

Hawai'i Computer Training Center: reaffirming self-worth

Senator Daniel K. Akaka Papers

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U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka
Floor Remarks
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HAWAII COMPUTER TRAINING CENTER: REAFFIRMING SELF-WORTH

Mr. President, I would like to bring to the attention of this body a program whose inspiring success has impressed me greatly -- the Hawaii Computer Training Center (HCTC).

It is as multifaceted as a rare gem. It represents a partnership between a community-based nonprofit organization and a global business giant. It is supported by Federal, State and corporate funding. Its students may be in their late teens or in their sixties, or anywhere in between. It takes unemployed disadvantaged and minority trainees and gives them the ability to compete in a high-tech world.

HCTC is a joint venture between IBM Corporation and Alu Like, Inc., whose primary mission, throughout my home state, is to assist Native Hawaiians in achieving social and economic excellence. Through the efforts of this IBM/Alu Like partnership and a local team of caring corporate sponsors, HCTC provides no-fee training for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed, who are unable to afford such training through conventional means and who have a true desire to improve themselves and their futures.

Since HCTC's doors opened in 1986, they have graduated nearly 350 students. Their job placement rate is 95 percent!

Yet, beyond the praiseworthy structure and the incredible employment success statistics, the essence of HCTC lies in the hearts of the truly special people who are part of each graduating class.

This past July, I was privileged to speak at the commencement of Class XVIII. I can say, with fervent conviction, that the ceremony, like all others before it, marked much more than merely the completion of 15 weeks of intense computer training. It was a monument to the human spirit.

Every HCTC commencement bears testimony to an absolute commitment to purpose -- an unwavering dedication, despite great personal sacrifice, to the pursuit of a valued mission and the achievement of a very admirable goal.

Every HCTC commencement pays tribute to personal strength in the search for a better tomorrow -- courage, in the face of sometimes horrifying and intimidating odds, to take up the challenge and claim the right to a brighter future.

Every HCTC commencement is a forceful and undeniable reminder to the world of the unique identity and value of every

individual graduate. It is a reaffirmation, to a society that often treats its members as faceless, that every one of these men and women is someone worthy of recognition, someone of dignity, someone who now holds what had previously seemed like out-of-reach dreams in his or her own hands.

And every HCTC commencement reflects achievements that have and can take on far greater and broader significance than even some graduates may recognize. The gloriousness of what they have accomplished for themselves also stands as a beacon of encouragement, empowerment and guidance to who-knows-how-many others out in the community-at-large.

The American essayist Norman Cousins said, "The starting point for a better world is the belief that it is possible."

By taking that truth to heart and proving its value year after year, the Hawaii Computer Training Center, Alu Like, IBM, all others involved in support of this program and, most importantly, every successful student, continue to make believers out of everyone they touch.

They do not simply fulfill personal ambitions; they set prominent and lasting examples for us all. The brilliant flame of their achievements does not merely light individual paths to the future; they kindle new fires of hope all around them.