

SUMMER IN THE PARK – YOUTH RANGER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Youth Rangers upon completion of their summer internship program.



National Park Service Ranger
Kūpono McDaniel

The Youth Ranger Internship Program is creating future stewards for our communities. Led by Park Ranger Kūpono McDaniel, who oversees the program, the Friends of Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park is pleased to be a part of this successful summer program.

Major funding for the Youth Ranger Internship Program was provided by the National Park Service, regional youth funding. Additional funds came from Hawai‘i Pacific Parks Association. In the fall of 2012, FHVNP was awarded a combined \$50,000.00 from the Cooke Foundation, Ltd., the Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation and Kamehameha Schools ‘Aina Education Program to provide funds for the spring training sessions and stipend payments for youth rangers not funded by the federal government.

The program provided education and career preparation opportunities to youth from rural East Hawai‘i. Working alongside park rangers in six different divisions within the park, including Interpretation, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Maintenance, Protection, and Administration, the program was designed to empower students to affect change in the world and expose them to meaningful career options. The skills they learned will provide them with a wider opportunity of career choices.

The six-week spring training session was conducted by Ranger Kūpono McDaniel, Ranger Dean Gallagher and other rangers from each division in the park. The youth were given an insider’s view of how the National Park works. FHVNP staff participated in the six weeks of training, providing weekly stipend checks for each youth in attendance, leading a budget/financial responsibility class and helping in a continuing mentorship throughout the program.

Training started on April 4, 2013 with over 45 youth from Ka‘ū, Pāhoa, and Kea‘au high schools and Hawai‘i Academy of Arts and Science. Upon completion of training, 33 high school and 11 college students were hired to work in the park. The youth worked for 8 weeks during June and July, 2013.



National Park Service Ranger
Dean Gallagher & Ranger Shyla,
Interpretation Division

“Youth-ful Quotes:”

“My experience in Natural Resource Management was amazing! I learned so much about our islands, native plants, animals, and the way of the Hawaiians. I shall take all these experiences with me and share them with friends and family.”

Karli Hong (Kea‘au HS) – Natural Resource Management Division

“During this work experience with the Youth Program, I learned many things about life! For example: job skills, working with other people and having the right tools to do the job. I learned and enjoyed all the projects we were involved in.”

Shaylin Navarro (Ka‘ū HS) – Natural Resource Management Division

“Look at who and what we are today! Perpetuating the land for future generations.”

Kian Tatum (Kea‘au HS) – Maintenance Division

“I learned how to operate a weed-wacker. I learned how to have fun and work at the same time. This program makes me a happier person. I love seeing the views and everything about this program.”

Tatiana Kahihikolo (Kea‘au HS) – Maintenance Division

“This experience taught me that opportunities like this don’t come knocking on everyone’s door. So if you get it, don’t mess it up! You can learn a lot from something you never thought you would.”

Raquel Pascual (Kea‘au HS) – Interpretation Division

“I learned how to fill out time sheets, do CPR and how to be flexible. I loved getting to have fun and do my part for the National Park. Doing the things I love made my summer!”

Sierra Puckett (Kea‘au HS) – Interpretation Division

“I definitely feel better prepared for higher education and future employment, for several reasons. I never had a job before this position and now I know what to expect from other employers. Secondly, the exposure to scientific research that I received will greatly assist me in the near future as I prepare myself for my own scientific research.”

“After you have worked in the park and gotten to know and understand its inhabitants – the birds, plants, trees and bugs, as well as the people too – you feel a stronger connection to it as well as a responsibility to protect the magnificence that resides there.”

Grace Tredinnick (Kea‘au HS) – Natural Resource Management Division (Biologists)

“This was one of the most memorable summers of my life! I lost 10 pounds. I learned so much about Hawaiian history.”

Tyler Amaral (Ka‘ū HS) – Interpretation Division

