



CASTANEA  
FELLOWSHIP

KAUAI  
IMMERSION  
MAY 2022







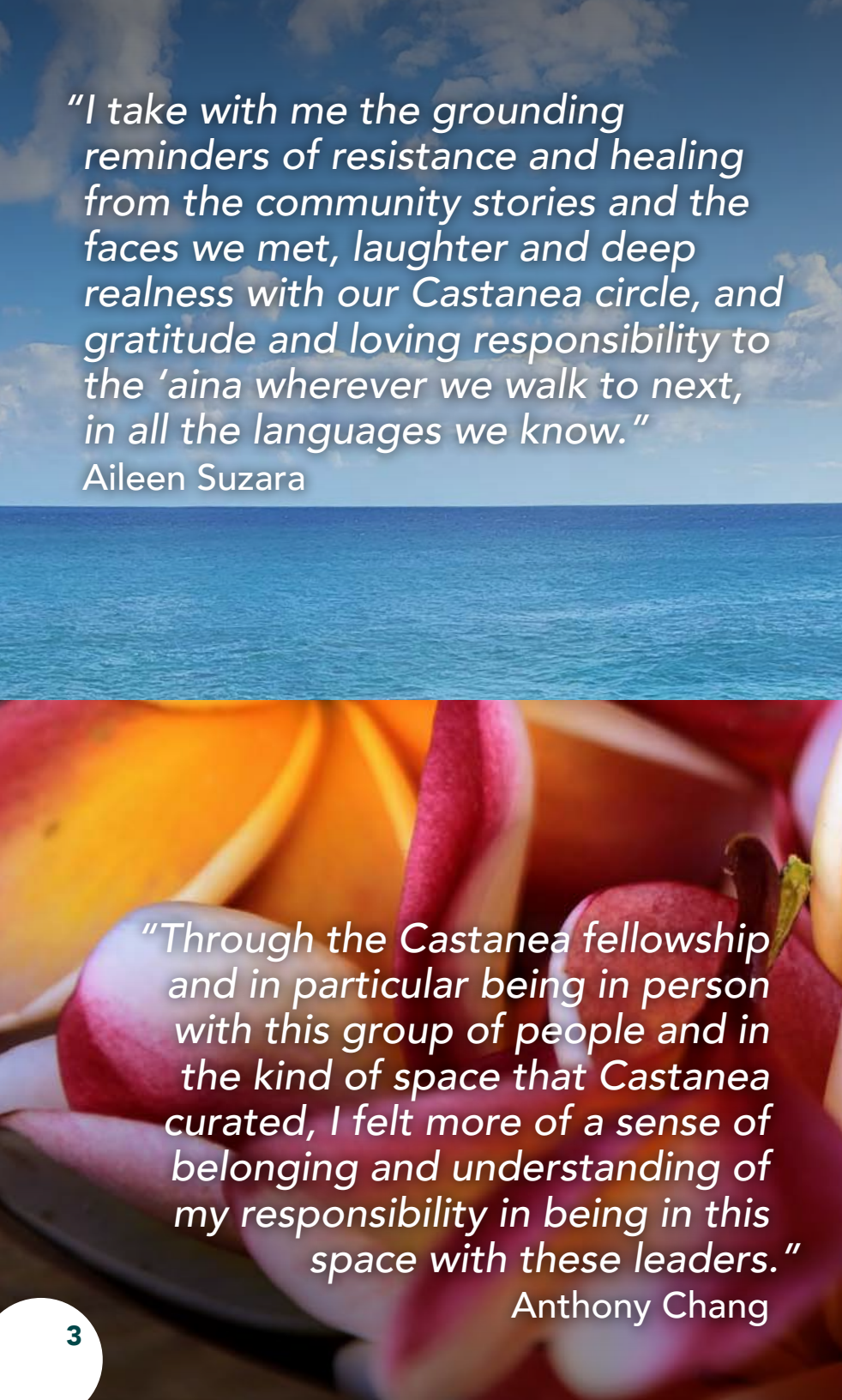
## **THE IMMERSION JOURNEY TO KAUAI**

Connection and Collaboration  
Rest and Rejuvenation  
Honoring the Land and the People  
Deepening Solidarity

