



Small Steps Towards  
a Big Difference

# SOMETHING "TALK STORY"

Our seasonal e-news updates are designed to share our current success stories that your donations have helped to make possible, because at Something Good in the World we believe that "small is beautiful, but beautiful is not small..." Please visit our website for more detailed information on all of our educational programs and projects: [somethinggoodintheworld.org](http://somethinggoodintheworld.org).

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[somethinggoodintheworld.org](http://somethinggoodintheworld.org)

✿ WINTER into SPRING 2026

"Talk story" is a Hawaiian expression that means to "chat informally." Talk story isn't just in passing, but is the kind of long, meandering, meaningful conversation that can last for hours. It is about sharing personal experiences and perspectives, creating a relaxed space for building community, trust, relationships, and connection. The sense is one of comfort, where one shares anecdotes in a way that is warm, engaging, strengthening and safe. When someone invites you to talk story in Hawai'i, it means they want to spend time with you, to get to know you, and it's full of *aloha*.

This issue of the Something Good in the World e-newsletter is like that, using photos and anecdotes to share a sense of the warmth and comfort that our nature-based, arts-integrated programs seem to cause in children, teachers, and parents alike. Whether we are in Hawai'i or New York (or anywhere in the world), our approach to learning allows for people to feel like they can be themselves. We strive always for humane education, so everyone can get inspired and engaged, with all of their senses, including the *na'au* (instinct) that tells us if we feel safe to relax. If a person isn't relaxed, they cannot learn.

Whenever our educators arrive at a classroom in a school, children light up, because they know it means they are going outside, and they are going to be using their whole bodies, and it's going to be different, and it's going to be fun, even if it's hard. At our [Earth School](#) programs for homeschoolers, parents always tell us how their children can't wait to come every day. One new mom told us that her 7-year-old son had never enjoyed learning until he came to Kula Honua, that it was the first time he could be himself, and how he came home spilling over with what he had learned.

At SGITW, our educators, parents, and students have the joy of the experience. We wish you could all be there with us to have the whole three-dimensional, sensory engagement they have. But since that's not possible, this issue aims to share some of those with you through photos and talking story.



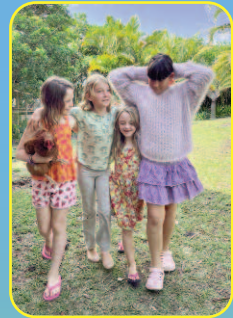
*Kula Honua*, as Earth School is called in Hawai'i, has always been about experiential learning in action! Every day includes learning with the whole of our bodies and our senses, integrated with academics and creative arts, which includes theatre, dance, music, crafts, drawing, farming and cooking. Because Earth School is necessarily place-based, with the Earth as our school and nature as our teacher, we spend a LOT of time in the field, learning from experts. In Hawai'i, this means learning from those who were born and raised on the *'āina* (the land), and carry the *mo'olelo* (stories with scientific, historic, cultural knowledge and ethical practices). Through the sharing of their expertise, these educators pass on the importance to our *haumāna* (students) and ensure that these principles will carry on into the future.

SGITW is proud to have such a vibrant community of homeschoolers and educators in Hawai'i, and grateful to all those who share their *'ike* (wisdom) with our *keiki* (children). *Mahalo nui* (many thanks) to the parents for their commitment and dedication to this form of education that nurtures and supports their children's natural genius. As the one 7-year-old *Kula Honua* student wrote at the end of the school year, "The most important thing I learned this year was that there are many different ways of learning."

*'Aohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okāhi*  
*All knowledge is not taught in one school*  
*One can learn from many sources*

— Mary Kawena Pukui  
*'Ōlelo No'eau, Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings*

[Click Here to read more about Kula Honua in the Ka'ū News](#)



