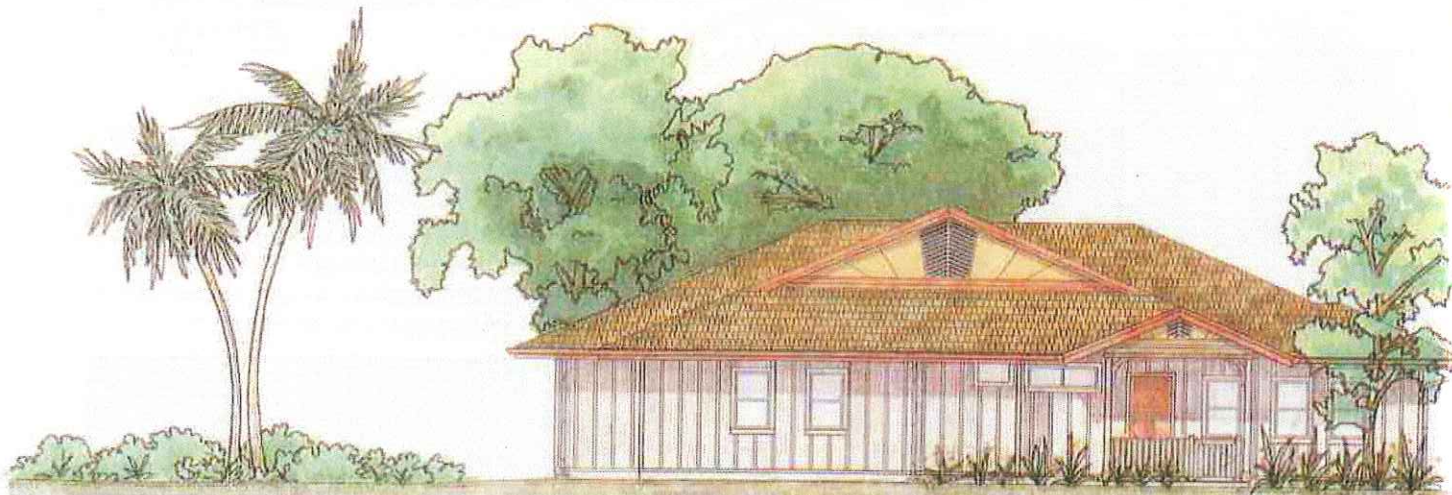




Safe Haven For Children



Hoomalu O Na Kamalii, a receiving home to open in Waianae, will be a place where siblings can stay together.

The first of its kind children's shelter, Hoomalu O Na Kamalii, is being built. It will serve as a non-threatening environment for children exclusively in Waianae and as a place where siblings can stay together.

Foster Family Programs (FFP) of Hawaii will manage the facility. Mike Wood of MW Group, Ltd., FFP board member, says, "Through this position, I saw a real need for a receiving home." Land for the facility, within the Villages of Maili temporary housing development, is provided by the state.

The 4,000-square-foot building will have 10 bedrooms, several counseling offices, a medical room and a living room. It will house up to 15 children between the ages of 3 to 17 at a time, with an estimated 180 to 300 children to be cared for yearly. Staffing will be available 24 hours a day, seven-days a week.

Linda Santos, president and CEO of FFP, explains, "When children are reported for abuse and neglect, sometimes the police and the Department of Human Services (DHS) have to remove them immediately. And until they can figure out what exactly is going on, they need a safe place to be."

When children are brought to Hoomalu O Na Kamalii, Child Welfare Services will perform assess-

Donating Millions

Mike Wood, principal of MW Group, Ltd., donated \$1 million to develop Hoomalu O Na Kamalii and that is only the start. He has pledged to donate \$400,000 a year for 20 years to help operate the home.

"My younger brother had emotional problems, (and) my family was unable to provide for him the special care he needed," Wood says. When Wood moved out on his own while his brother was young and he himself too young to help, Wood says he made it his mission to help other children.

He hopes that Hoomalu O Na Kamalii will be a safe, secure place where brothers and sisters can stay together. "I see this home as being a model for other shelters in Hawaii," he says. "I hope this donation spurs other business owners, include those larger than me, to also dig deep and give back to our community."

Wood was an original Big Brother in Hawaii in the 1960s and served on its board for 18 years. Now he is on the board of directors for Foster Family Programs of Hawaii.



Mike Wood

ments of each child and investigate the home situation. Children will stay from two weeks to a month.

"It's very traumatic when children are removed from their home, even if it's a bad situation. They don't understand, so hopefully by putting them in this kind of atmosphere with lots of support and warmth and nurturing, it will be less traumatic to them," Santos says.

Developer of the project is Stanford Carr Development and the

local general contractors are Coastal Construction Co., Inc. and Royal Contracting Co., Ltd.

DHS, kupuna from the Waianae coast and other community groups are also helping to run this home, expected to be completed in January and be licensed and opened by April 2009.

According to DHS, about 2,100 children are in foster care because of confirmed child abuse or neglect on any given day in Hawaii.