## **KAUAI PARTNERS**

Funder Partners  
Kauai Immersion Program Schedule





*"I take with me the grounding reminders of resistance and healing from the community stories and the faces we met, laughter and deep realness with our Castanea circle, and gratitude and loving responsibility to the 'aina wherever we walk to next, in all the languages we know."*

Aileen Suzara

*"Through the Castanea fellowship and in particular being in person with this group of people and in the kind of space that Castanea curated, I felt more of a sense of belonging and understanding of my responsibility in being in this space with these leaders."*

Anthony Chang

## THE IMMERSION

One large, looming question hangs over the heads of those in food movement and justice spaces: how do we build power together? Castanea's answer: with food, with laughter, and with deep personal connections. After two tumultuous years for fellows and our communities, the Castanea team planned the journey to Kauai in May 2022, with deep intention and four goals: Connection and Collaboration; Rest and Rejuvenation; Honoring the Land and People; and Deepening Solidarity.

At Castanea, we understand that place-based immersions are essential to building deep and meaningful relationships with community groups and leaders doing important food justice work. There is also a body of research pointing out that novel experiences that place bodies in new and unknown spaces also make their brains more resilient and healthy, laying the groundwork for new ways of thinking and doing. They support the fellows to break out of old patterns and assumptions, empowering them to move policies, practices, social norms, dollars, and the discourse of food toward a freer future.

If we're going to build a new and better world, we need spaces that allow us to show up as our whole selves and that allow us to create joy in our movements. At Castanea, building liberatory leadership means co-creating spaces to heal, to dream, and to connect. We design immersions to build reflective practices, reduce isolation, deepen relational networks, and leverage collective capacities to make change.

As the Castanea Fellows journeyed to Kauai, one moment stood out as a testament to the power of immersions. Fellows spent a day at Alekoko Fish Pond. From the depths of the valley below where the fellows gathered early that day come the deep tones of a conch shell. Three long calls in a row. The sound reverberates in the air, passing through the skin like a distant memory. Mālia Kahale'ina Chun, a local Indigenous education leader beckons: "They're calling us down, they're ready for us." As the fellows reach the valley bottom, Mālia sings them in, giving thanks and offerings, songs, prayers to the land, to the water, to the air. There is a sacredness here that touches deeper than words. Many of the fellows are brought to tears welling up from a place that one can only reach when one stops thinking and starts being. Here, together, they build and rebuild connections, bonds that normally go unfelt when we are under the pressure to perform, to direct, to produce. This web of being is essential for society's long-term survival; these moments, necessary for leaders to build a more just and wholly nourished world.





*"I had meaningful exchanges that have affected my work immediately and some that I will be processing for a while. I felt a great deal of respect and appreciation for the work everyone is doing."*

Esperanza Pallana

## JOURNEY TO KAUAI

### CONNECTION AND COLLABORATION

We dedicated time and space for fellows to deepen their connections with one another, build a practice of mutual learning and support, and identify potential points of collaboration. This happened through structured conversations, fellows' led discussion groups, and informal activities like collaborative meal making and joyful excursions that allowed for deeper bonds to form and creativity to emerge.





## REST AND REJUVENATION

We believe in the power of rest, healing, and joy as essential elements in expanding the capacity of our leaders, catalyzing creative thinking, and forging lasting connections. In Kauai, we strove to provide a spacious schedule, offer resources for wellness, and to cultivate a culture of collective care. Taking a day to kayak, hike, or snorkel along the Napali coast allowed our fellows to tap into a space of wonder, play, and relaxation.



