



# MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in MidWeek's West Oahu VOICE section on Wednesday, August 26, 2015.

## **Congratulations are in order**

Waipahu High School's science department chair **Michael Sana** has worked hard over the years to find opportunities to nurture and grow science talent among his students. This past summer, Michael secured funding so that WHS could stage its very first Science Scholars Program Symposium in collaboration with Rutgers University. Forty juniors and seniors participated in the five-week program. Their project was to take a look at the protein and genetic makeup of Duckweed – a plant found in Wahiawa's Lake Wilson – for potential uses in medicine and for other scientific purposes. The students used distance learning tools to send their findings to Rutgers researchers and received instant feedback on their work.

Waipahu High was the only Hawaii school to participate in the national program, but Michael wants to get other island schools involved. WHS has excelled at the State's annual science and engineering fairs thanks to outstanding teachers who encourage their students to challenge themselves and develop technology and laboratory skills for potential careers in science. *Congratulations!*



Photo courtesy of DOE

**Waipahu High School students showed off their research findings at the conclusion of a five-week distance learning program in conjunction with Rutgers University.**



The Honolulu Police Community Foundation – a non-profit organization that supports HPD and its more than 2,000 uniformed officers and their families – has awarded its 2015 scholarships. The scholarships go to students planning to major in law enforcement, the criminal justice system and public safety. Among the awardees this year is **Caitlyn Estanique**, a proud graduate of Waipahu High School, who is attending Chaminade University. Caitlyn is using her \$4,000 award to work toward a degree in Forensic Science – exactly the kind of work that can benefit HPD in its crime-fighting efforts. Congratulations to Caitlyn for her hard work and dedication to her studies. Kudos also to the Foundation, headed by former Police Chief **Lee Donohue**, for their ongoing support of Honolulu's Finest.

**Waipahu High School grad Caitlyn Estanique is pursuing her studies in Forensic Sciences at Chaminade University with the support of a scholarship from the Honolulu Police Community Foundation.**

## **State offers low-interest solar energy loans**

The Legislature in 2014 established a program to help residents install renewable energy producing equipment at their homes with low-interest loans from the state. The Hawaii Energy Office has announced that loan applications are now being accepted from residents seeking to finance solar photovoltaic systems under the state's Green Energy Market Securitization (GEMS) program. GEMS is aimed at consumers who want to install PV systems, but cannot afford the high upfront costs or do not qualify for traditional financing. Twenty-year fixed-rate loans are available for the purchase of a PV system installed at a single-family residence within the service areas of the Hawaiian Electric Companies. You can find out more and apply for the loans online at [gems.hawaii.gov](http://gems.hawaii.gov).