

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Nareit Hawaii Awards \$40,000 Grant to Support Hawaii Literacy's
Reading Comprehension Efforts with Underserved Families**

**Grant Will Provide 150 Families in Kalihi and Waipahu with Tablets and
Broadband Access to Improve Literacy Skills**

HONOLULU – Sept. 23, 2021 – Nareit Hawaii today presented a grant for \$40,000 to Hawaii Literacy to support a new outreach program that will provide 150 underserved families in Kalihi and Waipahu with digital devices and broadband access to improve their reading comprehension.

Hawaii Literacy Executive Director Jill Takasaki Canfield said Nareit Hawaii's grant will have a significant impact in helping these families to strengthen their literacy skills and, consequently, their overall quality of life. "At the heart of what Hawaii Literacy does is provide families, especially those in underserved neighborhoods, with the resources to improve reading skills, which builds self-confidence, brings families closer together and strengthens the community as a whole.

"Literacy is at the core of success in all aspects of life. This grant from Nareit Hawaii will create opportunities for families to empower themselves to succeed," said Takasaki Canfield.

The Nareit Hawaii grant will fund Hawaii Literacy's acquisition of tablets and Chromebooks that will be loaned free of charge to 150 families total – 50 families each at Mayor Wright Homes, the Towers at Kuhio Park, and in Waipahu – for a one-year period. The grant also pays for the families to have free broadband access when using the devices. Bringing these combined resources into the homes will allow parents and children to use technology and adapt to challenges in these difficult times.

Nareit Hawaii Executive Director Gladys Quinto Marrone said, "We applaud the relentless commitment of Hawaii Literacy and its outreach efforts to support people of all ages, educational levels and ethnic groups at expanding their reading and comprehension skills. Literacy opens doors and builds independence that is experienced in everyday life. We are proud of how this new digital program will put the tools of education and information into the hands of families to make their lives better."

Hawaii Literacy will support the families' usage of the devices with training and outreach programs provided by social service partners and volunteers to improve reading comprehension, including the Bookmobile, English Language Learner Program, and Family Literacy Libraries. Takasaki Canfield noted that families living at Mayor Wright Homes, the Towers at Kuhio Park, and in Waipahu represent some of the state's most underserved communities. Language and cultural barriers combined with other factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of transportation and malnutrition, have exacerbated the hardships that many families are coping with in these communities.

Participating in today's grant presentation from Nareit Hawaii to Hawaii Literacy were State Senator Michelle Kidani and State Representative Justin Woodson, the respective chairs of the senate and house education committees, Honolulu Councilmember Radiant Cordero (District 7), State Librarian Stacey Aldrich of the Hawaii State Public Library System, and Hawaii Literacy Board President Brandon Kurisu.

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About Hawaii Literacy

The mission of Hawaii Literacy, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, is to empower Hawaii’s children and adults with essential reading, writing, and lifelong learning skills to strengthen themselves, families and communities. Founded in 1971, the organization provides adult literacy tutoring programs on Oahu, Kauai, and Hawaii Island, and a youth Bookmobile program on Oahu and Hawaii Island. To learn more, visit hawaiiliteracy.org.

About Nareit Hawaii

Nareit Hawaii represents the interests of REITs in Hawaii and their participation in civic, community, and policy initiatives to benefit residents statewide, while also supporting community and charitable organizations that address social issues of importance. REITs are long-term property holders that own, renovate and manage affordable housing projects, commercial buildings, medical facilities, shopping centers, cell phone towers, public storage facilities, and hotels in Hawaii. For more information about Nareit Hawaii and REITs in Hawaii, please visit www.nareithawaii.com.

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