



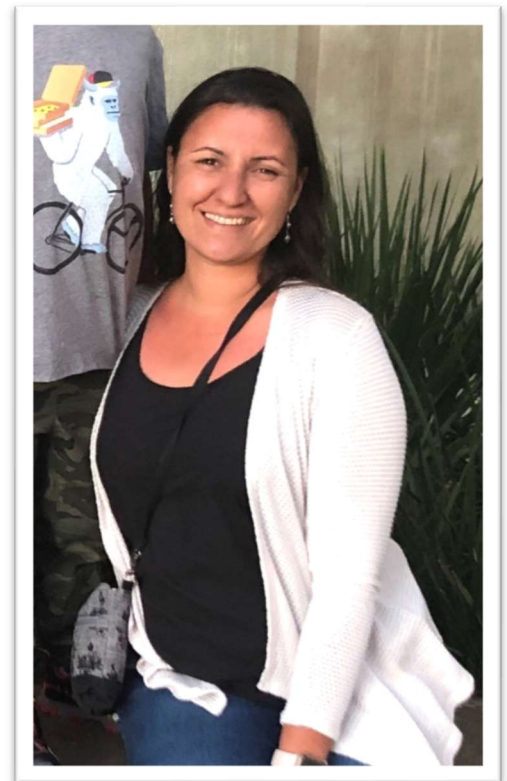
## THINK Fund Scholarships at HCF help Hawai'i students reach for the stars

The Hawai'i Island New Knowledge (THINK) Fund at Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) scholarships help Hawai'i Island students pursue a college education that will lead to a career in a STEM field or as a STEM educator. In 2019, 39 Hawai'i Island students received \$166,000 in scholarships.

### Student Spotlight: Emilia Kaawa

Leading by example, that is what inspires Emilia Kaawa to pursue her Master's degree in mathematics education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. "As a teacher, it is very important to always seek higher education and push oneself just like the expectation we set for our students. Being a single mother, I strive every day to set an example for my children to push and work hard for every goal they set forth."

Emilia is also a teacher at the Hawaiian language immersion school, Ka 'Umeke Kā'eo Public Charter School, where she teaches math through a cultural lens. As an immersion school graduate herself, Emilia always wanted to become a teacher to educate future generations in Hawaiian culture and language. "My Master's program offers me a more in-depth perspective on how I can help my students understand mathematical concepts related to our everyday way of life, like limu awareness, kilo, mahi'ai, and so on." Emilia's long-term goal is to create an instructional book where mathematics is taught through experiential learning using mo'olelo (stories) and loina (customs) as the forefront of instruction.



Since 2015, over \$670,000 has been awarded through THINK Fund at HCF Scholarships.

107 Hawai'i Island students  
22 Hawai'i high schools  
55 Higher education institutions  
36 STEM majors



### Student Spotlight: Rod Neil Burbano

Rod Burbano has been overcoming obstacles since moving to Hawai'i from the Philippines, when he struggled to learn a new language. "I had a hard time with my classes because the lessons were presented in English. Thankfully, I have the English Language Learners community that enhanced my English skills and assisted me with my education." Full of gratitude, Rod volunteers as a tutor at Honoka'a High School helping students overcome the language barrier he once faced.

With dreams of becoming a doctor, Rod faced a financial obstacle of pursuing a college degree. A THINK Fund at HCF scholarship gave Rod and his family peace of mind that he could continue his education without incurring student loans. Rod shared that this scholarship also "boosted my confidence knowing that you have recognized my achievements and believed in my potential." After completing his education, Rod plans to pay it forward by joining the ALOHA Medical Mission, a volunteer organization that provides underprivileged communities in Hawai'i with medical services such as checkups, medications, and vaccines.



**Did you know?** Scholarship applications are due in January and awarded in the fall each year.

"Meeting female engineers motivated me to be unafraid of industrial and engineering technology classes, often filled with males. These women studied and worked, making it to the top of their fields. I am excited to travel down the paths they carved in the STEM industry and emulate them."

- *Madison Hara, 2019 scholarship recipient and PISCES Women's STEM Aerospace Research Scholars program participant*

For more information about THINK Fund at HCF, please contact Lydia Clements, Vice President of Foundation & Corporate Partnerships, at (808) 935-1206 or [lclements@hcf-hawaii.org](mailto:lclements@hcf-hawaii.org)

[HawaiiCommunityFoundation.org/THINKFund](http://HawaiiCommunityFoundation.org/THINKFund)