

PO‘OKELA PROGRAM AT KĀ‘ANAPALI BEACH HOTEL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Po‘okela Program?

The Po‘okela Program is a unique training program for all Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel employees to learn Hawaiian culture and history in the context of Hawaiian values that were significant to the indigenous culture and are still relevant to today’s world. The program includes a number of Hawaiian cultural classes that are taught by staff covering subjects such as Hawaiian geography, religion, mythology, economics and technology. Employees have attended over 50 different classes on Hawaiian culture and values. The classes have been formalized by giving them a name, “Ke Kula O Ka Po‘okela” or the “School of Excellence,” complete with a set curriculum, workbooks and excursions. All employees are required to attend on company time since the classes are considered to be part of an employee’s training and development.

What is the purpose of the program?

Hawai‘i-born General Manager Mike White created the program for the purpose of enhancing employees’ understanding and appreciation of Hawaiian culture in hopes of working together to preserve it for future generations.

How did the Po‘okela Program begin?

The Po‘okela Program started in May 1986 following inspiration from Kenneth Brown, former State Senator and well-known Hawaiian business executive, who challenged the visitor industry to become more involved in cultural preservation. Mike White took the opportunity, began working with Hawaiian author and scholar George Kanahale and Project Po‘okela (Hawaiian for “Excellence”) was initiated at Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel.

How does the Po‘okela Program benefit guests of Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel?

Po‘okela reaches beyond the staff to the community. The goal is to integrate and share the culture and values with each other, family and guests, who in turn receive a more authentic experience of the Hawaiian culture. Project Po‘okela is the foundation of a concerted effort to integrate the ideas and values of the Hawaiian culture into daily life. Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel has presented a benchmark to Hawai‘i’s tourism industry and leads the way in preserving its own integrity and future with the Hawaiian people and culture.

The essence of the Hawaiian culture is open-hearted sharing. This is the ultimate benefit of Project Po‘okela for all of Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel’s ‘ohana (family) and guests. “Those of us fortunate enough to live and work here experience the joy of sharing our host culture and way of life,” said Lori Sablas, Director of the Po‘okela Program. “Our guests take away a new feeling about Hawai‘i, a deeper understanding of her people, and the diverse experience that makes Kā‘anapali Beach Hotel ‘Maui’s Most Hawaiian Hotel.’

What impact has the Po‘okela Program had on Hawai‘i tourism?

The program’s impact on tourism in the islands and among other cultures around the world has been recognized by The White House, State and local governments, and Tom Peters, management expert and author. In 1995 the hotel was officially named “The Most Hawaiian Hotel in the State of Hawai‘i” by the Waiaha Foundation. Through Po‘okela, it was felt that employees would develop a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, the culture while learning how to apply the Hawaiian values to their work and home life.

What are some examples of classes?

HAWAIIAN VALUES

A review of values from a Hawaiian perspective and the formulation of the Mission Statement incorporating these values.

HAWAIIAN MUSIC, TOURISM AND YOU

The evolution of Hawaiian music through chant, *himeni* (hymn), and contemporary songs, including the use of various instruments.

A HISTORICAL TOUR OF LĀHAINĀ

First off-property workshop for employees, conducted entirely by employees. This class was the “seed” that led to the current restoration of the Hawaiian historical site “Molu‘ula.”

HAWAIIAN FOODS

Food preparation techniques of the Hawaiians from ancient to modern times.

THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE

Introduction of the Hawaiian language using song, place names, and body parts.

KULIA O KA PO‘OKELA

The focus of this class was on the achievement of excellence by the Hawaiians of old, and how we are adopting some of the values used by our ancestors in our present day lives at home, work, and leisure.

ORGANIZED CULTURAL TOURS

Each year the Po‘okela Council organizes cultural tours for employees interested in learning more about their island state. Tours have been taken to such areas as La Perouse Bay, Haleakalā Crater, Hāna, and the islands of Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i and Kaho‘olawe.

NAVIGATION - PART I & II

Nainoa Thompson, Navigator of the Polynesian Voyaging Society’s double-hulled canoe, Hōkūle‘a, shared some powerful insights, cultural values, and personal emotions from twenty years of devotion to the revival of Polynesian ocean-voyaging canoes. In class II, Employees visited Kamehameha Iki Park in Lāhainā and enjoyed the experience of paddling an outrigger canoe. Members of Hui O Wa‘a Kaulua shared their vision of building a living Hawaiian Cultural Center at this site. Employees also learned about Hawai‘i’s largest double-hulled voyaging canoe, which was under construction.

HAWAIIAN FOODS

Food preparation techniques of the Hawaiians from ancient to modern times.

OUR ISLAND MAUI

A look at Maui through the eyes of our visitors, highlighting Maui’s visitor attractions and their cultural significance.