
HAB FORUM

HAWAII ASSOCIATION OF THE BLIND Advocating for Independence, Equality, Opportunity

Vol. VI No. III

September 2008

ALOHA! The Hawaii Association of the Blind (HAB) is proud to introduce everyone to the **HAB Forum**. This newsletter is published twice a year.

HAB is an organization comprised of blind and sighted members, who strongly believe in advocating for independence, equality, and opportunity for all blind persons. The officers are:

- President: Warren Toyama, vendor at the Tripler Army Medical Center
- First Vice-President: Filo Tu, President and CEO of Blind Vendors Ohana
- Second Vice-President & Scholarship Chairman: Don Thomson, Retired Professor
- Secretary: Maureen Sheedy, Ho'opono Volunteer
- Treasurer: Amelia Cetrone, retired hotel CEO
- Board Members:
 - Myles Tamashiro, vendor at Kona Airport
 - Norman Ota, dark room technician at Tripler Army Medical Center
 - Landa Phelan, self-employed
 - Ronald Flormata, HAB webmaster

*** Court Says the Blind Will Have Meaningful Access to Currency ***

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5, 2008 – The American Council of the Blind is pleased to report that District Court Judge James Robertson has told lawyers representing both sides in the case American Council of the Blind v. Paulson that the Department of the Treasury must make U.S. currency accessible to people who are blind and visually impaired as quickly as possible.

In its decision on May 20, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia remanded the issue of injunctive relief back to the District Court for further consideration. Therefore, a status conference was held Sept. 4 by Judge James Robertson, during which he made it clear to both sides that he will not allow any unnecessary delay by the Treasury as it seeks to comply with the court's ruling that requires paper currency to be distinguishable by people who are blind and visually impaired. Robertson ordered the parties to meet and attempt to reach agreement on a schedule. The court intends to impose a schedule on the government for making future generations of currency accessible and to ensure that it is complied with.

Mitch Pomerantz, president of the American Council of the Blind, said "It is apparent that this judge expects the Treasury to expeditiously comply with his earlier ruling in favor of accessible currency. Our outstanding attorney, Jeffrey Lovitky, is continuing to hold Treasury's feet to the fire and it is gratifying to know that the judge is likewise requiring accountability and transparency from the manufacturer of our legal tender. ACB and Mr. Lovitky shall stand firm on behalf of blind and visually impaired individuals in our demand that we have the same opportunity to independently determine what each bill is without the need for outside assistance, either human or electronic."

PRESIDENT'S CORNER – Warren Toyama

The activity level of the Hawaii Association of the Blind has gotten to an unprecedented number of projects. The latest event was HAB underwriting the cost for one-half of the billing for hot dogs and buns at the recent Library for the Blind open house at the Waianae Library. Congratulations to the Administrators and staff of LBPH, and the Friends of the Library for the Blind for a job well done!



At the 47th annual national convention of the American Council of the Blind (ACB), about 19 people from Hawaii were in attendance in Louisville, Kentucky. The convention was a huge success and Hawaii did our usual positive things (\$1,000 donated to the ACB general treasury, and \$1,000 also donated to the National Education and Legal Defense Services). Retired professor Don Thomson served as Hawaii's delegate. It was also nice to fellowship once again with Cynthia Hirokawa.

As we go to press, HAB is staring at four important projects – projects that will strengthen our organization: 1) HAB will have a booth at the “I Love Liliha” Festival, 2) HAB has been invited to participate at the Senior Fair, 3) Stacie Phasouk and Amelia Cetrone have been selected to attend the October convention of the California Council of the Blind, and 4) Filo Tu, Ronald Flormata, Myles Tamashiro, Norman Ota, and Julia Toyama are delegates to ACB's Western Regional Leadership Training Conference. I am on the planning committee and will be one of the presenters at the conference.

I urge all HAB supporters to participate and grow with us!

Flormata's Attain U.S. Citizenship - Stacie Phasouk

Most people who come from developing countries seek to become U.S. citizens because of the opportunity for a better way of life. This was true for Ron Flormata, his wife Elizabeth, and their three children. However, unlike many other people, Ron is visually impaired.

