. Justin Carvalho, instructor and coordinator of the college’s carpentry program, and Instructor Duke Lang are thrilled with their students’ teamwork. Justin commented, “We wanted to emphasize the importance of the relationship between the KCC carpentry and maintenance programs, and the industry partners in the community.” Jim Andrews, who heads up the electrical installation program, agreed. “The best thing our students learned is to work together with the other trades to be able to install the equipment and complete the project”. It wasn’t just his words that evoked sincerity; it was the tremendous smile he flashed at his students and the grins that came firing back as they admired the house.

On the last day of class, there were at least a dozen students milling around the Tiny House, laughing with each other, and with good reason, being proud of their work. The sense of dedication that surrounded each one of them was evident. It was easy to see that they didn’t just want to complete this building for a grade-they wanted to learn from it. More than that, they want to share with others what they have learned. Levi Silva, a student in his second year in the carpentry

program, was impressed with his work and with the younger students in the program. “The hardest and scariest part is when we’re on the roof and it’s pretty high, but doing this with the new guys was a good learning experience. You gotta teach the new guys and give them an experience so they know what to do. If you do these things before you graduate, it’s a better learning experience before the real world.” His passion for teaching the younger students clearly showed, as did his admiration for his mentors Justin and Jim.

In this program, relationships aren’t just about turning in the next homework assignment; they’re about inspiring others and making connections that will last a lifetime. By working in the trades, students learn the value of teamwork in a hands-on way through the projects students do on campus. Students just can’t get this kind of experience in most other college programs. And it shows in the way they sit on the edge of the Tiny House, legs dangling off the sides while patting their friends on the back, and smiling wider than the house they built-together.

