

## Innovative Farming Methods Used at LCPCS's Piggery



*Seventh-grader T.J. Rodillas and eighth-grader Preston Parel with three of the four LCPCS pigs.*

Secondary teacher Jeff St. Pierre and four of his students are in charge of the piggery at LCPCS this year, and Mr. St. Pierre is the first to admit he doesn't know all that much about pigs. But he and his students are learning together, and that, he says, is the whole point. "Learning is a continuous process," said Mr. St. Pierre recently, and demonstrating to students that learning never stops is a major part of his vision.

As for the pigs, the four of them are thriving, and the beneficiaries of a farming method called Korean Natural Farming, an innovative new kind of farming that emphasizes the use of naturally occurring micro-organisms. "This type of farming is new and interesting, and works well in Hawai'i because it's self sus-

taining, and perfect for family farms," says Mr. St. Pierre. The method uses micro-organisms to support farming practices that use no man-made chemicals, and produce no pollutants or odors.

A pigpen that doesn't smell? Yes! In the fall, Mr. St. Pierre and his students created an "Inoculated Deep Litter System" by first layering the pens with bio char and cinder. Next, they added logs, and over that pallets, to level things out. On top of the pallets, the students added a lot of green waste, like banana leaves, and a mixture containing the micro-organisms. The micro-organisms break down the waste, and eliminate odors.

The micro-organisms thrive in a mixture that the students prepare and add to the pigpens regularly. First, the students collect micro-organisms from local soils. Then they mix them into ingredients which will help them thrive. The basic medium includes some type of carbohydrate (like corn or wheat husk), and several mixtures containing (among other things) vinegar, ocean water, herbal nutrients and brown sugar. Right now, the pigs themselves are fed all the waste and leftovers from the LCPCS cafeteria. It's all cooked again before it's fed to the pigs, though, per USDA regulations.



*L to R: Shaydan Willett (8th grade), T.J. Rodillas, Rayden Lukzen (8th grade), and Preston Parel pose for a photo in front of the LCPCS piggery.*



*Preston Parel applying a solution containing lactic acid bacteria to help control odors and flies.*

Mr. St. Pierre and the students work with several experts, including personnel from Cho Global Natural Farming; UH-Mānoa extension agent Michael DuPonte, who has been extremely helpful; USDA personnel, who regularly inspect the property and the animals; and Becky Settlage, from UH-Hilo and the Hawai'i 4-H Program.

Goals? The students have plans to breed their best boar to their best sow; they'd like to ascend the various levels that are integrated into the Cho Global Natural Farming certification process; they'd like to start growing more food for the pigs using Korean Natural Farming methods; and last but not least, they envision LCPCS's piggery as a model for other schools who would like to establish similar programs. In the near future, they need to expand the existing facility, purchase boots

and appropriate outerwear, and continue to obtain the necessary grain and carbohydrate mixtures. The school is currently exploring ways to fund these goals. Check out the **LCPCS piggery blog at [lcpcsswineproject.blogspot.com/](http://lcpcsswineproject.blogspot.com/)** (it can be accessed via the school website)! And for more information on Korean Natural Farming, try [cgnf-hawaii.org](http://cgnf-hawaii.org).

## Calendar

- Wednesday, May 10, 5:00 — **Hui Makua** meeting, band room. Bring lei-making supplies if possible.
- Friday, May 12, 8:30 am — **Lā Hō'ike**. Lunches are available for guests after the presentation. Call 962-2200 to reserve.
- Monday, May 15 — **NO SCHOOL** for students. Teacher professional development day.
- Tuesday, May 16 — Second and third grades to Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
- Wednesday, May 17 — Fourth and fifth grades to Koholālele; second grade to Coconut Island
- Friday, May 19 — Pre-k to Laupāhoehoe Beach; first through third grades to Hawai'i Tropical Botanical Garden
- Tuesday, May 23, 5:30 pm — Governing Board Meeting, band room
- Friday, May 26 — **Last day of school**



## Faculty and Staff Select LCPCS "Teacher of the Year"

Congratulations to fifth grade teacher Naomi Smith, who was recently selected as our school's Teacher of the Year. The HSTA teachers' union annually sponsors this award to celebrate the outstanding work of Hawai'i's Public School teachers. This is the second year that LCPCS has participated. Ms. Smith was nominated and selected by LCPCS teachers and staff, and will attend an award luncheon at Nani Mau Gardens on May 21st.

"She wears a lot of hats," said a colleague recently, "but she still manages to be a wonderful teacher. She loves her kids, and they know it." Besides her regular teaching load, Ms. Smith is on the school Governing Board, she helps to represent the elementary teachers in weekly meetings with Director Garcia, and she runs the annual school book fair.

## A Note from Director Garcia



I love the resiliency of our students and families, particularly given the tragic loss of two members of the Hāmākua Coast community last week. At school, we provided space for anyone to process thoughts and feelings, and in the community we supported one another as best we could. Compassion and aloha are the special ingredients that bring us together, and together we all contribute to the beauty of Hawai'i Island and the Laupāhoehoe community. The sign of a strong and healthy community is how we come together in challenging times, and how we celebrate in happy times.

I want to send a huge congratulations to four students who were selected to read their poetry this past Saturday as part of the Martin Luther King Jr. Poetry Contest in Hilo: third-graders McKayla Real and Isaiah Knoblauch, and fifth-graders Abigail Nadeau and Ava-Amelia Aguirre. McKayla and Abigail placed in the top five contestants for Hawai'i Island. Furthermore, LCPCS third grade teacher Josie Harding was presented with the 2017 International Peace Poem Project Teacher of the Year Award for Hawai'i Island. Mrs. Harding was surprised when her name was called, but with her usual grace and hu-

mility accepted the award from Mayor Harry Kim. Please be sure to congratulate our students, their teachers, and Mrs. Harding for the recognition they received, and thank them for representing our school.

Finally, please join us this Friday from 8:30 to 11:00 am for this year's Lā Hō'ike Celebration (formerly May Day) in the gymnasium. Our students will perform chants, songs and hula in celebration of our coming together as a community.

Go Seasideers!