During his last year of high school, Ron began to notice that he was having trouble seeing in the dark and was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa during his first year at the University of the Philippines. He said, "Being blind is tough if you live in a developing country like the Philippines, where government support is almost nonexistent to make the lives of blind individuals productive. Services such as transportation, vocational rehabilitation, job search, and education, just to name a few, are virtually unheard of. The disabled have to compete courageously with everyone else."

In April of 2003, after waiting 14 years for their U.S. Visa to be processed, the family arrived in Hawaii, where Elizabeth has family. Anyone applying for Naturalization must remain in the U.S. for at least 5 years, but can put in their application 6 months prior to the end of the 5th year. The couple applied for citizenship in January 2007. Four months later, they went through an interview/examination. Applicants are advised to read 100 questions and answers about U.S. history and government. During the interview, however, the immigration officer asks the applicant only 5 out of those 100 questions. The applicant is also instructed to write a simple sentence. In Ron's case, the officer asked him to write, "She cooks very well" on the back of a 1x1 inch photo. This took several attempts by Ron, who said "I was fortunate to have

that particular officer instead of my wife's interviewer who seemed so strict, stern faced and a person of no emotions." A couple of weeks later, he received a letter informing him to attend the Oath Taking Ceremony.

On June 2, 2008 with his daughter by his side to assist him during the ceremony, Ron took his oath of allegiance and officially became a citizen of the United States of America. Elizabeth obtained her citizenship on June 25, 2008. "It's only been a month since we became naturalized citizens. Our lives have not changed dramatically yet. However, we have no doubt it can only get better and we look forward to a more secure and rewarding future."

SOCIAL COMMITTEE – Beth Flormata

The Social Committee would like to express its deepest thanks and appreciation to all the members and friends who helped make this year's Spring Fling celebration at the Pagoda Hotel a huge success! In particular, the bingo social was a wonderful way of sharing and enjoying the camaraderie, especially the winners (as well as the losers!!). Special thanks also to all those who donated prizes for the bingo games. Your generosity is what makes this organization really special! Maybe we can have a repeat performance in the near future.

Another upcoming event that we can all look forward to is our annual Thanksmas Party! Thanksgiving and Christmas, before we know it, is just around the corner! So be ready for wonderful surprises that await the members and friends of HAB at this event. Details shall be announced as soon as they become available. Any volunteers in for this annual event would be most welcome. Contact Myles Tamashiro if you wish to sign up. Mahalo!

**TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Ronald Flormata,
Webmaster**

During the HAB Convention of 2008, I was very fortunate to be awarded the Maestro/Trekker GPS (Global Positioning System) navigation device. There are a number of GPS devices on the market now (such as Garmin, Tom Tom, and Magellan), however none of them are accessible. Trekker is a computer program developed by Humanware and it runs on PDA's (Personal Digital Assistant) with the Windows Mobile operating system. Since it is a hand-held computer system, it is highly advisable that the user knows how to operate a personal computer. To access the stylus operated keyboard of the PDA, Humanware equips these devices with a tactile keyboard specially designed for the blind. I've had no problems moving around this keyboard.



So is the Maestro/Trekker actually useful for the blind? Judging from my four months (and counting) of personal usage, I'd say YES, YES, YES! But don't just take my word for it...ask my Trekker buddies – Filo and Myles. I fondly call the Trekker my personal tour guide. Suddenly I see points of interests such as restaurants, schools, churches, etc. that used to be invisible to me while traveling. Whether you're simply walking or in a moving vehicle, the Trekker will announce things such as what's in your vicinity, the street you're on, and intersections.

One of the more interesting features of a GPS navigation system is the route creation. Once you have created your route from point of origin to point of destination, the Trekker will help you navigate your way through. It will give you ample warning before you make a turn. Compared to non-accessible GPS

products on the market, the Trekker does not automatically re-compute your route when you move out of the first computed route.

It should be noted that GPS relies solely on satellites that orbit the earth, so no satellites means no GPS. Weather conditions also play a major role in determining how many satellites your GPS receiver can see in the sky. You need at least three satellites to pinpoint your location on a map, a process called triangulation. The more satellites, the more accurate the reading would be. So far, the most my GPS receiver sees is 11 satellites and the accuracy is quite remarkable. I usually miss the turn to our apartment when I'm walking from the bus stop, but now the Trekker tells me with a high degree of accuracy when to make the turn. You can also customize these announcements by recording your voice! Please also note that GPS does not work inside buildings, in places with thick foliage, or in other places that don't offer a good view of the sky. I also noticed that when I'm on the bus, I have to place my GPS receiver near the window or I lose contact with the satellites.

