

59 years ago in 1956 Ching bought hundreds of acres of land and turned it into the Airport Industrial Park, a facility that provides office and warehouse space. 45 years ago, he welcomed the Kukui Gardens, an affordable housing community for financially struggling families, to its first residents. Today, the foundation continues to help fund several buildings designed to progress Hawaii's education and encourage the prosperity of our students. Ching has influenced our lives in countless ways, constantly improving the community and society. As a child he was always striving for success, and this perseverance and drive followed him in his adult career, leading him to found dozens of buildings that benefit our lives. Ching's work and lasting legacy inspire me to contribute myself to the growth of our community.

One issue in Hawaii that needs to be addressed more seriously is our dependence on mainland products, especially food. 85% of our food is imported from at least 2500 miles away, leaving room for error in its delivery. There are organic farms on the islands, but if our connections to the continental US were somehow blocked, we wouldn't be able to last long with the limited amount of local food. However, Hawaii has the capability to grow more than five times the amount of crops we currently do. The first step is to use this land for farms, increasing production of fruits and vegetables and grain. Then, an affordable service solely dedicated to distribute this organic, fresh food around the islands will need to be created. This service's purpose is to ensure people's acquisition of the food, making sure that those interested in buying locally are able to do so. Though it would be a statewide business used by most people, it would

have nothing to do with the government and wouldn't be associated with any national corporations. By being more independent and self-sustained, we are preparing ourselves for situations in which we aren't able to receive any imported goods. If this problem is never fixed and something like that happened, all of Hawaii's residents would rely on the small number of farms here. The absence of food would cause turmoil among people as well as hunger and the closing of certain culinary businesses. That's why it's so important to stop depending on mainland products to support our own population.

Though they are sparse, local and organic markets and stores do exist in Hawaii. Unfortunately, not a lot of people buy groceries from there because of the high prices, which is another issue entirely. Many choose to shop at national supermarkets because the food is cheaper, but what they may not know is that they're paying the same amount, just at different times. Growing food and raising animals is an expensive ordeal, and the owners require large sums of money to pay their workers. In order to provide for them, we spend small amounts of money on the actual food and pay whatever else is needed in bills and taxes. When buying organic, the money used to pay for the food goes directly to the farmers in a simple exchange. The charge is generally the same at big chain stores and smaller, local ones, but the latter are the the only ones that will come back around and end up benefiting Hawaii as a whole.

If we begin solving this problem now, future generations will be able to enjoy pure, fresh food more often and be conscious of buying organic. They'll understand the importance of supporting local farmers as well as nourishing themselves with unprocessed, natural sustenance that is grown right on the island. Like Ching's past projects, this solution will change Hawaii's future and improve its well-being completely. It'll promote healthy living and encourage people

to eat mindfully and well, making a source of local food very accessible. It will also be affordable so all families living in the state can pay for the service. Everyone should be able to eat organic food, which is why the prices will be low and inexpensive. This is a very simple fix to the issue, one that is within our reach. All we need to do is take the first step that'll lead us to healthier and overall better lifestyles for ourselves as well as the future generations to come.