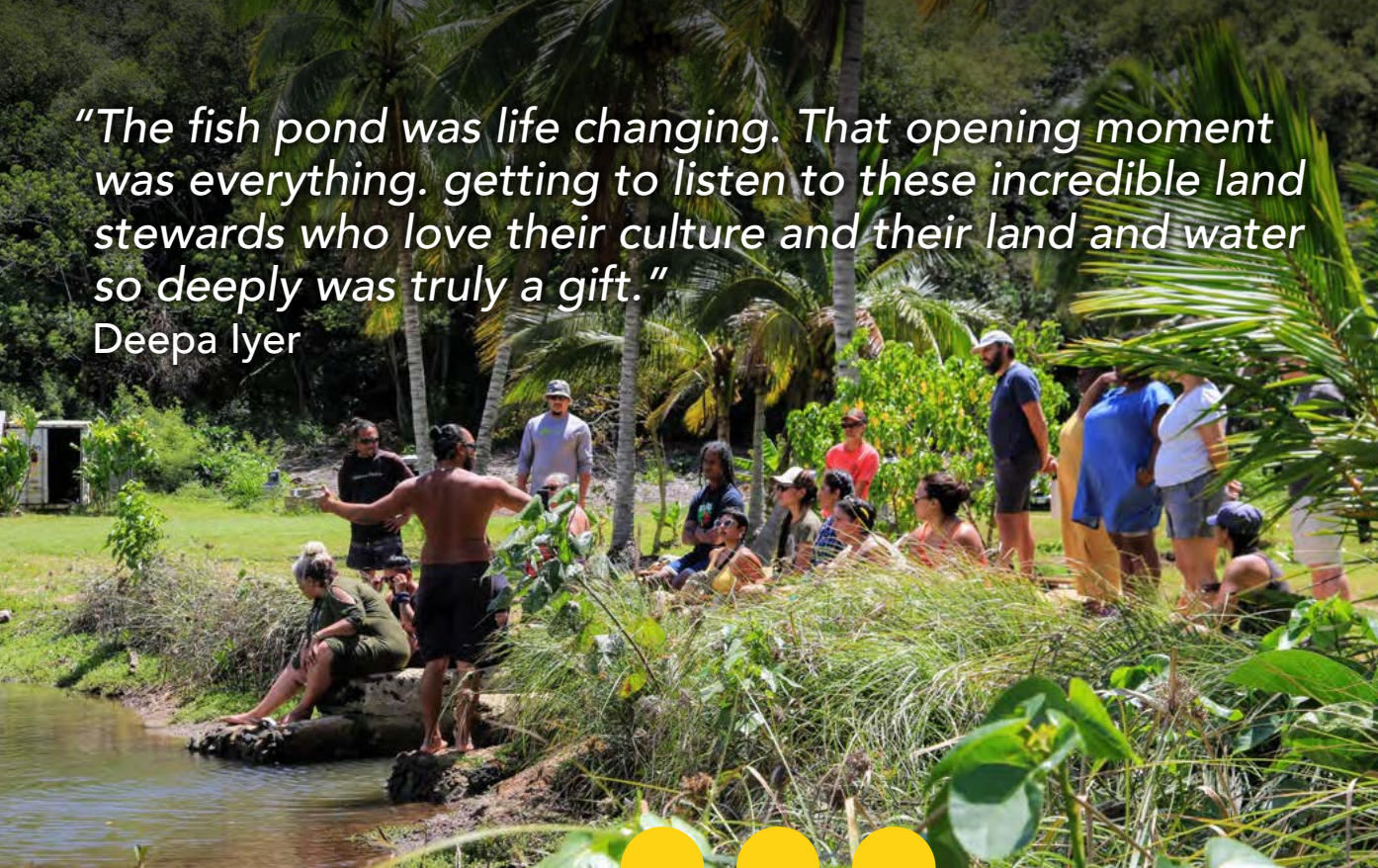
*"Honestly that was the first time I have rested in many years."*  
Geeta Maker-Clark





*"The fish pond was life changing. That opening moment was everything. getting to listen to these incredible land stewards who love their culture and their land and water so deeply was truly a gift."*

Deepa Iyer



## HONORING THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Castanea is committed to showing up as good guests in the places and communities we visit. This means arriving with a sense of humility and taking the time to ask and learn about local context and customs. For this reason, we plan our immersions in intentional coordination with partners on the ground. An online Solidarity Gathering before each in-person immersion provides the space for local leaders to share and for fellows to ask questions in advance of arriving.