Where have I tested the Trekker? Well, I had the chance to trek with my Trekker in Las Vegas, Nevada; in Anaheim and Los Angeles California; in Prescott, Sedona, Flagstaff, and Tucson in Arizona; in Louisville, Kentucky; and of course Oahu. Just don't forget to install the map of the state before you go there, otherwise Trekker can't be of much help to you. Now, everywhere I go, I have my Trekker with me...I can't leave home without it!

Vending News – Filo Tu

It's never ending...the blind vending program is in danger again this year! A bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate to take

away the word “blind” and just include the word “vendor” in the Randolph-Sheppard Act. As you can understand, the blind vendors all over the nation were alarmed by this bill. Why you may ask? Well, without the word “blind” in the Act, I will promise you that blind people will never have a fair opportunity to get into the vending program. This bill was so important to the blind of this nation that the two major organizations of the blind came together to stop it. I am proud to say that the members of HAB played a vital role to bring this bill to a halt, for now.



In February, Warren Toyama proposed to the State that we should bring Terry Smith from the Tennessee vending program, Bob Humphrys the lead writer of the Randolph-Sheppard Act, and national lobbyist Catriona MacDonald to share with Hawaii’s blind vendors and explain what’s going on and what Hawaii can do to help the vending program. It was a successful conference! They told Hawaii’s vendors to try and meet with their congressional delegation...and so we met with all four congressional members.

Mr. Dave Eveland, the administrator of Ho’oponono, Warren Toyama, Myles Tamashiro, and I were able to set-up these meetings. We met Congresswoman Hirono and Congressman Abercrombie personally, and we talked with people from the offices of our two U.S. Senators. The meeting with Representative Abercrombie was a conference call held at my office! We also met with Walter Kaneakua from Senator Inouye’s office.

This mission was accomplished with the help of your members from HAB, members from the National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii, Mr. Cordova from the Department of

Rehabilitation, and Mr. Eveland from Ho’opono. This effort has been recognized not only by our local lobbyists, but by all the people involved with saving the blind vending program nationwide.

This program is the most successful employment program that congress has created for any disabled group, and that is why we must always be ready to protect the blind vending program not only for the blind of today, but also for the blind of tomorrow!

Keiki and Parents of the Visually Impaired (KAPVI) – Carol Hotta

- In June, KAPVI members participated in the MauiLions Club’s fishing tournament and won several trophies: Karl Jason (2nd grade, Wailuku) won a 1st place trophy for the smallest fish; Troyden (10th grade, King Kekaulike High School) got a 3rd place award for the most fish; and Kamakoa (2nd grade, Makawao) took 3rd place for the largest fish. Congratulations to the KAPVI students!
- Tentative KAPVI Calendar: October 24 (Fri.) – Pumpkin Decorating Contest; November (Date to be announced) – Participation with Maui Lions Club’s Thanksgiving Lunch at Kalama Beach; December 13 (Sat.) – Christmas Party and Food/Toy Drive for the Homeless.
- One of KAPVI’s activities was a workshop to find the best ways to provide for our “special-needs” children – medically, legally, financially, and providing for care-givers. Things to consider are: making wills and “special-needs” trusts, government benefits and qualifications, child’s short-term and long-term needs, power of attorney, selection of guardians and



trustees, and estate planning. There are attorneys who are knowledgeable in the laws and in estate planning for “special-needs” children.

Please contact Carol Hotta if you would like info from parents who participated in the “special-needs” workshop, or if you want to participate in any of the activities listed above (phone: 205-7411, email: carol_hotta@notes.k12.hi.us, or Margaret_greiner@notes.k12.hi.us).

