

Malama Ka Aina

A prominent figure in developing the Hawaii we have today, Clarence T.C Ching to me represented much more than an entrepreneur, he epitomized the quality of altruism. Mr. Ching was the developer of numerous projects, including Kukui Gardens, that have changed the face of Honolulu neighborhoods. However, another one of Hawaii's iconic neighborhoods is being threatened and is in desperate need of our help: the coral reef. It functions as the home of many unique marine organisms that are native to the Hawaiian Islands, although approximately 27% of these reefs have been "bleached" since 2000. As successors of his vision, we are to challenge and resolve the key issues of our era, one subject at a time. Currently, one major issue we face is the destruction of our coral reef, or specifically, coral bleaching.

Coral bleaching occurs when the coral encounters external stress, such as pollution, that results with the algae leaving the coral cell. When bleaching occurs, the coral loses its natural color and becomes white, along with losing its vital food source and eventually dies. If we, the people of Hawaii, do nothing to address this critical environmental issue, the local economy and natural marine ecosystem will inevitably suffer due to our dependency on the reef. One of the main pollutants in coral bleaching is agriculture runoffs, specifically phosphorous, as it deteriorates water quality and impedes the growth of coral. We can make an effort to reduce phosphorous runoff by replacing our usage of inorganic fertilizer with compost.

To figure where to start, we need to first understand who the major offenders are. Although large scale farms such as Monsanto create the bulk of agricultural runoff, we can still start off small by first replacing household dependency of inorganic fertilizer. Not every idea has to start off huge as simple ideas have the capability to snowball into greater lengths, similar

to Mr. Ching's progress from humble beginnings into a successful individual. Compared to fertilizers, compost does not create excessive nitrogen and has very little phosphorous to begin with, making it a safer alternative to use. If we were to create neighborhood compost bins, say at your local park, then as a community we can work together against polluting our water and coral reef. With these bins, people are able to recycle materials like fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells, and coffee grounds that would typically be thrown away, but now becomes recyclable. These neighborhood compost bins not only serve as a substitute for fertilizers, but also encourages other to grow their own plants. The foundations of creating and using these compost bins comprises of reducing environmental waste and creating green awareness. On top of that, this idea of a neighborhood compost bin brings together the people of a community, a matter that Mr. Ching himself had envisioned when creating these neighborhoods.

However, if we do nothing in our powers to address this growing issue in the coming years, it will be the future generation of Hawaii who will be taking the full blunt of the impact. Through observation of the past decade statistics of the deterioration of the coral reef, if we were to continue our malicious doings without change, by 2065 the Hawaii coral reef would be nonexistent. This will not only mean that the reef would be destroyed, but the entire Hawaiian marine ecosystem would similarly turn extinct as those organisms would simply have no place to live. The effects of the destruction of the coral reef would be immense to the health of the local economy. It should be noted that tourism alone makes up the bulk of Hawaii's economy, as in 2014 generated approximated \$14.7 billion in revenue. By destroying the natural environment, the disappearance of the coral reef would not only ruin the tourism industry, but also the fishing

industry as the coral reef and indigenous species are primary attractions to tourist. But if we were to simply preserve and protect our environment, we can save the coral reef.

Clarence T.C Ching was an advocate for distributing what one had, regardless of the amount. By giving others the essential knowledge of sustainability, together we have the ability to shape Hawaii into the place we want our children to live in. When building these cities and communities, we still need to account for our other neighbors, the environment and its inhabitants, as they also share the common land of Hawaii. If we were to model ourselves after Mr. Ching to accomplish altruistic acts and solve social issues, than maybe one day the future children of Hawaii would similarly carry the torch.