*Hōkū Iki* means “Little Star” and this Hawaiian youth group was born out of the inspiration of SGITW’s engagement with New Era Creative Space’s Girls EmpowerED visit to Hawai’i. Last summer, 9 teenage girls from NECS in Peekskill, NY joined 3 girls from SGITW in Hawai’i, to practice community service and experience a cultural exchange program ([see the report in our last E-Newsletter, Something of Hope](#)). The Hawaiian girls decided they wanted to continue to meet together once a month, to explore our amazing natural environment and to get to know one another better. Even though they live in the same area, it’s not always easy to discover new friendships. The *Hōkū Iki* engagement is different from school or afterschool, and in the day-long excursions together to sacred sites, peaceful beaches, and botanical gardens, there was plenty of time to talk story and offer inter-support. Each girl could choose to be quiet and still, or to share, to play card games, to laugh and joke, and to help one another with problem-solving. There is no greater honor than to listen and be witness to the energy of youth. It’s been many years since the original Blue Star Youth Movement in New York took shape ([click here to see the Youth Movement video](#)), and this “Little Star” offshoot has been a sweet way for SGITW to restart this endeavor in Hawai’i’s district of *Ka’ū*. *Mahalo* to the girls and their moms for helping on this great new adventure!



([click here to see a video about the NECS experience in Hawai’i](#))

The [Volcano School of Arts & Sciences](#) has had the most incredible year to talk story about ever!

This was the 6th year of collaborating with [Native Skywatchers](#) for our studies of the Hawaiian Star Compass, culminating in an art exhibit and theatrical presentation entitled “Mahalo Sea and Stars,” at the [Mokupāpapa Discovery Center](#) in Hilo. Thanks to the grant from NSW, as well as support from the [Atherton Family Foundation](#) and from private individuals, the VSAS students were able to experience weekly workshops, at school in *Ka Mala Maluhia* (the [Children’s Peaceful Garden](#)) and in the field. Kindergarten, First, and Second Graders were treated to monthly *huaka’i* (excursions) that took them all over Hawai’i Island.

Second Graders visited Punalu’u Beach with [Hawai’i Wildlife Fund](#) to learn about the *honu* (green sea turtle) and *honu’ea* (hawksbill turtle), as well as the local *mo’olelo* about the area’s lava rocks, *pu’u* (volcanic cinder cones), winds and ocean currents, and the mele and ‘*oli* (songs and chants) that accompany the traditional creation of shapes with the *hei* (string games).

First and Second Graders went whale-watching to encounter the *koholā* (humpback whales) that migrate through their ocean environment every winter, to chant to them and record their voices as the whale moms and babies respond to one another.



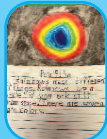


Kindergartners explored Ka Lae (South Point), the southernmost point of the Hawaiian island chain, to experience the landing site of the ancient Polynesian wayfinders, and practice using the Hawaiian Star Compass to know all of the directions. They hiked to Pinao Bay where the plastic marine debris washes up all year long, and cleared the beach of as many microplastics as they could find. This became the art they assembled at school, led by 9th Grader Laisani Kivuyo, to design a giant marine debris whale and raise awareness through creative activism.

Every student in each K-2 class discovered the issues affecting Hawai'i Island's ocean and land environment, and the interconnectedness and intersection of these problems, and became the "solutionaries" to help solve these in their own backyards. Their artwork displayed their knowledge, and a brochure of solutions demonstrates how individuals can play an active role in helping the situation immediately in their own home, school, and work environments. ([Click here to read the brochure.](#))

From the issues of marine debris and invasive species, to becoming more connected to and aware of the importance of nature's moon and star cycles; from protecting the coral reef and its wildlife, to seeing how human behavior on land directly affects the marine environment; from the impact of noise pollution on native birds to shipping traffic's disruption of whale migration... the VSAS students developed an in depth understanding of how we are all part of the problem and we are all part of the solution.

*Mahalo nui nui* to the many people who made these workshops, programs, and field trips possible, from the teachers and parents to the educators and donors, and to the Mokupāpapa Discovery Center for hosting our art exhibit from March – May!



This talk story segment comes from the [Kalobeyei Initiative For Better Life](#) at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. The original inspiration for sprout farming came from SGITW's "[Seeding the Future](#)" project in which the KI4BLI team received instruction in how to grow sprouts in the camp, and then developed their training program and certification process for adults and students. SGITW is proud to share these new stories with you, as we continue to donate literal seed money to this project every year...