Hawaii Association of Parents of the Visually Impaired (HAPVI) – Amy Downard

Get your calendars out; HAPVI has a whirlwind of events coming your way. August 9 (Sat.) HAPVI will have their quarterly meeting from 10am – 12pm at Ho’opono for networking, family support, and convention planning. August 30 (Sat.) we will be sharing a table with HAB at the “I Love Liliha” Festival. Stop by Kawananakoa Middle School Cafeteria as we share information about HAPVI with the community. And best of all, HAPVI will host its Annual Convention on Saturday, September 13th at the Pagoda Hotel in Honolulu from 8am – 2pm. A wide range of topics regarding services, updates, and transition opportunities will be a treat to all who attend. Look for flyers or hear the buzz in the air as the date nears! Contact HAPVI President Myles Tamashiro for more info.



HAPVI members last met at LBPH in May for an update on library services and event planning. It continues to advocate for quality services and education for children who are blind and visually impaired. Its membership is steadily increasing. Yeah!

State of Hawaii Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SHAER) – Amy Downard

SHAER is proud to announce that five newly certified Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) have been hired. These teachers filled vacancies in Honolulu, Windward, and Central School Districts on Oahu. Portland State University partnered with UH and DOE to provide a high quality and rigorous program for selected teacher candidate from Hawaii. SHAER congratulates these hard working teachers on their achievement. SHAER is planning a conference focusing on social skills, Braille literacy, and transition skills in February 2009. Penny Rosenblum from the University of Arizona will be the featured presenter. Look for more info coming soon.

Several SHAER members, including SHAER President Christian Yates, enjoyed an amazing and informative AER Convention in July 2008 in Chicago. Many wonderful presenters shared information on the latest and greatest in instruction, resources, and technology.

Letter from Amy Downard to HAB

July 24, 2008

Dear Members of Hawaii Association of the Blind,

I would like to thank you so much for your ongoing support to our visually impaired students in Honolulu. This past summer, we used some of the donation money you gave us in March to support

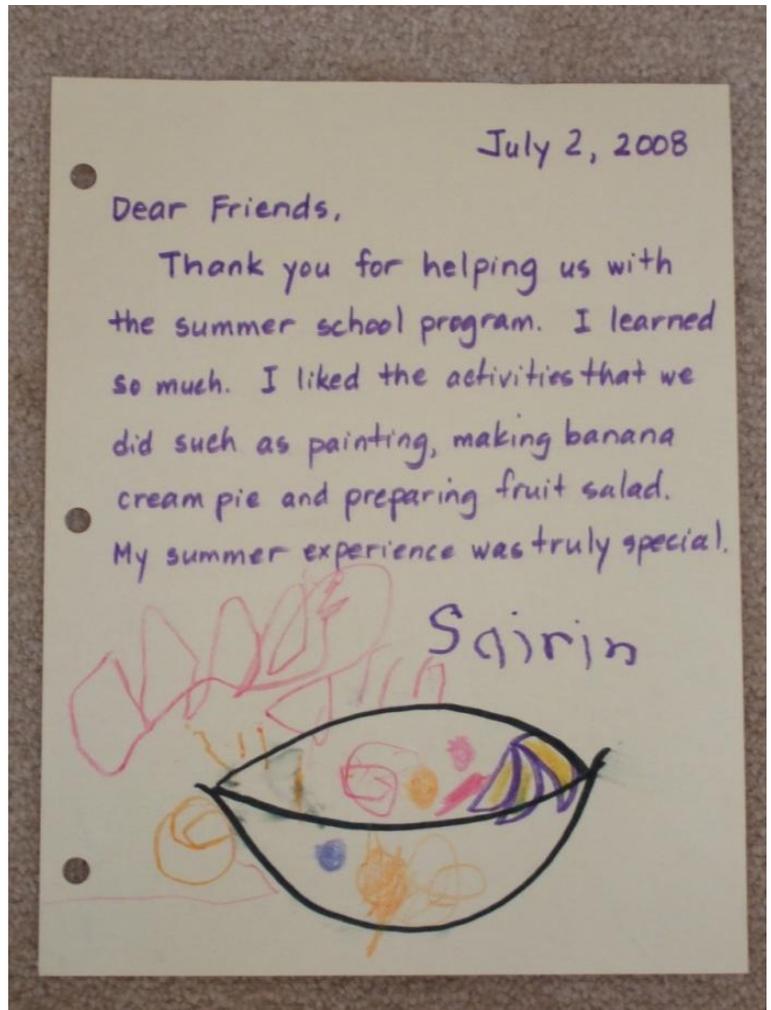
a summer school program for four blind and visually impaired students. The kids had a ball! They went on field trips to CPK, the Liliha Fire Station, the Kalihi Transit Center and more. They loved riding the city bus and saying "Hello" to the bus driver.

