

Aloha, my name is Tammy Aiwohi, I am a nontraditional student of Hawaiian descent. I am a four-time recipient of a WOW scholarship. I have been living in Wai'anae for a little over 50 years. I am a single parent of two and a proud grandmother of four beautiful granddaughters.

I lived and raised my children on state assistance and struggled to make ends meet. I never thought that I would be able to pursue higher education because I could not afford the price of tuition. In all honesty after being in a very unhealthy relationship for years my self-worth and shame got the best of me. My life spiraled out of control after the passing of my grandparents. And found myself making bad choices and living apart from my children. I believed at the time that having them live with family members was better than dragging them through my personal hell.

It was during my incarceration that I had made the decision to do something with my life that I felt would not just benefit me and my children but others who experience hardship on the Wai'anae Coast. Many have or are still going through hardship, domestic violence, homelessness, addiction and incarceration.

It was through therapy and higher education that I was able to escape this cycle and continue to heal by helping others in our community as a student employee at Leeward Community college-Waianae Moku.

In the spring of 2019, I graduated with my Associates degree in Social Science and certificate in Hawaiian Studies. I moved onto UH-West Oahu to pursue my Bachelor's in Psychology. And in the spring of 2021, I graduated. I am currently finishing my first semester in the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work.

My passion is to use my education and personal experience to help others in my community. Why? Because I know the struggle, I lived it. I am a survivor of domestic violence, homelessness, addiction and incarceration. My life was not too far from those that you see living in make-shift encampments along the coast.

Through your generous donations I stand here proud of my accomplishments. And forever grateful for your tremendous support. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. And I hope your holidays are filled with love and laughter.