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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

PATCH issues scholarships to island families to pay for preschool, with funding from the Samuel N. & Mary Castle Foundation and the Atherton Family Foundation.

Statewide: The current government funding cuts are causing financial difficulty for many Hawaii families, making it harder to afford preschool and other child care costs. PATCH has issued thirty five scholarship grants to help low-income and gap group families across Hawaii to pay for preschool tuition costs for their four year old children. Grants given ranged from \$100 - \$625 per month, for a period of between five and eight months each, and were scaled according to family size and income levels. The average cost of preschool for a four year old child in Hawaii is over \$600 a month.

A Kona preschool grant recipient said “\$150 a month may not seem like much, and some people might not even think it is worth applying... As a single mother of three children, it means a lot... I work two jobs, have no child support and, like everybody else, I am struggling. This \$150 means that from next month, I can now afford to send my 2 ½ year old to preschool as well as my 4 year old.”

PATCH seeks additional support from our community to assist other low-income children to go to preschool. There are applicant families waiting for your help to pay for their children to attend preschool. Please call (808) 791-2121 or your local PATCH office or email patch@patchhawaii.org if you are able to donate to the PATCH Preschool Scholarship fund.

PATCH extends thanks and aloha to the Samuel N. & Mary Castle Foundation and to the Atherton Family Foundation for their generous funding of these scholarships for preschoolers, and, for once again, being there for our community in a time of need. If not for this opportunity, several of these children would not be attending preschool right now. The other families, like many low-mid income families in Hawaii, were struggling to pay preschool costs for their children, and now have a more manageable financial situation.

PATCH operates the Preschool Open Doors program, a statewide early childhood education and care project which offers low-income families the opportunity to send their children to preschool for up to one full school year through State supported subsidies. With this year's government funding cuts, the Preschool Open Doors program offered subsidies to just 541 families in the 2010 school year, a figure which is less than half of the applicants who would normally be supported.

Preschool prepares children for kindergarten by teaching social skills and recognition of shapes and letters. It allows children to explore and discover their world in a learning environment. Children also learn how to get along with others and how to work as part of a group. It is important for every child to have a positive early learning experience.

"The goal of Preschool Open Doors is to help as many children as possible, in Hawaii, be ready to succeed in Kindergarten. Studies show time and time again that a good preschool experience helps a young child to do just that," said Katy Chen, Executive Director of PATCH.

As Hawaii's only child care resource and referral agency, PATCH has been helping Hawaii's families balance work and family responsibilities since 1976. The mission of PATCH is to support and improve the quality and availability of child care and education for the young people of Hawaii.

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