The kids had a great time using their canes together on their walks and making strong connections. They also loved making food. It was a real treat to see them enjoy each other's company.

Enclosed are some letters and pictures from the students.

Thanks again for all you do for us!

Aloha,
Amy Downard
Visual Impairment Teacher
Honolulu District Office



ACB National Convention – Art Cabanilla

This year's National ACB Convention was once again a blast! It was packed full of folks from every state and beyond. No matter where you went, you could hear folks talking in wonder about the latest technology or advancements in the field of blindness technology, or just discussing the pro's and con's of different issues facing the blind across the nation. Through this level of energy and excitement, a sense of empowerment along with an attitude of "I can do" gleamed through everyone's voices as the week long convention began its course.

Some of the technology that drew great interest were those products put out by Humanware, such as the Trekker Breeze and the popular VictorReader Stream. The Breeze is Humanware's latest GPS solution for the blind. Like its predecessor, the Trekker, the Breeze is designed to assist blind individuals in their day-to-day travels. With only 9 keys, the Breeze makes travel and navigation simple to do. The VictorReader Stream is a revolutionary product designed to enhance one's listening pleasure. The unit allows the user to listen to digital talking-books from NLS which were once only available on 4-track cassettes. Due to its digital nature, several other audio formats are supported by the Stream as well, making it a versatile and easy to use device. Unlike many of your off-the-shelf MP3 players, the Stream's interface is fully accessible to the blind, and allows for organization and retrieval of one's listening content with ease. With its ability to use standard secure digital (SD) memory technology, the Stream allows users the option of increasing their media memory as needed, with memory sizes ranging from 1-2 GB to the more popular 4-16 GB high capacity cards (SDHC).

Two new scanning solutions for the blind were also displayed, the KNFB mobile reader, and ABISEE's Eye-Pal scanning solution. Each of these offer portability and accessibility to various printed material while on the go. The KNFB mobile reader is an all-in-one package running off the Nokia N82 Symbian S60 series phone. Use of the phone's built-in camera along with the KNFB mobile software and talks software, allows a person with low-vision or who is blind to be able to have printed material read to them on the fly. It is safe to say that this is the most portable and accessible scanning solution on the market to date. However, the Eye-Pal is also a speedy and accurate scanning solution that offers portability and accessibility through a laptop computer attached to a camera via USB connection. This particular setup allows a blind user to read almost any type of printed material imaginable, such as business cards, informational hand-outs, newspapers, bounded books, and a printed label found on a CD. In each instance, the Eye-Pal was able to rapidly scan and read back the printed information with great accuracy and clarity. In my opinion this is a must-have device for anyone who is blind and wishes to read printed material with the press of a button.

The last item of interest was a simulated demonstration of an audible crosswalk system for the blind. It is made by Polara who has installed several of these systems throughout the United States. What makes this system unique is its ability to offer both audible and vibro/tactual indications.

Finally, a visit to the American Printing House for the Blind was an educational and fun experience. We got to see the process in which Braille books are produced, and were also shown the process to make the many copies of audible Talking Books that

many of us enjoy. We also took a brief look back in history to get a hands-on feel of what kinds of Braille writing machines were used in the 1800's compared with the Perkins Brailler of today. APH is not only known for its braille and audio products, but they are also very involved in the creation and development of learning tools and aids for blind children such as tactile maps, tactile board games, and much more.

With all that I saw and did, it is hard to put it all into words. The best way to experience a National Convention is to experience it for yourself. If you are able to make it to Orlando next year, you will come away with so much more than you could ever imagine. So, start planning today and I'll see you there in 2009!

