

# Na 'Ohana Pūlama – Lexie's Story

Lexie is the definition of the word resilient. Her biological mother had her when she was 16 years old and struggled with substance use, mental health issues, poverty, and could not care for her. From birth, Lexie experienced various forms of abuse and neglect. At age 4, Lexie's family moved in with her maternal grandfather.

When reports of abuse and neglect surfaced, Lexie and her younger brother were placed in the custody of the child welfare system. Eventually, Lexie was referred to a transitional family home (TFH) program at Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

At age 8, Lexie had lived in seven different TFH homes and was even hospitalized several times. Due to ongoing concerns with her maternal grandparents, Lexie became a ward of the state. She remembers feeling scared, not knowing who to trust, feeling unwanted, abandoned, and always thinking "why me?"

Shortly thereafter, Lexie was placed with the Faufata family, a family who has worked with CCH for the past 15 years providing a TFH home to kids. Lexie received individual therapy and consistent support and structure within the home. Over the next couple of years, Lexie continued to respond to services and made significant progress.

Today, Lexie continues to thrive. This fall, she will be a junior in high school and her goal is to graduate from high school and go on to college to become a social worker to help other kids like her.

Lexie attributes her current life to the love and support she received from the Faufata family and the Catholic Charities Hawai'i team. She expressed that the main things that helped her was having a safe and stable home, adults who cared for her, and people to listen.

*Catholic Charities Hawai'i Comprehensive Counseling and Support Services offers professional counseling, case management, and crisis intervention services, outreach, support, and visitation services to families with a history of child abuse and neglect.*

*Catholic Charities Hawai'i Transitional Family Home program provides services to youth with a variety of emotional and behavioral problems. Youth referred to this program have often experienced various trauma including physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse and neglect. Youth are placed in licensed foster homes to learn appropriate social and life skills.*



**CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII**  
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SUMMER 2019 • CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII NEWSLETTER

## Finding Love and Hope for a Brighter Future

Seven years ago, Janny and Bronson met at Hina Mauka, a treatment center for alcohol and substance abuse. They both came from dysfunctional homes – Janny, raised by a single mother, remembers a cycle of homelessness and domestic violence with her four brothers, a memory she'd rather not think about. Bronson came from a family of seven children. His dad was a drug dealer and his mom was a drug addict. They divorced while he was still young. Janny and Bronson started dating and five years later had a child together.

In 2018, Janny was arrested and her children were taken away. When her case was dropped she was given a second chance to turn her life around. Janny said, "I hit rock bottom" and knew that something had to change.

That's when they found Catholic Charities Hawai'i and started meeting with their therapist, Elliott, in Comprehensive Counseling and Support Services. "Elliott pushed me to be a better person," Janny said.

"He encouraged me and always stayed positive. It wasn't easy, there was a lot we had to do, we took a parenting class, domestic violence class, drug rehabilitation counseling, singles and couples counseling." What kept them

going? They wanted their kids back so that they could be a family again. Bronson said that it was hard to see his son cry when they left after supervised visits.

Both were living apart - Janny in a homeless shelter and Bronson at a clean & sober house. They weren't sure if they

could be together but thanks to hard work and Catholic Charities Hawai'i, they were able to get a 2-bedroom apartment at Hale Hoaloha, a transitional apartment building for individuals and families working toward self-sufficiency.

Now that they have made significant changes in their lives and have a stable home, their sons were returned to them in May.



*Bronson and Janny pictured in front of their new apartment.*

When asked how they feel about their future, Bronson said "hopeful" and Janny said "prosperous." "All we want is to give our kids a better foundation in life. In five years, I would like to be a nurse and own my own home" Janny added. Bronson said, "I just want a normal family that I can go to sporting events with or to practice with my boys."

"Catholic Charities Hawai'i put us on the right track but it's up to you," Janny said. "I would tell anyone that is going through a lot, don't give up – there is help but you have to want it and not be afraid to ask for help."

### CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

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[www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org](http://www.catholiccharitieshawaii.org)

#### OUR MISSION:

Helping people in need to help themselves, regardless of their faith of each person calls us to reverence the God-given life and dignity of each person at every stage and condition of life.

#### OUR CORE VALUES:

**Social Justice** calls us to be a community of hope that works to achieve the common good, promotes individual rights and responsibilities, and advocates on behalf of those with the greatest need.

**Compassion** calls us, as sisters and brothers, to be present with others in their suffering and need and to serve with a caring spirit.

