



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

February 01, 2014

Mr. Jed Gains  
Read Aloud America  
1314 South King Street, Suite G4

Dear Mr. Gains:

Hana High and Elementary School felt privileged to host six Read Aloud Program (RAP) nights during the fall of 2013. All six evenings were very exciting and our cafeteria was jam packed. In my nine years as Principal at Hana High and Elementary I have never seen our cafeteria so crowded. It was amazing.

Hana is very rural and isolated. It is a 3-hour drive to the nearest school in our complex area (Lahaina). It is a two-hour drive to the nearest stoplight. Due to our isolation, we are often left out of programs and opportunities that others have available to them. Our school is composed of 80% free and reduced lunch and 80% Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian. Our unique situation of a small number of at-risk students (365) spread out over 14 grade levels puts us in a situation where the small amount of funding we receive is spread very thin. In short we have very little money. We have lost almost 40% of our funding in the past five years.

Larry and Joanne Laird approached me regarding the possibility of having RAP at Hana School. When I inquired about the cost, it was out of the question. It was not feasible because of the lack of funding, not because of the nature of the program. I was sold on the program but just could not make it happen. Larry and Joanne doggedly worked with me to try to find a way to bring RAP to Hana. Because I could offer some things other than money, we made it work.

I am sure you are very aware of the excitement generated because of RAP. The cafeteria was packed, there was electricity in the air and everyone was very excited. The school-community library had a spike in the amount of activity. Families were reading together. Due to our K-12 situation we were able to utilize our middle and high school students as readers in the elementary school. I usually stayed in the adult session. I could tell by the look on everyone's face that they thoroughly enjoyed Joanne and the guest readers reading to them and stressing the importance of families. I personally appreciated how the program was organized. Because Joanne and Larry were former school administrators, it was clear to me that they understood the demands placed on Principals and did everything in their power to lighten my workload. Joanne and Larry were absolutely the best in everything from the planning and set-up to the presentation.

I read each and every one of the parent evaluations. The evaluations were off the chart with praise for RAP. The parents stated how they were reading together more as families and how excited they and their children were about each RAP session. Most evaluations asked us to continue our relationship with RAP.

I want to sincerely thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity to bring RAP to our underserved program. We hope to continue the relationship with your organization in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard W. Paul".

Richard W. Paul  
Principal