Blindsight News – Iolana (Landa) Phelan

Camping with the Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunrise is an experience you won't want to miss. If you like fun in the sun, playing in the waves, playing Miniature Golf, and all sorts of other fun outdoor activities, then camping with these guys is where you want to be. Over the past 4 years, the Rotary Club of Honolulu Sunrise has invited blind/low-vision folks to take part in their annual summer camp where they try to include the blind/low-vision campers in all their activities, from swimming in the ocean to trekking it across the open fields of grass and sand while in a 4-man cycle. If you have a desire to try new things and explore new adventures, then these are the guys who will help get you there. If you've never body-surfed before but wished you could, or ever wondered what it is like to paddle a canoe, they will go the



distance in helping you to experience what it is like to do so. Along with all these fun things to do, camping can also be relaxing. Just to get away from the day-to-day business of life and just hanging out with fellow campers can be so therapeutic for the mind and soul. While sitting at the beach or in a swing under a tree, it is real easy to let the pressures of life drift away just for a few hours or for a whole weekend. So as you can deduce by now, camping with the Rotarians is more than just setting up a tent and sleeping in a sleeping bag. It is all that and a whole lot more. It is a time to challenge yourself in ways to help increase your self-esteem and broaden your horizons. It is also a time for relaxation and to learn more about each other and develop new friendships. If this article has inspired you, I hope to see you next year so we can share in the fun and just have a grand old time! Whether you are a seasoned camper or a newbie, it is an experience you won't want to miss.

Auntie Weezie's Corner – Louise Horio

Aloha Kakou! Wow, time sure flies when you are busy, yeah?



- Every obstacle in our path presents an opportunity to improve our condition.
- In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They DESERVE your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say “hello”.
- Work like you don't need the money, love like you've never been hurt, and dance like you do when nobody's watching.

-
- Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself and the other for helping others.
 - Now more than ever – Peace...

Cool and Easy Summer Salad

Combine the following:

- Package of mixed baby greens
- Tofu, drained well and cut into cubes
- Mandarin orange slices, drained
- Almond slivers, sprinkled liberally

Salad Dressing Choices:

- Tropics somen salad dressing, or
- Auntie R's Special Dressing
 - In a jar or blender, mix thoroughly:
 - 2 tsp Salt
 - 8 Tbsp (1/2 cup) Red Wine Vinegar
 - 1 cup Vegetable Oil
 - 8 Tbsp (1/2 cup) Sugar
 - 1 heaping Tbsp minced Chinese Parsley
 - Dash of Black Pepper
 - Toasted Sesame Seeds, optional

HAB Scholarship

The Hawaii Association of the Blind is offering scholarships to legally blind college students who are also Hawaii residents. The students may be attending any accredited university or college regardless of location. May 15th and November 15th are the deadlines for Fall and Spring applications.

Scholarships may be offered on an annual or a semi-annual basis as determined by the scholarship committee. The committee reserves the right not only to accept or deny scholarship applications, but also to determine the amount and duration of the scholarship. Scholarship recipients must re-apply in order to be considered for future scholarships. Those who are denied a scholarship are eligible to re-apply in the future. Scholarships will not exceed one-year in duration and are not expected to be less than \$500 per semester.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be legally blind as defined by national standards.
- Must be planning to attend college for the period which he/she is applying.
- Must be a resident of the State of Hawaii.
- Must not be a member of any national organization other than The American Council of the Blind, the parent organization of the Hawaii Association of the Blind (since other national organizations have their own scholarships).
- Persons who are not affiliated with any national organizations of blind people are encouraged to apply.

For further inquiries please call (808) 671-1160.

College Scholarship Application Form

Hawaii Association of the Blind

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

College: _____ Major (if any): _____

Completed Credit Hours: _____ Class: _____

- Must be legally blind as defined by National Standards.
- Applicants must submit a letter of no more than two pages describing his/her educational goals, and informing us of information he/she deems relevant to the application.
- Applicant must provide the scholarship committee with official college transcripts. If the applicant has not attended college or is in the first semester of attendance, official high-school transcripts are required.
- Applicant must submit at least two letters of reference, one of which must come from a professor or teacher.
- The committee reserves the right to ask the applicant for further information.
- Relevant false information given will cause any scholarship recipient to have his/her scholarship terminated and legal action will be taken to reclaim money already awarded.
- Information omitted which is relevant to the requirements of the scholarship shall be considered to be falsely presented, and thus will result in the same penalty.

Please send scholarship applications to:

Hawaii Association of the Blind
College Scholarship Committee
1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Hawaii Association of the Blind
1255 Nuuanu Avenue, #1102
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

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MATTER
FOR THE
BLIND**