What this looks like in practice:

### Shared Cultural Experiences

- Kapu Kai: joining as Malia Chun led Castanea through a sunrise ceremony in the ocean
- Ritual and asking permission: showing up as good guests
- Family Lu'au: being hosted and fed by Malia Chun's family

### Shared Resources

- Grants to Local Partners: moving \$5,000 small grants to local site visit partners
- Focus on working with local vendors with aligned values

### Shared Experiences

- Partners Dinner: inviting additional partners doing justice and sovereignty work from across the island to a shared celebratory dinner





## DEEPENING SOLIDARITY

Through a mix of structured conversations and more informal spaces for connection, immersions are a springboard to build a sense of deep connection and mutual support between the fellows and across the different sectors and communities they work in. We also seek to build meaningful and lasting connections between fellows and local partners. Already, collaborations between fellows and partners in Kauai are coming into fruition, including podcasts, funding opportunities, and planned shared programming and site visits.



*"I'm part of a group I feel deeply aligned with and I feel a sense of security, hope and power in that. I feel like I can share my dreams with this group and find supporters and co-conspirators among them."*  
Ma'raj Sheikh





# KAUAI PARTNERS

Castanea is committed to showing up in solidarity with the people and the land on any immersion. In order to show up as good guests on Kauai island, we partnered with several people and groups doing community-based justice and sovereignty work. The depth and power of our experience would not have been possible without the generosity and trust extended by our local partners.

## Mālia Kahale'inia Chun

*Lead local partner, immersion co-planner, and lū'au host  
Kauai Program Director of  
Nā Pua No'eau, at the  
University of Hawai'i*



**Role:** Mālia was our core link local communities and partners on the ground, and ensured our ability to arrive respectfully and in right relationship with the land and indigenous communities. She provided invaluable guidance with everything from program planning to our logistical choices and ensuring our resources were going toward the benefit of local people as much as possible.

**Bio:** "I am Mālia Kahale'ina Chun from the moku of Kaua'i, moku of Puna and the ahupua'a of Wailuanuihō'ano. I am the mother of two daughters, Lei'ohu and La'akea. My degrees are in Hawaiian Studies and Education. I have been the Kauai Program Director of Nā Pua No'eau, at the University of Hawai'i, for 22 years, providing cultural enrichment opportunities in every educational directive, within a cultural context. My mission is to raise the goals and aspirations of Native Hawaiian children and inspire them to be leaders in their respective communities. I have a specific interest in the revitalization of traditional food systems, natural resource management and the protection of cultural and historical sites. I specialize in developing community partnerships that build, develop and support community based projects. Ultimately, my life's passion is to plant seeds of consciousness and understanding in our youth and equip them with the tools to live a self-sustainable future."



## Mālama Hulē'ia // 'Alakoko Fishpond

[malamahuleia.org](http://malamahuleia.org)

'Alakoko Fishpond is a 600 year old traditional fishpond that has been recently restored. Mālama Hulē'ia advocates, educates, and leads community efforts to remove red mangrove along the Hule'ia river, re-establishes native wetland ecosystems and creates an environmental stewardship program honoring Hawaiian values.

## Anne Frederick

*Executive Director of Hawaiian Alliance  
for Progressive Action (HAPA)  
[hapahi.org](http://hapahi.org)*

**Role:** Connected us with Malia. Provided a socio-political and organizing history and context of Kauai.

**Bio:** Anne Frederick brings over 16 years in non-profit management, community-driven programming and organizing to her work at HAPA. Prior to working at HAPA, she co-founded and directed Hester Street, an NYC non-profit that works to ensure neighborhoods are shaped by the people who live in them. She is also a graduate of Parson's School of Design and the New School for Social Research, where she received a BFA in Environmental Design & Architecture and a BA in Urban Studies. Frederick is most passionate about honoring people's connection to place and organizing to ensure that communities have a voice in how their land is used and managed. She currently lives with her husband at their Anahola, Kaua'i homestead.





