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By Desiree Higa

The Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) was awarded a \$40,000 grant in October from the 2005 Ulu Network Fund, which is administered by The Department of Native Hawaiian Health at the University of Hawaii, John A. Burns School of Medicine.



The Health Center will use the funds to increase the awareness, prevention, and control of diabetes through the implementation of a culturally inspired project entitled The Makahiki Project. The Project, named after the traditional ceremony as celebrated by the kanaka maoli, or Native Hawaiians, aims to increase physical activity and improve nutrition by providing activities that teach various means of growing and acquiring healthy foods. Activities, such as farming, aquaculture, and fishing are just some of the skills that participants will learn.

We have just begun the farming curriculum. So far, participants have cleared more than 90 square feet of land on the lower campus of WCCHC. Makahiki participants, including Diabetes Support Group (DSG) members and their family, volunteers, and passersby joined together to prepare the land for the fruits, vegetables, and herbs that the participants have already sprouted. It was really exciting to see everyone come together as an ohana and support our new garden. If you have diabetes and are interested in joining the Makahiki Project please call today!

For more information on The Makahiki Project contact Desiree Higa at 696-1599, or email dhiga@wcchc.com.