

ParaGenius Foundation Summary

Mission: To promote local organic food production and distribution.

Category: Employment Education and Training

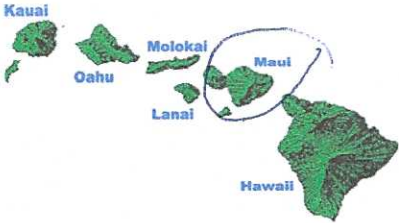
Contact: Eric Peterson

Address: P.O. Box 723, Kihei, HI 96753

Grant History: N/A

2024 Request: \$25,000 for general operating support.
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- Notes:**
- Founded by Dr. Carolyn Dean to educate and promote local organic food production and distribution.
 - One-year long contracts to 8 individuals to provide rent-free housing, subsidized full-time employment, and farm skill training.
 - Partnership with Maui Okoa Farms.
 - HireLocal: Thrive Local initiative.
 - Goal: “Foster self-reliance by building local agricultural expertise and reducing reliance on imported food, while addressing Hawaii’s high cost of living and filling the gap created by retiring workforce.”
 - Food distributed to local restaurants and residents.





ParaGenius Foundation's (PGF) Mission Statement:

To address, educate and assist in promoting and maintaining wellness, beginning with proper food production and distribution on a local level.

PGF Background:

PGF was founded by doctor, naturopath and author, **Dr. Carolyn Dean**. Laying the groundwork through her own volunteerism, capital donations and professional recruitment of in-kind contributions to the farming movement, Dr. Dean has offered invaluable support to a Maui community in increasing need of locally grown produce. Her inspiration to first provide this support to local, organically managed Maui farm 'Oko'a Farms—along with a million dollar commitment to their developing business through low-interest loans—speaks to her foundation's dedication to local farming, food sustainability and community well-being.

- Material Donations Provided: \$424,000
- In-Kind Contributions through multiple volunteers, estimated financial value over \$200,000

Program & Program Overview: Hire Local:Thrive Local

PGF, along with programmatic partner 'Oko'a Farms, has created a multi-faceted employment and housing initiative to strengthen local farming efforts, while providing immediate accommodations and work opportunities for individuals directly impacted by the Maui Wildfires.

The program begins as a year-long contract for up to eight individuals, where funding provides rent-free employee housing in a four bedroom upcountry home, along with full-time employment subsidized to provide a living wage. The initiative empowers individuals to financially save for the next steps in their lives – all while acquiring skills that benefit local farming efforts for Maui.

Getting survivors and local businesses back on their feet is of the utmost importance. The hiring of local residents for farm labor positions, positions that are often filled by temporary foreign labor, has been a long-standing objective for our organization. And now, after a time of crisis, we see it is all the more important to support our own residents. We want to see everyone benefit: local farmer, local wildfire survivor, and the customer wanting to continue purchasing locally grown produce.

-Dr. Carolyn Dean, founder of ParaGenius Foundation

PGF's program partner, 'Okolea Farms, is an organically managed farm providing produce to dozens of restaurants and thousands of residents each week. The devastating wildfires came on the heels of 'Okolea opening their first brick and mortar farm store, which brought a sizable curtailment of revenue and damage to their farm operations, all amidst the recent rental acquisition of a third farmland to grow more produce.

As 'Okolea experiences a period of significant expansion, it presents a powerful convergence of needs and aspirations. This initiative offers displaced residents not just jobs and housing through the pre-existing capacity 'Okolea Farms can provide, but the opportunity also helps to cultivate new careers in local agriculture, aligning a survivor's individual growth with a farm's burgeoning trajectory.

Need Being Addressed: Disaster-Relief Employment and Housing Opportunity for Survivors on Maui, following Maui Wildfires

Opportunity:

After the devastation of the Maui wildfires, PGF sees an empowering opportunity to afford survivors farm education through a paid, contracted experience—infused with added external charity.

Now that relief efforts have provided a baseline for meeting critical needs, the challenge ahead is for survivors to be afforded purpose-filled opportunities to stably rebuild their lives, on their own terms. Wildfire survivors need programs

that build upon charitable donations and transition into direct access and self-directed opportunities to build back capital. By infusing charitable donations into pre-existing employment opportunities, these opportunities can act as amplifiers and lily pads to restore security and stability.

The urgency for added charity can be confirmed by current data:

- HI cost of living is 93.3% higher than the national average.
-Missouri Economic Research & Information Center
- Even after the wildfires, median home prices have risen 26% compared to this time last year. *-Maui Real Estate Report*
- HI's min wage is \$10 lower per hour than the estimated baseline living wage. *-MIT*

High living costs double the burden for wildfire survivors. For one who has experienced a total loss of everything, how can they truly rebuild their life, secure a home, and regain their footing in a Maui with exorbitant prices and scarce opportunities?

We observe an opportunity where a program can support local survivors while also supporting local farming.

