

# From the Director/ President Crystal Leishman – Hawaii Island Pride

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Many things have changed for Hawaii Island Pride since 2008. The 1<sup>st</sup> annual Gay Pride festival in June of 2008 turned out to be a huge success with over 1100 attendees, 51 vendors, and 40+ volunteers. The food, entertainment, security and many supplies were donated to the Hawaii Island Pride and our annual event by businesses and surrounding community members. Our original 8 volunteer committee member worked hard and long in a very short period of time (from March till June) to ensure that an organized, peaceful, and fun event was established for the Big Island. Out of the 8 original members there are still 6 of us that carry on our mission and purpose. We have learned a great deal in this process and hope that each year we strengthen not only our community but the events, outreach programs and festivals we organize.

2009 has brought on a handful of necessary and exciting changes, which I believe reflect our dedication and hard work. We have gained nonprofit status under section 501 (c) (4). This enables us to operate as a tax exempt organization that functions exclusively for the promotion of social welfare and is primarily engaged in promoting the common good and general welfare of the community. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> step in achieving our long term goals and in continuing our efforts to improving the lives of our LGBTQ community. Hawaii Island Pride's 6 original committee members (Crystal Leishman, Jen Johansen, Maggie Foley, Keola Shimotsu, Jude Herrera, Jeffrey Werle) have expanded. We have had the privilege of including a few new additions to the committee/board. These new members have been dedicated volunteers with Hawaii Island Pride from the beginning and are now directly involved in the decision making process, Brian Lamb and Jain Vaughn. Additionally, we have expanded our resources to facilitate in island wide efforts. A key group on the eastside has eagerly expressed interest in working with Hawaii Island Pride in successfully promoting our mission and goals island wide. We are excited to work with each other and have joined together in our efforts. With this, we will continue to work towards fulfilling our original goals and develop a visible presence in the community and work toward a solid financial base.

We will continue to advocate for the LGBT Community and to provide opportunities for community members to get involved. In addition we will work to meet the needs of allies and local service providers to ensure that we are all able to provide our best for the LGBT Community. We will build additional connections throughout the state's community and engage various groups, nonprofits, and local businesses.

As is the nature of the business of a nonprofit we will continue to develop creative ways to raise funds to ensure our ability to provide the services of Hawaii Island Pride. Financial stability and diversified funding sources for HIP is vital. In 2008, we held our first Gay Pride festival through community donations, fundraising events and sponsorships. As the years progress so do our monetary goals and the need for continued financial support.

Here is what we will strive for in 2010:  
Resolutions, Goals, and Hopes for 2010

We resolve to stand firm in our belief that all individuals deserve equal rights.

We resolve to be a strong ally to those that are out and those that cannot be.

It is our goal to become more visible in the community and welcome new allies.

It is our goal to speak up, speak out, and demand discrimination stop based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

We hope for an inclusive ENDA (Employee Non Discrimination Act).

We hope for the right to marry and have our relationships recognized.

We hope to make the world a friendlier place for LGBT people so we can all live out and proud.

I look forward to working with you for a phenomenal 2010! - Crystal Leishman, Hawaii Island Pride, 2009