*"Sprout farming is a simple form of hydroponic agriculture done indoors, where seeds germinate in water-filled containers without soil. The process takes 5–7 days, and the harvested sprouts are eaten raw like a salad. Sprouts are highly nutritious, rich in protein, calcium, fiber, essential minerals, vitamins B and C, and antioxidants, making them particularly beneficial for malnourished children and lactating mothers.*

*Sprout farming emerged as a powerful, low-cost solution to food insecurity and malnutrition in Kalobeyei's arid environment. Through the Sprouts Project, KI4BLI trained 167 farmers and engaged 493 students in nutrition education and sustainable agriculture practices. More than 100 kilograms of nutrient-rich sprouts were supplied to Light Academy, improving the quality of school meals and contributing to better learning outcomes. Community demonstrations conducted across three villages enabled households to adopt simple, water-efficient farming methods, allowing families to produce fresh vegetables using minimal resources and space.*

*The impact of the Sprout Farming Program is vividly reflected in the experiences of Gismah Abdallah, a South Sudanese mother living in Kalobeyei Settlement. Before joining the training in 2024, Gismah struggled to provide her family with nutritious food and relied on basic staples. Through a one-week training provided by KI4BLI, she learned to grow highly nutritious sprouts using simple containers, little water, and no soil. What impressed her most was the short harvesting cycle, which allowed her to produce vegetables within a week. After completing the training, Gismah began growing sprouts at home and soon found innovative ways to maximize their value. Rather than discarding the roots after harvest, she began using them to feed her ducks. Today, she keeps fifteen ducks and sells eggs and meat to neighbors, generating income that supports her household and helps pay school fees for her child. The sprouts have improved her family's diet while creating a new livelihood opportunity.*

*A few homes away, Sporta, a mother of ten, also put her training into practice despite having no access to farmland. Using milk cartons and recycled plastic containers, she began growing sprouts inside her home. This simple innovation allows her to harvest fresh vegetables weekly, ensuring her children have consistent access to nutritious food even during periods of water scarcity. Her experience demonstrates how small-scale, adaptable solutions can significantly improve household nutrition and resilience.*

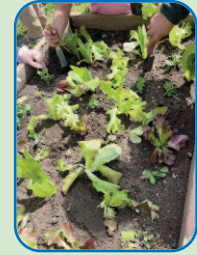
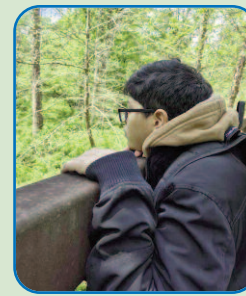
*Another powerful story highlights the health impact of the sprout initiative. A mother in the community had been suffering from persistently low blood levels and insufficient breast milk production, leaving her exhausted and unable to care for her baby adequately. Despite medical treatment, her condition did not improve. Her daughter, a participant in KI4BLI's sprout farming training under the WELP program, learned about the nutritional value of sprouts and their potential benefits. Motivated by this knowledge, she introduced sprouts into her mother's diet. After consuming them twice, the mother began to regain strength, her headaches disappeared, and her milk production improved. She later shared that the sprouts restored her health and allowed her baby to thrive. This experience reinforced the role of nutrition education in complementing healthcare and empowering families to support one another."*

-Submitted by the Educational Team at the Kalobeyei Initiative for Better Life



# UNDER CONSTRUCTION!

Stay tuned for Spring into Summer talk story about the [Ossining High School](#) and [Anne M. Dormer Middle School](#), as well as at [Abbott House](#) in Irvington... coming soon! We are planting seeds, making worm cake, getting their raised beds set up and scheduling all the field trips – but it's still spring and New York has been COLD! We'll be in touch to tell you how grants from the [Jack DeVito Foundation](#), the [Kate Svitek Memorial Foundation](#), the [St. Faith's House Foundation](#), and more, are making the Children's Peaceful Garden design continue to expand and grow in 3 different locations in Westchester County! We have more new stories in the works - too soon to share some of the exciting news but we promise the next issue of our e-newsletter will be full of surprises!... ☺



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**The following people donated their time, energy, and creative skills to the production of this newsletter:**

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**MISSION STATEMENT:** The mission of Something Good in the World is to provide a safe and enhancing environment wherein children may be promoted to achieve their highest potential in learning and development, and to prepare them toward becoming responsible human beings ready to take on the challenges of life.

We are committed to upholding a genuine value for humanity, and are steadfast in our dedication towards creating a new and better template for education in the 21st century, that integrates nature, the environment, and the practices of sustainable living.



**We welcome your letters and responses! Please feel free to write to us any time by e-mail: [somethinggooditw@aol.com](mailto:somethinggooditw@aol.com), or by regular mail: Something Good in the World, Inc., 624 Croton Avenue, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567.**