

Lanai Youth Artists Create 1,000 Medallions for the 20th Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities

Young artists with disabilities who attend Lanai High and Elementary School created one-thousand rainbow raku pendants to sell as keepsakes of the 20th annual International Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities.

The project is sponsored by VSA arts of Hawaii-Pacific in an effort to launch the Lanai Artists Cooperative. The event is hosted by the University of Hawaii Center on Disability Studies at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel.



Isaiah, Taylor, Ryan with Branden Hazlet and Carla Reader worked long hours to complete the medallions in time to sell at the conference. The proceeds will fund the arts mentorship program and an end of the school year class field trip.

Lanai teachers Branden Hazlet and Carla Reader spearheaded the effort of the students.

“We don’t know why didn’t we think of this before,” Lanai High principal Pierce Myers said. “Launching this creative industry has been so successful that its invigorated the both the school and the community.”

The Lanai Artists Cooperative, part of the statewide “Artists Mean Business in Hawaii” mentorship and self-

employment initiative. It is funded in part by the grant from the Hawaii Community Foundation.

The Lanai youth entrepreneurial effort was launched with the creation of 100 Halloween ceramic pumpkins by Lanai potter Jocelyn Taal. It was followed by 100 sparkling beaded Valentine’s Day bracelets created by elementary school artists-students ages 5-75.

“We see the artists cooperative giving Lanai youth more options. If they want to stay home after high school, they can work for themselves and market globally,” school psychologist Sharie Liden, the Lanai VSA arts of Hawaii-Pacific coordinator.