

Support growing for S. Maui's private school

By JOSEPH W. BEAN

When families look for a place to live, many individual factors go into the decision. It's always a big there's not a lot of room for averaging things out. Instead, one significant low score can scuttle the deal. Maui usually scores well. Dream house? It's here no matter how large or small, simple or luxurious the dream. We also have arts and entertainment, all levels of excellent dining, and the full range of health and wellness services - not to mention sun, sea and natural wonders.

Some families, however, find that the public schools are just not acceptable. Without a solution to that challenge, they won't be sharing their talents with us on the Valley Isle. Everybody loses. The answer is a private school that meets the needs of discriminating parents. Specifically, in South Maui, the only answer is Montessori Hale O Keiki.

Parents often want to see their children go to the colleges they attended, but it isn't always like that for elemen-

founder Jeff Bezos, first lady Jacqueline Kennedy, entertainer Sean 'P. Diddy' Combs, Princes William and Harry, Julia Child and Nobel (literature) Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez. These 10 successful people went to 16 colleges, but they have Montessori in common.

Case closed. Montessori is a highly approved choice. The problem is that Hale O Keiki is not, as they say, rolling in dough. To keep pace with growth and demand in the South Maui community, it could use a little support of the cash kind. For starters, MHOK could use property and a building of its own. The needs won't stop there, of course. When the aim is to educate the next generation of independent thinkers, who knows what might be needed or what it may cost.

Several years ago, West Maui faced a similar issue. They really needed a private school to address the needs of families who wanted to live there. Who would know that? Well, Einstein-level geniuses and the real estate professionals who heard the stories: Maui scores high, but not without a "good" school for



Dave Richardson (from left) is seen here with the RISE co-founders, MHOK Development Director Stacey Breitlow, Head of School Jessica Thompson and Patrick Kil-

bride. The result was the Alliance to Improve Maui (AIM), a group of real estate professionals who set themselves, as a first step, the goal of raising a million dollars for the planned Maui Preparatory Academy. That group has exceeded its original goal, and is still there, supporting the functioning school. By functioning, you may understand both educating young people and raising the score of West

Maui as a place where families can choose to live. "We had a seminar," said Title Guaranty Account Manager Patrick Kilbride, who is a member of the MHOK board. "We invited AIM to share with us what they had done and how. About 2.5 people came."

Life Real Estate Brokers, another board member (whose daughter started at MHOK at age 2 years, 9 months), added that what AIM was working with is the realization that "school is community." He also recalled that, "The initial start-up of this school was a group of Realtors. There were five or six Realtors who helped start the school around 1991."

Jessica Thompson, MHOK Head of School, said RISE is not setting an end-goal as AIM did. "There is certainly a yearly monetary goal. This year it is \$50,000. Our biggest goal, though, besides raising money, is to build relationships in the real estate community." To that end, the school has designed RISE as a "sponsorship" opportunity. Realtors who help will get a link to their site on the MHOK website and recognition on the school's Facebook page. There will also be regular press releases highlighting the gifts of the real estate community.

RISE is a business win, a community win, and for families who are able to realize their dream of living on Maui, a personal win.