

(upbeat music)

- My name is Derrick Alan Ikaika Parker,  
started up the farm back in 2008.

And so I started as an intern,

I recently interviewed for a job

as the Food Processing and  
Quality Control Manager.

I check and manage their sales,

I'm so directly with  
Down to Earth as well,

I kind of manage our packaging facility.

Somewhat of the expediter of  
that shed, kind of controlling

or managing the structured  
chaos with food processing.

The founders, Gary and  
Kukui Maunakea-Forth.

Gary from Aotearoa and  
Kukui from Nanakuli,

little over that mountain over there,

but basically they kind  
of seen two deficits

in our community.

One was the lack of  
access to healthy food.

Having that opportunity  
to have healthy food

and kind of like the lack  
of I guess, education.

Or the lack of the opportunity

to be able to educate yourself.

And so what the farm was,

they seen the farmers that  
this could be the vehicle

where we could get people  
to go to college for free,

debt free and also produce  
food for our community

that's safe for not only the people,

but also for the aina as  
well and for the land.

College interns are  
majority of the workforce.

And so college interns,  
they come on the farm,

they work three days a week.

They got a full tuition waiver at LCC.

And so they're able to  
learn how to grow food,

learn these skills and  
then apply that as well

as they're going to school for free,

debt-free, along with going  
with a group of people

having that kind of support system.

The farm kind of like what we,

what we call it as a Youth  
Leadership Training Program

and that's basically like the wild tea

and that's a program  
that kind of incorporates

the school portion along  
with a farm portion.

And we call it leadership  
is, necessarily we just,

we're not necessarily training managers.

You know what I mean by training  
leaders of our community.

if you don't already know, y'know Waianae,

we don't necessarily  
have the best reputation.

We have a lot of diet related  
diseases in our community,

a high high school dropout rate,

a low college retention rate

alot of these deficits  
incorporates our youth

in our community.

So like the median age I guess,  
of our community is roughly 17 to 24.

That's the large demographic.

And so understanding  
that as an asset, yeah.

We have this like the next generation  
is growing in our community

it's like, how do we be  
that positive influence?

How do we create opportunity  
for these people?

That are gonna potentially  
be leaders of our community.

And that was kind of like  
the farms take on it ,

and kind of why we wanted to implement  
that youth leadership training program.

But initially when the farm started,  
it was a farm apprenticeship.

It was just to kind of like teach people  
that was interested in farming.

Yeah, it kind of molded into this thing  
where you didn't necessarily need  
to be interested in farming,

but we wanted to provide the opportunity to go to college.

If you wanted to be a farmer, that's cool too.

That's kinda like I kinda sit in data.

I kind of pack it. Yeah.

I didn't know what I wanted to do when I first started.

Apparently I wanted to be a farmer so.

I mean the biggest benefit is supporting the local economy.

I mean, this is kind of like a perfect time

to sort of talk about it, you know,

especially during, you know,

just the shifts in the world that we've had. Yeah.

I feel like our world has kind of like flipped upside down,

you know, due to COVID and due to this scare,

but you're really realizing how fragile our economy is,

especially when a lot of our economy is being stimulated

by tourism, you know, which almost completely shut down,

you know, for the most part.

And so understanding what other areas do we need

to support and definitely the food system.

For us being an Island and our dependency on imports,

you know, I'm not saying like importing, everything is bad.

Cause there's some imports that  
like, you know that's good.

But realizing that there is a  
need to support local. Yeah.

And realizing that we need  
to build our food system here

to be, if we ever want to  
reach, you know, sustainability

or self-sufficiency.

And another thing too, it's  
like supporting stores,

like down to earth that  
are supporting farmers.

You're, you're directly  
supporting the farmer.

You know, and you're supporting  
stories that are, you know,

being aware, being cognizant  
of that importance as well.

You know, I was thinking  
about this last night

and I was like, we get so much, it's okey

I'm going to say two things though,

because they're, they're both different

but favorite thing is definitely  
a down to earth burger.

I believe it's the big one,  
but it's like, it's so good.

I always have like a real specific craving

for that specific burger.

But then the second thing that's  
kind of really in line with

that is vegan, peanut butter  
smoothie or ice cream chic,

but with kale and cocoa nibs, oh my,

if you could name it after me, whatever,

like that'd be so no, that's my favorite.

That's my favorite drink and  
I always go after working out

usually I have that, like that  
vegan, peanut butter creamy.

(upbeat music)