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# School of the Sea

The Marimed Foundation strives to get Native Hawaiians back on the water



STORY BY FRED DIXON

PHOTOS BY LOGAN MOCK-BUNTING

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## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. No purchase necessary to win. Entries for the Hana Hou! Lucky Island Draw may be submitted from April 1, 2016 until June 10, 2016. To enter, mail your completed survey entry form to PTI, 1144 10th Avenue, Suite 401, Honolulu, HI 96816. To be eligible for any of our prizes, you must complete all sections of the survey. Only one entry per person may be submitted. All entries must be received or postmarked by June 10, 2016 to be accepted for the contest. Only official entry forms may be entered; no substitute forms, including without limitation photocopies, facsimiles, computer-generated or mechanically reproduced duplicate forms, will be accepted. Neither Hana Hou! nor Hawaiian Airlines is responsible for lost, late, ineligible, misdirected, undelivered, stolen or incomplete entries or mail.

2. No more than one prize may be won per person. A random drawing of all entries will be conducted on June 30, 2016 to select the prize winners. If any Hawai'i resident wins a prize to the island on which he or she already resides, upon request that prize may be changed to a different neighbor island at the sole discretion of Hawaiian Airlines.

3. Three prizes will be awarded. The first prize is a trip for two to the Island of Maui and includes a three-night stay at the Grand Wailea as well as round-trip coach airfare on Hawaiian Airlines. The second prize is a trip for two to the Big Island and includes a three-night stay at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows along with round-trip coach airfare on Hawaiian Airlines. Third prize is a trip for two to O'ahu and includes a three-night stay at the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa and roundtrip coach airfare on Hawaiian Airlines. Ground transportation and meals are not included in any of the prizes and are the responsibility of the prize winners. All trips must be completed no later than June 30, 2017 or prizes will be null and void. Travel dates will be based on airplane seat and hotel room availability, and some restrictions may apply. Prize winners must depart from and return to the same city in the Hawaiian Airlines system. Prize winners who reside outside Hawai'i will receive round-trip air transportation from the nearest Hawaiian Airlines' U.S. departure city to their Hawaiian island prize destination. Prize winners who reside in Hawai'i will receive round-trip airfare from their island of residence to their Hawai'i island prize destination. No cash alternatives or other substitutions will be made, and prizes are not transferable. By accepting the prizes, winners agree to release, hold harmless, and indemnify Hawaiian Airlines, Hana Hou! and the participating hotels and their affiliates (collectively, "Prize Sponsors") from any and all liability that may arise from the acceptance and use of the prizes, and they explicitly acknowledge that no warranties have been made by the Prize Sponsors, expressed or implied, including fitness for particular purpose or merchantability, in fact or in law or in equity, with respect to the quality, conditions or fitness of any aspect of the prize. For tax purpose only, the approximate value of each prize is \$2,000.

4. Conditions of entry: Submitted entries become the sole and exclusive property of Hana Hou! and will not be returned. State, federal and any other taxes, including but not limited to income taxes and sales taxes, imposed on any prizes are solely the responsibility of the winners. By accepting any of the prizes, prize winners specifically agree to allow the Prize Sponsors to use their names and/or photographs in advertising and sales promotions without any additional compensation. Winners may be required to complete an affidavit of eligibility and appropriate releases within 14 calendar days of prize notification and to provide their social security numbers as a condition precedent to obtaining their prize. By submitting an entry, each entrant agrees to abide by and be bound by these official rules. Each entrant waives the right to assert any and all costs of redemption or travel to redeem the prize and any liability that might arise.

5. Eligibility: Participation is limited to individuals who are 18 years of age or older at the time of entry. All entrants must be residents of the United States of America. The following persons are not eligible to enter or win a prize in this contest: employees and agents of Hawaiian Airlines, Hana Hou!, LCA-Anthology, any individuals engaged in the development or production of airline advertising and promotional materials used in this contest, and any immediate family members of any ineligible person.

If your copy of *Hana Hou!* does not contain a survey form, or you wish to enter the Lucky Island Draw without purchasing a *Hana Hou!* magazine or flying Hawaiian Airlines, please send your name and address to:

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## School of the Sea

When I climb aboard *Makani Olu* at her mooring in Kāne'ohe bay, the three-masted schooner is just about to get under way. I can feel the big Cummins diesel engines thrumming through her deck plates. The covers are off the sails, and after a brief meeting on the foredeck, the crew disperses to hoist them. Up in the bow the anchor chain clatters slowly up the hawsepipe. The captain gives a quiet order, the sails go up and *Makani Olu* eases down the channel.