## Josh Mori

Nā Mahi Ho'okō A'e // Iwikua  
Pakahi Academy

Developing Kama'āina by empowering current and future generations to be culturally centered life-long learners and to fulfill active roles in the community as teachers, leaders, and farmers. Utilizing hands-on education rooted in traditional knowledge and by partnering with existing organizations such as schools, nonprofits, and local businesses, Iwikua is a resource for real food and cultural wellness.



## Kaina Makua

Aloha 'Āina Poi Co. // Kumano I Ke Ala  
alohaainapoico.com  
kumanoikeala.org

Based in the Makaweli Valley on the Westside of Kaua'i, Aloha Aina Poi Company is a farmer-owned enterprise centered on 'āina-based community enrichment, empowerment and economic development. Our goal is to provide the highest quality kalo products in order to reinvigorate and support a thriving mahi 'ai kalo (kalo farming) complex in West Kaua'i.

Kumano I Ke Ala's mission is to build a foundation of Aloha 'Āina through culturally-based Native Hawaiian education programming to grow self-aware, self-determined and self-directed critical thinkers for a sustainable West Kaua'i. They provide food to the community, feed elders, and lead programs for youth. Kaina is also a Native Hawaiian language teacher.



## FUNDER PARTNERS



& Anonymous Donors





# KAUAI IMMERSION PROGRAM SCHEDULE

	SATURDAY 5/21	SUNDAY 5/22	MONDAY 5/23	TUESDAY 5/24	WEDNESDAY 5/25	THURSDAY 5/26	FRIDAY 5/27
MORNING	FELLOWS TRAVEL TO KAUA'I	<b>Sunrise Kapu Kai Salt Water Ceremony</b> <i>Hawai'ian cleansing ceremony led by Malia</i>	<b>Fellow Curated Convos</b> <i>Fellow-led conversation circles</i>	<b>Rest &amp; Recreation</b> <i>Choose your own adventure from a set of options</i>	<b>Community Visit</b> <i>Visit Na Mahi Ho'oko A'e // Iwikua</i>	<b>Community Visit</b> <i>Visit Mālama Hulē'ia ('Alakoko Fishpond)</i>	FELLOWS DEPART
MIDDAY		<b>Welcome Gathering</b> <i>Connect as a group, set the tone</i>	<b>Fellow Curated Convos</b> <i>Fellow-led conversation circles</i>		<b>Rest &amp; Recreation</b> <i>Relaxing picnic at Kōke'e State Park with some sightseeing stops</i>	<b>Community Visit</b> <i>Visit Mālama Hulē'ia ('Alakoko Fishpond)</i>	FELLOWS TRAVEL HOME
LATE AFTERNOON		<b>Cohort Connections</b> <i>Fellows conversations focused on reconnecting as cohorts</i>	<b>Castanea Future</b> <i>Next steps for fellows Ideas for the future</i>		<b>Community Visit</b> <i>Visit Aloha 'Āina Poi Co. // Kumano I Ke Ala</i>	<b>Closing Reflections</b> <i>Fellows reflect on their experiences and look forward to what's ahead</i>	
EVENING/ NIGHT		<b>FELLOWS ARRIVAL</b> <i>Light dinner provided Settle in, informal connection</i>	<b>Dinner &amp; Open Time</b> <i>Fellows can connect, relax, walk around</i>	<b>Fellows Cooked Dinner</b> <i>Collaborative dinner</i>	<b>Community Partner Dinner</b> <i>Dinner shared with local community partners</i>	<b>Transition Ceremony</b> <i>A ceremony to honor all of the transitions</i>	<b>Lū'au / Celebration</b> <i>Traditional meal with foraged &amp; local ingredients, hula dancer, local band</i>

COLOR KEY: ● **Arrival & Departure** ● **Fellows Connection** ● **Local Partners, Land, & Culture** ● **Rest & Recreation**







# CASTANEA FELLOWSHIP

COMMUNITY. POWER. JUSTICE.

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