



April 1, 2025

MEDIA CONTACT:

Stryker Weiner & Yokota Public Relations, Inc.
Lance Aquino
Ph.: (808) 398-0657
lance@strykerweiner.com

**Bishop Museum Celebrates Completion of “Growing Capacity” Project
With Gathering of Nonprofit Cohorts on Friday, April 4**

*The Project provided mentoring and training for those working in
Hawai‘i museums and cultural organizations.*

Honolulu, Hawai‘i — [Bishop Museum](#), the State of Hawai‘i Museum of Natural and Cultural History, will celebrate the completion of its “[Growing Capacity](#)” project with a gathering of nonprofit cohorts on Friday, April 4. Held on Museum grounds, the private event will include a welcome protocol, presentations and discussion by more than 25 project participants plus the Hawai‘i Museums Association, as well as tours of the Museum’s Cultural and Natural Science collections.

The “Gathering Resources & Growing Capacity: Museums Working Together in Hawai‘i” project was held in partnership with Nonprofit GrowthGen, LLC and supported by a grant from the Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services program of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Over the course of two years, the project provided training and mentoring for those working in Hawai‘i’s museums and cultural organizations. Participants received professional development in the areas of resource-gathering, project management, and grant writing, and represented Native Hawaiian-serving organizations from Hawai‘i Island, Kaua‘i, Lāna‘i, Maui, Moloka‘i, and O‘ahu.

“At a time when funding from federal grant programs — and the programs themselves — are uncertain, nonprofit professionals need a network of colleagues for sharing information, thought-partnership around building organizational capacity, and providing mutual support,” said Janet Bullard, Bishop Museum vice president of advancement and marketing communications, and acting director of government relations. “This group is gathering at Bishop Museum to build relationships with each other as well as with the Museum and our staff members, with the goal of uplifting our collective efforts.”

“As we’ve navigated through these mentorship programs, I’ve been struck by participants’ repeated emphasis on the value of consistent, external mentorship and camaraderie with peers in Hawai‘i,” said Mary Ramsay, M.A., Nonprofit GrowthGen, LLC cofounder and mentor. “With all that nonprofits have on their plates, it’s nearly impossible for managers to make the time to consistently nurture the professional growth of their staff. There is

so much reciprocity in the Growing Capacity project — we have learned from cohort members as much as we have mentored them, and they have learned from each other.”

Melia Kalawe is an Archivist for the Moa‘e Moloka‘i Digital Repository of the Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center. [Moa‘e Moloka‘i](#) is a first of its kind, fully searchable centralized repository of archival records including photographs, recordings, newspapers, and maps, with records of Moloka‘i from as early as 1850. Managed by a team with deep roots on Moloka‘i, the resource enables users to learn more about the island and its people, history, and culture.

As a participant in the “Growing Capacity” project, Kalawe shares, “As someone born and raised on the island of Moloka‘i and working under a nonprofit cultural heritage center — specifically in the heritage preservation sector — the Growing Capacity programs served as the ultimate gateway to networking with others who do similar work. This is especially important for me and my position as Archivist, as Moloka‘i lacks professional development opportunities related to cultural heritage and preservation work.”

“Much of what we do at Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center is community-based, with a strong emphasis on respecting and responding to the needs of the community rather than creating opportunities that do not align with those needs,” added Kalawe. “However, with the help of the Growing Capacity programs, I was able to understand what nonprofits are capable of in Hawai‘i and what is actively happening on various islands to support cultural institutions. For Moa‘e Moloka‘i Digital Repository, these programs provided a solid foundation of resources to build a reliable long-term future for us as we work towards establishing Molokai's first archive.”

“There is amazing expertise in Hawai‘i-based nonprofits,” said Mandy Kirchgessner, Ed.D., Nonprofit GrowthGen, LLC cofounder and mentor. “In just two years — and with the help of our dedicated advisors Leah Caldeira, Kamalu du Preez, and Halena Kapuni-Reynolds — we have involved 24 Hawai‘i nonprofit professionals as guest speakers in this mentorship program. The magic of the Growing Capacity Project has been this skill-building among professionals of all levels. While funding for the next iteration of the Growing Capacity Project is uncertain, we have learned from cohort members and others that this type of mentorship is needed and deeply impactful.”

To learn more about Bishop Museum, visit [BishopMuseum.org](https://www.bishopmuseum.org).

###

About Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, the State of Hawai‘i Museum of Natural and Cultural History:

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum’s mission is to inspire our community and visitors through the exploration, celebration, and perpetuation of the extraordinary history, culture, and environment of Hawai‘i and the Pacific. The Museum was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in memory of his wife Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a royal descendant of King Kamehameha I. Today, the Museum thrives as an educational center for the community and is widely regarded as the world’s premier institution for Hawaiian and Pacific content.

Bishop Museum’s vast collections of more than 25 million objects and specimens represent nine disciplines and include more than 22 million biological specimens, over 2 million cultural objects, 115,000 historical publications, and 1 million photographs, films, works of art, audio recordings, and manuscripts. These collections tell the stories of the cultures and biodiversity of Hawai‘i and the Pacific as well as the proud legacy of scholarly research spanning 130 years.

Bishop Museum proudly serves more than 200,000 visitors each year, including 20,000 children on school visits.

To learn more about the Museum's research, collections, exhibits, and programs, visit BishopMuseum.org, follow @BishopMuseum on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), become a fan of Bishop Museum on [Facebook](#), visit Bishop Museum's [YouTube](#) channel, or call (808) 847-3511. Bishop Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Bishop Museum is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer, and welcomes applicants from the military, veterans, and those with disabilities. Learn about careers at Bishop Museum at BishopMuseum.org/Careers and on its [LinkedIn](#) page.

[Bishop Museum Press](#) is Hawai'i's oldest book publisher and one of the first scholarly publishers in the Western Hemisphere, and has published over 1,200 titles and distributed over 1 million books in 72 countries worldwide.

Past news releases can be viewed and downloaded at BishopMuseum.org/NewsRoom.