It's a scene that's been enacted countless times on countless schooners around the world. Except for this: Apart from the captain and a couple of mates, no one on this crew is a professional sailor. Instead, all are alumni of Maritime Careers Exploration program, the latest offered by the Marimed Foundation. Marimed is best known in Hawai'i for its Kailana program, a form of adventure therapy that takes at-risk kids to sea. MCE, though, has a different mission: to expose Native Hawaiians to career opportunities on the waterfront. At one time many of the high-paying jobs in the local maritime industry were occupied by Hawaiians. Today those positions are held mostly by people originally from the Mainland. Hawaiians often don't even

know these jobs exist. MCE aims to remedy that. The program is free, and even though it's only a year old, it's already a success. Ninety-eight students have graduated, ranging in age from 18 to 72. Twenty-three of them have been women. Several have found work on Honolulu's waterfront.

The ninety-six-foot *Makani Olu* is Marimed's second schooner. Her predecessor, the *Tole Mour*, was built as a hospital



ship to provide medical services to the remote atolls of the Marshall Islands. That meant she was much larger—twice as big as *Makani Olu*—with room for live-aboard crew, doctors, nurses and medical equipment. In the late 1990s, when Marimed's focus shifted to serving at-risk kids in Hawai'i, the upkeep and crew cost of *Tole Mour* became too high, and Marimed sold the big ship. In 2001 they found *Makani Olu*, a steel-hulled schooner built in Florida in 1998. She was meant to serve as a sail-trainer, so she was perfectly suited to the nonprofit's new mission. She's been at the center of all Marimed's operations ever since.

**Somewhere off** Coconut Island in Kāne'ohe bay, the engine shuts down, and the ship heads across the water, sails full and shining in the sun. The MCE crew, most of whom seem to know one another, chat amiably. A few put on safety harnesses and clamber out on the bowsprit to enjoy the ride. Others lounge on deck boxes or hatch covers.

I find Joy Hinojosa up on the foredeck. She's an alum of the most recent class and one of its successes: She's about to begin an internship at the tugboat company Kirby Offshore Marine. "I wish I could be



At one time Native Hawaiians worked many high-paying jobs around Honolulu Harbor, but not so today. The Marimed Foundation aims to remedy that by teaching Hawaiians maritime skills and connecting them with potential employers. Above (left to right) Amy Hashimoto, Keda Barrozo and Joy Hinojosa hoist sails on Marimed's schooner, *Makani Olu* (top). Opening image: Students stow sails as *Makani Olu* returns to her mooring in Kāne'ohe bay.

## School of the Sea

on the water all the time, which is why a career on the water would be perfect for me," she says. She pauses and gestures broadly to make sure I take in the beauty of *Makani Olu* under sail. "This—being on the water—is a priority for me." When asked what she learned in the MCE program, she says, "All the different facets of the industry. The shore side. Being at sea. The whole gamut. Even pulling the lines and dropping the anchor. I learned far more than I would ever have expected. And, of course, the field trips were very, very good for everyone because you're meeting important people in the industry." In addition to Kirby, Hinojosa also had interviews with P&R Water Taxi and Pasha Shipping.

That's what MCE was created for, so it's not surprising that alumni like Hinojosa are the program's biggest advocates. "I'm trying to get people to sign up all the time," she says. "Especially my nephews. They're 19- and 20-year-olds who still don't know what they're going to do with their lives. I tell them, 'I love the ocean. You love the ocean. We all spend time going to the beach, fishing and swimming and surfing.'



Learning their lines: Students in the Marimed Foundation's Maritime Careers Exploration program, which is free to Native Hawaiians, train in the time-honored sailing skill of knot tying. Above, Tita Hina adjusts lines. At left, Barrozo ties a cleat hitch on one of *Makani Olu*'s three masts.

If this is something you want to do, why not take it a step further? It's free because you're Native Hawaiian. Even my own sons ... I would like for them to do this when they're of age."

The five-week MCE program has three parts. The first is composed of classes and experiential learning designed to prepare the students for entry-level jobs in the industry. The instructors—who are also the officers of *Makani Olu*—teach students the old skills, like line handling, knots and splicing, and small-boat handling. They cover safety, like fire and lifeboat procedures. In addition there's a cultural side to the curriculum, which delves into traditional Hawaiian navigation and the maritime history of the Pacific.

The most popular part of the program is at the end: a one-week sail around the Islands. It's not a pleasure cruise but rather a chance for the students to apply what they've learned. Although there's always a licensed captain, a first mate/relief captain and a second mate aboard, the students are the crew. They all stand watch, plot courses, handle the sails. They all check the engine and clean the heads.

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## School of the Sea



Clockwise from top left: Lewis Char mans the helm; Captain Harry Sprague IV, who became *Makani Olu's* master in 2008; Captain Kali Velasco brings his experience as a veteran crew member of the Polynesian voyaging canoe *Hōkūle'a* to students in the MCE program; first mate Kevin Young (in yellow) works at the foremast with Hina.

They all take turns at the helm. As much as possible, the professional sailors leave the students in charge.

