



HAPA: Hawaii Academy of Performing Arts
Chinatown Artists Lofts & **The ARTS at Marks Garage**

March 13, 2013

Aloha!

I am writing in support of the Honolulu Food Forest project that is being developed by The Asia-Pacific Center for Regenerative Design.

Honolulu Food Forest can set the gold standard for creative placemaking for the Pacific.

We are pleased to know that they are working with Honolulu Police Department, Hawaii Pacific University, The Institute for Human Services, Mental Health Kokua, PermablitzHI, and 808 Urban to help develop a vibrant and innovative urban experience.

The ARTS at Marks Garage, Chinatown Artists Lofts and the other projects that we manage are based on the belief that creativity is the raw resource for the economy of the future, and innovation is the key ingredient for new technology. Far from the arts being a “frill” or an “elective” creativity is in the top 5 applied skills desired by business leaders, and 72 percent of business leaders now say creativity is of high importance when hiring. A college arts degree is regarded as the biggest creativity indicator.

We have experienced similar projects and can offer testimony that these projects are attractive, landmark sources of civic pride. They serve as incubators for community interaction and benefit the social fabric and overall well-being of a community in the neighborhoods lucky enough to be home to this type of projects.

Hawaii Academy of Performing Arts and community leaders in Chinatown embrace this project as a tremendous benefit to our attractiveness and appeal to both visitors and residents. Programs are being considered now to link Honolulu Food Forest and the creative industries of Chinatown through wayfinding and for the benefit of all.

We are looking forward to a working with our neighbors on a project focused on creative use of the commons, food security and community building. We have witnessed firsthand the excellent design, planning and community involvement The Asia-Pacific Center for Regenerative Design are known for.

We have had installed a small edible forest project of our own earlier this year on the corner of Nuuanu and Pauahi that has been enjoyed by the crowds on First Friday. Judging by the reactions of pedestrians, the project inspires faith, and hope, and positive belief in the power of citizens to change their surroundings for the better.

Again, Hawaii Academy of Performing Arts supports Honolulu Food Forest’s work in this neighborhood and throughout the state.

Mahalo nui loa,

Rich Richardson,

Executive Director

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Mission: To transform our community with the power of the arts & establish Chinatown, Honolulu as the creative capital of the pacific.