

YOUTH RANGER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

One of the most rewarding and successful park programs supported by FHVNP in 2014 was the “Youth Ranger Internship Program”.

In the fall of 2013, FHVNP was awarded a grant of \$64,000.00 from the Victoria S. and Bradley L. Geist Foundation to fund the spring training sessions for the 2014 and 2015 Youth Ranger Internship Program and provide stipends for this and next year’s summer work 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 and Kamehameha Schools.

The seven-week 2014 spring training session was conducted by Rangers Kupono McDaniel, Dean Gallagher and other rangers from various divisions in the park. Sessions were held at classrooms provided by Kea‘au and Ka‘ū high schools. FHVNP staff participated in the seven-week training program: providing weekly stipend checks for each youth in attendance during the training, leading a budget/ financial responsibility class, and continuing mentorship throughout the summer.

Fifty junior and senior high school students began training in March. Forty-eight students successfully finished the training program and graduated. Through combined federal and non-profit grant funding, twenty-eight high school students and ten college students were hired for the 8-week summer work program. Several students from the graduating class not in YRIP were hired by the park through the Youth Conservation Corps work program.

Students were employed throughout the park: eight students each worked in the Natural Resources Management Division and in the Interpretation Division, six in the Maintenance Division, two in Law Enforcement, and one in Administration. Two youth rangers served as a film crew in the youth and volunteer office. Their job was to document and record video footage of their fellow youth rangers at work in their respective divisions. The raw footage was edited and two films were created showcasing the summer experiences of the youth rangers. For the first time, FHVNP had an intern performing office administrative duties and learning how a non-profit operates.

The program was meaningful for all participants and much was accomplished. The visitor center got some overdue maintenance. Boardwalk materials were created for the Pu‘uloa Petroglyph trail. The stock and corral was painted. Resources management crew removed over 23,000 Morella faya trees plus thousands of Russian olive trees. They cleared over 300 square meters of Himalayan ginger and processed thousands of native plants seeds in preparation for replanting and reforestation. In Human Resources, the task of fingerprinting personnel was finished and the intern helped manage confidential records and shred countless documents. The youth rangers in law enforcement division assisted visitors with vehicle lock-outs, first aid and interpretation at the eruption viewing areas. The Interpretation division interacted daily with countless visitors, led guided hikes, worked with young junior rangers and made meaningful connections with many visitors throughout their term, including with their own millennial generation. It was another rewarding year for our youth, their families, our communities and our park. We look forward to the continued success of this enriching program.



Standing together for a group photo at the celebration luncheon.



Munirah Msikizi-Jackson (HAAS)
& Pauline Adkins (Pahoa HS)



Kawai Ronia
(Kea'au HS)



Kamalei Ontai (Ka'ū HS)
Marileah Lalin (Ka'ū HS)



Sierra Puckett (Kea'au HS)

"I have worked the past two summers at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park in the Y.R.I.P. program. It has been absolutely wonderful. Prior to my junior year in high school I had zero work experience. The YRIP program gave me many new skills. I have learned effective communication techniques. I do not fear public speaking. I have a sturdy resume, a CPR certification and a great understanding of what it means to work effectively as a team. I have a solid understanding of proper work ethic and I honestly feel that I got much more from this program than a pay check."

My most favorite part of this job was getting to observe and interact with families from all over the world. It was such a beautiful thing seeing them make memories that would last a lifetime. It was fulfilling to know that I played a part in helping them create their vacation memories - seeing their smiles when I told them "it was all thanks to them and their visit that we have such a beautiful park and that we all play a part in protecting and preserving its natural beauty."

Knowing that I was able to give them the very best customer service they could experience while at the park always made my day."

(Youth) Ranger Sierra Puckett

"When I was asked to write about my experience during the summer as a Youth Ranger, I couldn't help but smile. So many great memories flood into my mind. This summer has shown me that I have a passion for nature and this unique Hawaiian island. During the course of the summer I learned more about the beautiful culture of the place I call home. Being a YRIP has inspired me to be successful in life as I look forward to college life and step onto the challenging path of adulthood."

(Youth) Ranger Maya R. Skillman



William Mitchell (Ka'ū HS)



Maya Skillman (Kea'au HS)



Carlos Valdez (Kea'au HS)



Fun at the 4th of July Parade in Volcano Village.