



Central Area Extra

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KAY CAHILL'S GRANDDAUGHTER'S STORY

Last year, IAEOP member, Kay Cahill, told us about the need for funds by her granddaughter Kate. Kate is teaching in the Teach for America Program in a poverty area of Hawaii. The schools have very little money and Kate was asking family and friends for support. IAEOP sent a contribution and Kay followed up with additional information about Kate and the program. The following information, provided by Kay, was so interesting, Paula Bender, past IAEOP President thought we all might benefit from reading about the not so fortunate in a land we think of as paradise.

Sent by Kay Cahill: Kate, the youngest of my daughter Kathy Goedeker's daughters, graduated from Loyola University in Chicago, May 2008. She has made a two-year commitment to the Teach for America Program. Information about TFP can be found at www.teachforamerica.org.

Kate is participating in the Teach for America Program. Kate, or Miss G as she is known by her students, teaches U.S. History to 8th graders at Waianae Intermediate School on the island of Oahu.

Waianae is one of the poorest school dis-

tricts in the United States. Many of Kate's students are homeless and are faced with "adult" problems and difficult circumstances every day. However, they are very talented artists, musicians and writers who have taken to Miss G's interactive style of teaching. They respect Kate as she instills confidence and self-worth by believing in them and believing that someday, they can accomplish their "biggest goal in life."

On the first day of school, Kate asked her students to write down their "biggest goal in life, three things they could do to achieve it, and their biggest fear in life." Franswa, one of Kate's students, wrote his biggest goal in life was to become a "Veterinarian." He could achieve his goal by "working hard in school, going to college and volunteering at an animal hospital." Unfortunately, Franswa's biggest fear in life is "dogs." As you can imagine, stories like these bring joy to Kate and fuel her to continue to work hard and advocate for her students.

While Kate has been passionate, creative, and free-spirited since she was a little girl, it wasn't until she was older that we real-

ized how passionate she was about helping others. Every Saturday morning throughout her college career, while her friends were sleeping in or enjoying coffee together, Kate got up early and took the EL to a high school in inner city Chicago. On these early weekend mornings, Kate taught a scholarship curriculum to high school juniors and seniors, preparing them for a year-end academic bowl with a grand prize of college scholarships. After many months of hard work, preparation and studying, imagine how excited and proud Kate was when her students won the academic bowl. They were so appreciative for Kate and her efforts. We believe this experience changed our sister's life and encouraged her to apply for the Teach for America program, in Hawaii, a state with struggling school districts.

When we tell people our sister lives in Hawaii, we are always greeted with the same reaction about the beautiful weather, ocean, and "Island life style." Though what we have learned from Kate is that this is not the life style her students and their families live.

EXCERPTS FROM A RECENT E-MAIL FROM KAY'S DAUGHTER

Kate is doing well. When we arrived on Friday we went to Kate's school to watch the high school homecoming football game... Believe it or not, the football field is on the ocean! While it was breathtakingly beautiful facing the west for sunset, it isn't anything great to the residents—a very poor area. The concession stand sells saimin! (kind of like Ramen). It was weird to see high school kids in the bleachers eating soup...also lots of Spam—no lie. They sell these little bricks of rice with a slice of Spam on top and

bottom-about the size of a Twinkie, but definitely not a Twinkie.

Saturday we watched the Aloha Festival parade. Kate's intermediate school band was selected to march in the parade and it was quite an honor. Since they didn't have the attire or even some of the instruments they needed to be in the parade, some of the private schools in Honolulu sent them uniforms and instruments and flags that they were no longer using so the Waianae kids could march. The school colors are teal, navy and white. They

marched wearing donated red and black. The students were so proud at the end of the parade when they were told that theirs was the only band that stayed in formation all the way to the finish line...the others broke ranks as quickly as they could, as it was very hot and a very long, long parade. That was a great compliment as Waianae area kids are labeled as unruly-and sometimes "unworthy." Kate walked with her student for about the last 1/4 mile-she was so proud of them.