Between 2011 and 2014, a group of University of Hawaii researchers and education organizations developed a model for youth to become suicide prevention gatekeepers for their peers. Although the grant for that work ended, a group of teens and young adults—the Youth Leadership Council on Suicide Prevention—is continuing to involve youth from across the state, including from rural communities with a high percentage of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. The council now has 94 youth and supportive adult members. The youth are given leadership and development training and community service opportunities, and they help with suicide prevention efforts, including community awareness events, trainings, and team-building. “If we’re going to target youth and we want to make a difference in the youth’s lives, we have to involve and engage youth because they’re important resources for their own friends and their peers,” said Jane Chung-Do, a public health assistant professor and staff member of Hawaii’s Caring Communities Initiative for Youth Suicide Prevention. According to Mara Pike, manager of Mental Health America of Hawaii’s Pono Youth Program, “The adults are here to listen and ... the youth, it’s really up to them to be able to help us understand what would be helpful for them in their communities.”

**Spark Extra!** For an example of a youth peer leader program that is available for all youth populations, see [Sources of Strength](https://sourcesofstrength.org/) [2]

Links within this resource

Printed on 05/06/2020 from https://www.sprc.org/news/hawaii-how-these-hawai%E2%80%99i-youth-work-prevent-suicide