**Dignity** of each person calls us to reverence the God-given life and dignity of each person at every stage and condition of life.

**Commitment to Excellence** calls us to serve competently and collaboratively.



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Maui United Way



KAUAI UNITED WAY



## Message from the Board Chair and Acting Chief Executive Officer

Aloha,

We hope that many of you are enjoying these summer months and taking advantage of the longer days. Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) has been busier than ever as we continue to strengthen programs, welcome new ones and prepare for our new CEO to be named.

Some programs that have seen recent expansion include:

- **Housing & Homelessness:** Our new Villages of Mā'ili (VOM), which houses formerly homeless families and individuals, has seen rapid growth and brought important services to the west side. Our first client moved into VOM in March of this year and since then 45 units are currently occupied. These units house 75 adults and 42 children. One additional building will offer more housing once the units are ready for occupancy.

Our senior housing projects are continuing to expand to offer affordable housing to more seniors. Meheula Vista Phase III will be completed this year with 75 additional units added to the first two phases. Kahului Lani I on Maui will also be completed this year with 82 units of senior affordable housing on Maui. Phase II will have 83 units.

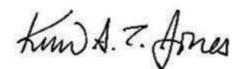
- **Senior Services:** Two new programs recently started, Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC) and the Dementia Grant. BEC will assist seniors with accessing benefits and the dementia grant provides support and education for caregivers.

- **Disaster Recovery:** A new partnership on Kaua'i is helping to rebuild homes for those affected by last year's flooding. On Hawai'i Island we are still assisting with longer term disaster recovery needs.

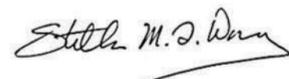
- **Counseling:** We continue to grow our counseling services on O'ahu and Hawai'i Island, providing counseling to individuals and families. In addition, family visitations have been taking place in Laulima House for over a year now. CCH provides supervised visits between parents and their children in a safe home environment so that children can feel more comfortable.

CCH continues to strengthen its programs to align with our strategic plan. We have built a strong community of hope thanks to all the support you have provided.

We are grateful for your support in our work to serve the community and its ever-changing needs. Together we are giving hope to others and making our community stronger.



Kim T. Jones  
Chair, Board of Directors



Stella M. Q. Wong  
Acting Chief Executive Officer



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Chair, Board of Directors

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Acting Chief  
Executive Officer

## Donor HIGHLIGHT Larry Rodriguez

In the early 1990s, Larry Rodriguez was a partner at Ernst & Young and one of his partners was a Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) board member who introduced him to CCH. Larry was initially drawn to our senior service programs and our work with families. As his involvement with CCH increased, he agreed to co-chair the CCH Capital Campaign with Bishop Larry Silva. The campaign was a success and his involvement with CCH increased his commitment to helping those in need.



Larry has stayed involved with CCH all these years because he values the commitment CCH staff have to its mission, as well as all of the important and efficient work CCH provides. He believes that CCH continues to make a significant impact on the community it serves.

When Larry first came to Hawai'i, he had only planned on being here for a few years. That was 38 years ago! He stayed in the islands because he was drawn to the culture and people. Being in the islands was different from his experiences living and working in other places. He appreciated the way in which people work together to get more done and accomplish great things.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i knows it is a privilege to have the support of Larry Rodriguez. He is a long-time philanthropist and supports numerous local organizations. We are incredibly honored to be counted as one of them!



Your legacy gift can be tailored to meet your financial needs while providing lasting support to Catholic Charities Hawai'i. For more information, contact our Development Office at (808) 527-4820.

## Leave a Legacy

Consider leaving a legacy by including Catholic Charities Hawai'i in one of the following:

- Your Will (Bequest)
- As a Beneficiary Designation (involving all or part of life insurance, IRA, etc.)
- Gifts from your IRA
- Donor-Advised Fund
- Gifts of Appreciated Stock

## Catholic Charities Hawai'i Events



Laulima House Reception (L-R) Larry Rodriguez (Campaign Chair), Stella Wong (Acting CEO), Jerry Rauckhorst (Fmr CEO)



Friends of Catholic Charities Hawai'i Annual Luncheon at The Pacific Club on May 10, 2019



Walkers raising money for CCH at the Kaua'i Charity Walk



CCH Staff Conference Hiking group, May 3, 2019



Korean Dancers at the Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center



CCH Staff Conference Hula workshop, May 3, 2019