



Maui Family Support Services, Inc.

Strengthening Children and Families in Maui County since 1980!

**For Immediate Release
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'Ono Stuff, a local children's book that brings music and families together

Tiana Kamen, author of *Farm to Keiki*, was contacted by Maui Family Support Services Early Literacy Coordinator, Traci Robello, with an idea.

WAIKUKU, MAUI - Maui Family Support Services, Inc. (MFSS) received a federal grant for their Early Literacy Project to provide training and support in the implementation of evidence-based early literacy practices in the County of Maui. The Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Early Literacy grant has three main initiatives: 1) child literacy, 2) family literacy, and 3) culture-based education. Understanding the importance of culture, and not finding the types of books that represent the children and families in Hawaii as well as intentionally imbed evidence-based early literacy practices such as dialogic reading and phonological awareness, Robello asked Kamen if she could use her knowledge of healthy eating and beautiful photos of plants from her *Farm to Keiki* book to create a children's book that includes foundational reading tips on each page of the book.

Tiana Kamen, the author of *'Ono Stuff*, is a farm to table nutritionist and aina-based educator from island of Kaua'i. *'Ono Stuff* is the newest of Tiana's 5 books, all of which were written to achieve her goal of empowering others to adopt healthy, farm-to-table lifestyles, nurture healthy habits in our youngest children and mālama 'āina – take care of the earth. These books are chock full of recipes featuring Hawaii-grown foods, educational tips, lesson plans and more!

While all of her books (including *'Ono Stuff*) are all available for sale to the public on her website, www.farmtokeiki.org, most of the people who are familiar with them are early care providers throughout the state. Through partnerships with agencies such as The Hawaii Department of Health, US Department of Agriculture, and the DOE Special Education Department, over 500 preschool teachers and family child care providers have already received her flagship *Farm to Keiki* curriculum book for participating in Tiana's *Farm to Keiki* workshops, trainings, and learning collaboratives. In these hands-on workshops, participants often leave with a nourished body, mind and soul - as they have had a chance to connect to nature by planting seeds, cooking and eating foods from the 'aina!



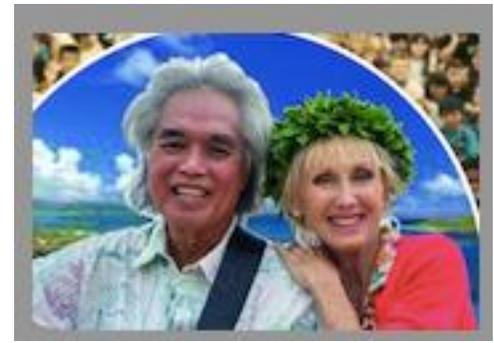


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While *Farm to Keiki* promotes “...caring for the health and education of Hawaii’s youngest children, while connecting them to the ‘aina...”, we decided to partner with Leon & Malia, Hawaii’s award winning entertainers and composers, to use their famous keiki song, ‘*Ono Stuff*. Robello states that, “The rhyming lyrics build phonological awareness skills, the music makes it fun, and many families are already familiar with the song. Using the common local staples of *kalo, ‘ulu, u’ala, ko, mai’a*, this sing-a-long book includes ‘*Building Language Skills*’ tips on each page that includes dialogic reading strategies that extends learning. Parents and children are reading, singing, and learning together in a fun way. This book was a true collaboration effort for Hawaii families to enjoy.”

Award-winning composers, recording artists, performers and producers, Leon & Malia are Hawaii’s leaders in children’s music. Every year, they perform to tens of thousands of school children throughout Hawaii. Leon & Malia’s HAWAII KIDS MUSIC concerts, videos, CDs, activity books and other children’s products, delight and inspire the children of Hawaii to explore the natural and cultural magic of their unique island home – Hawaii has many important treasures – the environment, plants and animals, many cultures, but the most important treasure of all are the children of Hawaii. Leon & Malia’s songs share the joy, fun and energy of our island home. www.hawaiikidsmusic.com



To purchase the books, contact Tiana Kamen at www.farmtokeiki.org or Leon and Malia at www.hawaiikidsmusic.com.

About MFSS: MFSS is a private, non-profit agency incorporated in 1980 to provide early childhood development services to families in Maui. The agency has provided 40 years of continuous service to children and families of Maui County. MFSS’s mission is to promote healthy family functioning by providing supportive services that build on family strengths. The prime directive is to utilize our collective resources toward the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The agency serves the islands of Maui, Lana`i, and Moloka`i. Please visit www.mfss.org for additional information about the agency.

