

Kaneta Foundation pledges \$1M for Kapiolani Community College scholarship program

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The Kaneta Foundation has committed to a \$1 million challenge grant over the next five years for the expansion of the Lunalilo Scholars Program at Kapiolani Community College, which provides financial, and academic support to financially at-risk students.

The program covers Lunalilo scholars' first year of tuition at the KCC and also provides them with tutoring, financial literacy, and skill-building programs during their first year. The program has shown to increase graduation rates and boost grade point averages.

Philanthropists Lester and Marian Kaneta partnered with KCC in 2012 to create the program, which has grown from 21 students to 50 students for the 2015-16 school year.

Lester Kaneta hopes the program can accommodate 100 students the following year. Students involved have had greater success rates than the general school population, he said.

“There are some great scholarship programs, but nothing that really broke that cycle of poverty,” Lester Kaneta told PBN. “This works — we work with feeder schools, high schools and social service agencies and we accept applications from everyone. Many of our applicants have had very difficult lives facing major obstacles, whether it is domestic violence, or drug abuse, or homelessness.”

Forty percent of the initial Lunalilo cohort graduated, compared to 20 percent of the general student population, he said, and 91 percent of Lunalilo scholars successfully complete their first year at KCC, as opposed 77 percent not in the program.

“They come in with low confidence and not a lot of hope, but the difference with this program is you see their transformation right before your eyes,” said Lavache Scanlan, director of the Lunalilo Scholars program. “They’re confident and setting higher goals for themselves, more than they thought they could. They’re not afraid anymore to do a little bit extra.”

http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/news/2015/05/29/kaneta-foundation-pledges-1m-for-kapiolani.html?ana=e_du_pub&s=article_du&ed=2015-05-29&u=21586990754d5c134d9af672e1dfd1&t=1432948729