

## Growing as a Community

Healthy eating and exercise campaigns are becoming more and more popular in Hawaii and all over the nation. This is because there is a greater focus on the fact that people aren't living healthy lifestyles. One solution to help people lead healthier lifestyles is to create public gardens. Public gardens are a great way to promote healthy eating and exercise and to bring the community together.

Public gardens have many benefits. The major advantage is that communities grow fruits and vegetables! This is beneficial for people because it helps promote healthy eating in a fun way. If we build gardens around the island, more people could be involved and could enjoy home grown food. Monthly activities could be held there, such as farmers' markets. The money earned from the markets could help pay for the land and supplies such as seeds and tools.

Land for this project could come from different large towns around the island. Those who are interested could sign up for a plot of land and be given a small amount of seeds. Every month, a small farmer's market could take place. People could sell their fruits and vegetables. All the profits earned could be used to keep the community gardens running. Additional activities could also be held, like a huge market once a year, with all of the community gardens coming together as one. Donations could be given to the less fortunate, such as extra vegetables and fruits, or some of the profits could be given to those who are not as fortunate. The money could be given to the community, not just one person running it.

Clarence T.C. Ching was a very good man. He was someone to look up to because he helped those in need. He was a man with a vision, one who could use his

wealth to do things that would benefit others, not just himself. By developing Kukui Gardens, he helped change so many different lives. Such developments and community gardens could coexist.

Hawaii can truly become a better community if public gardens are created. Community gardens would be a benefit to everyone, not just a single group. The gardens would help us show children and adults the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. As Anne Raver, a New York Times columnist said, “Gardeners, scholars say, are the first sign of commitment to a community. When people plant corn they are saying, ‘let’s stay here’. And by their connection to the land, they are connected to each other.” These wise words really do show how community gardens would not just benefit individuals, but the whole community.