The most important part of the program, though, comes before the cruise. It consists of a series of field trips to most of the major employers around Honolulu Harbor. Matt Claybaugh, the long-serving CEO of Marimed, points out that at one time most locals had a relative or a friend who worked on the waterfront. "I tell the students, 'MCE is that uncle that works down at the harbor who can introduce you to all these opportunities.' I never had that uncle, the guy who would say, 'Matty, I'm gonna take you down to the harbor to meet the

captains.' The uncle who walks you onto a Matson ship or a cruise ship. The uncle who takes you down to the pilots' office, where they hang out waiting to bring the ships into harbor. ... It never occurred to me that there were opportunities there, all kinds of jobs."

Claybaugh says the inspiration for MCE came from people like Kaipo Pomaika'i and his wife, Donna, who founded the Waianae Maritime Academy several years ago. Their program was designed to get disadvantaged kids from the Wai'anae side of O'ahu jobs on the waterfront, and, much like MCE, they tried to connect local kids with employers. "I think they ran some-

thing like two hundred students through that program in about five years," Matt says. "But it was run just on those two people's aloha. I don't care how much aloha you have—and Uncle Kaipo has more than anyone I know—you can't run an organization like that forever."

The other inspiration for MCE was Leighton Tseu, former port engineer for Matson Pacific. Claybaugh and Tseu are old friends who have sailed together on several cruises. "He's like me," Matt says, "always telling stories. So we're on watch one day, and he says, 'You know, Matt, we're losing all the Hawaiians from the waterfront. All the licensed jobs are going

**Josh Moniz, Pipeline**  
Photo: Keoki/Freesurf

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to Mainland guys. We have to figure out a way to fix that."

The spark for MCE came when Claybaugh saw a request for proposals from Alu Like, a Native Hawaiian organization, which had received a grant from the US Department of Education. "I had thought about it so long," he says, "it took me only about a week to write the proposal. A week and thirty years of building relationships."

**As the ship approaches** Mokoli'i, a.k.a. Chinaman's Hat, the big ocean swells surge down the channel. The sails are smartly sheeted in, the engine rumbles back on and *Makani Olu* bears up into the wind as she heads to sea. As we pitch and roll, I grab a handhold and go looking for *Makani Olu*'s young captain. Kalei Velasco projects the quiet confidence that comes from years at sea. He's from Kaua'i, where he grew up on the water running catamaran sightseeing charters with his family. Then he got into sailing, learning on the boats of friends and family and, as he puts it, "doing stuff with the yacht club." From there it was a natural step for a young Native Hawaiian sailor to move on to traditional sailing canoes. "Before I came to Marimed," Velasco says, "I was sailing around the Pacific on the Te Mano o te Moana voyage on *Haunui*, the double-hulled voyaging canoe from New Zealand." Velasco spent two years aboard *Haunui*, putting in over twenty-four thousand nautical miles. He also spent time on *Hōkūle'a*, most recently crewing during the Indian Ocean leg of the canoe's current round-the-world voyage.

Aboard *Makani Olu* Velasco seems at ease, issuing orders and correcting errors with laconic calm. But that demeanor belies his level of responsibility at Marimed. "If I was just the captain of the ship," he says, "I think this would be a relatively easy job. But I also have to run an entire ship program." That means a host of shore-side responsibilities, including Marimed's long-standing programs for at-risk kids. But Velasco was hired specifically because of MCE, which is fortunate because his favorite part of the job, he says, "is working with local people, working with our community and seeing their eyes open up to things they've never seen before, right in their backyard. I think that's what makes it meaningful." He notes that most of the people who come into the program have never seen the Islands from a boat.

A nautical career isn't for everyone. Some of the students go through the pro-

gram and bow out. For others, though, MCE is the ideal introduction to the maritime industry. John Kealoha, who graduated from the program at age 42, after twenty-five years in the construction industry, landed an internship at Kirby. Since then he's been hired full time and promoted twice. "If it wasn't for Marimed," he says, "I wouldn't be in the position I am right now. Before, I had no direction. I didn't know the steps to get here. If I had known it was that simple, I would have tried a long time ago."



The rewards can be considerable. Walk-on deckhands make \$170 a day without any experience. And for hard workers like Kealoha, there's a lot of room for advancement. "At this rate," he says, "I'll have my Coast Guard engineer's rating in five years. The wages for an engineer are \$704 a day." Marimed also encourages alumni to attend professional schools, like the Merchant Marine Academy in New York or the California Maritime Academy. Students at the Merchant Marine Academy graduate as third mates, earning a minimum of \$100,000 a year.

*Makani Olu* returns to her mooring in Kāne'ohe bay. The sails have been furled and covered. Now, in the afternoon light, I watch a group of alumni at the davits. Working in unison, they winch the tender from its cradle on deck, heave it over the rail and into the water, then one of them leaps in and fires up the outboard. Just like professionals. **HH**

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