I am meeting people in need and wanting to help us on the farm. I'm ready to offer them help. *-Ryan Earehart, owner/partner -'Oko'a Farms*

The recent wildfires left the farm grappling with worker shortages and revenue setbacks, jeopardizing their ability to meet the ever-growing demand for locally grown food. But amidst this, farm housing sits ready to offer shelter, and farm positions are available. By equipping survivors with on-farm training and stable housing, 'Oko'a can rebuild its workforce, PGF can fulfill its mission, and most importantly, survivors can begin to reclaim their lives with purpose and resilience.

This initiative can create a far-reaching chain reaction of benefit, seeding new farmers for Maui while revitalizing a local farm, all ultimately reaching more residents' plates with locally grown food. These benefits are especially critical to Maui county, when considering:

- Maui County tops all counties in the US in food insecurity. - *Feeding America 2021*
- Up to 90% of Hawaii's food is imported. -UH: Hilo

Supporting survivors in agriculture is a strategic necessity for our community's resilience. The wildfires are the second unforeseen event in our recent history to create a seismic impact to our local economy; the preceding being the pandemic. These events highlight the vulnerabilities of Maui's food system.

Maui is desperate for new local farmers, and survivors are in desperate need to get back on their own feet. For a survivor to learn to grow their own food, instead of simply receiving food, all while being provided a long-term housing and employment opportunity, they are empowered to begin to reclaim a sense of security and stability.

Amount of Funding Request & Explanation: \$25,000

With the bulk of projected funding secured by current partnership through HCF's Maui Strong Fund, Dorcy Foundation's contribution could go to any of the following components:

- Housing Subsidy for 2 of the 4 bedroom spaces provided in the work-housing unit for the 12 month program (\$1,000 per room, \$12,000 for the year)
- Labor Grant Subsidy for 1 of the up to 8 hired workers (Subsidy provides \$10 additional per hour, per full-time worker [*atop Okoa's \$18 per hour*]; \$1,733.33 for one worker per month; \$20,800 for the year)
- PGF Oversight and Project Management for length of the program (\$2,000 per month, \$24,000 per year)
 - Bulk of PGF's contribution occurs at start of project, with recruitment and assistance in interviewing candidates via *HelpingMaui.org*, *Maui Hale Match* and similar disaster-related grassroots agencies providing access to wildfire individuals without employment and housing.
 - PGF will serve as lessee of bedroom spaces and will allocate housing and labor funds to 'Oko'a for project duration.
 - PGF will perform site visits, build rapport, ensure satisfaction of hired workers throughout project, and consider project expansion opportunities, should program prove to be of benefit beyond this critical initiatory year.

PGF's Early Funding & Emerging Partnerships:

- PGF secured over \$115,000 in individual and business contributions in its first year, along with \$11,000 in fundraising and \$34,000 in foundation funding from Hawaii Community Foundation's (HCF) Maui Strong Fund, for Advancing Food Distribution Efforts following the Maui Wildfires.
- In addition to pursuing partnership with Laurence H. Dorcy Foundation, our 2024 Hire Local:Thrive Local initiative is pending funding from:
 - Fred Baldwin Memorial Fund
 - Atherton Foundation
 - Hawaii USA FCU Foundation
 - HCF's Maui Strong Fund

In closing: Hire Local:Thrive Local is an initiative that speaks to the power of collaboration, shared purpose and empowerment. The Laurence H Dorcy Foundation appears to be a foundation in closest alignment with our current objectives. We are most excited at the opportunity to partner with an organization so committed to supporting a Hawaiian Island community through this employment and housing initiative.

Together, individuals, businesses and organizations like the Dorcy Foundation can create lasting change for Maui. We invite you to partner with us, as we endeavor to continue nourishing our own, following the unspeakable tragedy of the Maui Wildfires.

Paragenius Foundation
Profit & Loss
 January 1 through December 27, 2023

	Jan 1 - Dec 27, 23
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Support	
Corporate Contributions	2,000.00
Individ, Business Contributions	115,000.00
Public Grants	34,000.00
Total Direct Public Support	151,000.00
Other Types of Income	
Fundraising Revenue	11,666.58
Total Other Types of Income	11,666.58
Total Income	162,666.58
Cost of Goods Sold	
Cost of Fundraising Supplies	2,353.50
Total COGS	2,353.50
Gross Profit	160,313.08
Expense	
Advertising	483.87
Awards and Grants	
Charitable Contributions	2,000.00
Gifts	98.12
Awards and Grants - Other	94,000.00
Total Awards and Grants	96,098.12
Bank Fees	639.23
Contract Services	
Accounting Fees	2,000.00
Legal Fees	3,981.04
Outside Contract Services	2,397.15
Total Contract Services	8,378.19
Education & Training	1,000.00
Grants Given	39,000.00
Operations	
Automobile	532.64
Books, Subscriptions, Reference	51.85
Office	1,077.10
Postage, Mailing Service	15.63
Supplies	487.49
Total Operations	2,164.71

Paragenius Foundation
Profit & Loss
January 1 through December 27, 2023

	Jan 1 - Dec 27, 23
Software & Apps	1,304.00
Travel and Meetings	564.15
Total Expense	149,632.27
Net Ordinary Income	10,680.81
Net Income	10,680.81