



STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 12, 2024

**AgriBusiness Development Corporation and Partners
to Help House the Houseless in Wahiawā**

WAHIAWĀ, HAWAII — More than 44 houseless individuals in Wahiawā have been placed in shelters or reunited with loved ones following more than six months of community work by the AgriBusiness Development Corporation (ADC), the Wahiawā community and the City and County of Honolulu and nonprofit partners.

ADC Property Manager Roger Clemente and ADC Project Manager Ken Nakamoto credit the success to daily, sustained, face-to-face meetings with dozens of houseless people who had been living along a small parcel of newly acquired ADC land in Wahiawā, just off Whitmore Avenue, around Kahi Kani Park. Dozens of them, Clemente said, have been living in the area for years and were startled to learn that the land is now private, with no idea of where to go. The goal of ADC was to develop trust and meaningful relationships in order to provide them with supportive services and get them into housing.

“Many [houseless] have experienced a trauma. A lot of them need guidance, somewhere to turn. I know many of them are in homes now,” says Clemente. “We were able to be there for them, along with other community members, to provide resources and shelters and to be supportive. [Kealahou West O’ahu](#) met with many houseless people over the course of the year.”

ADC works to address multiple challenges facing Hawai‘i’s infrastructure, food production and thousands of acres of vacant lands. Wahiawā, including the Wahiawā Irrigation System, is a main artery to many arable acres of farmland and irrigation systems.

“All of this land will be turned into production, for food for the community. But it has been barren for years, and just putting up the ‘Private Property’ signs doesn’t always get that point across,” say Clemente.

--continued--

“We hope to get a farmer on this Wahiawā land by the end of the year,” added Clemente. “We know that this is a challenge across the islands, but we also know that leading with compassion for each other is the only way.”

“The greater community needs to be assured that ADC will continue to manage its lands to the best of its ability, and at the same time, show compassion to individuals who are on the land,” says Nakamoto. “Our biggest concern from the community? Safety for our children, including fire safety.”

“As more and more ADC land becomes licensed and operated, the Wahiawā community can be a resource: monitoring the safety of our community, helping those in need find a place to live, and preventing fires and injuries,” says Executive Director Wendy Gady. “We all have to be vigilant.”

For more information on ADC’s efforts, visit: <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/adc/category/main/>

About AgriBusiness Development Corporation

The AgriBusiness Development Corporation (“ADC”) is a state agency created in 1994 by the Hawai‘i State Legislature and is administratively attached to the Hawai‘i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Its mission is to conserve and convert arable lands and their associated infrastructure that were formerly large mono-crop plantation lands into new, productive uses. The agency’s ultimate goal is to ensure that agricultural production and agribusiness ventures will be responsive to the current food and other agricultural needs of the state of Hawai‘i.

The restoration of the Wahiawā Irrigation System (WIS), part of ADC’s statewide irrigation infrastructure and water sustainability efforts, fulfills ADC’s statute: to grow more local food, to develop an agricultural export business, and to be an aggressive and dynamic leader in agriculture for Hawai‘i. ADC also operates multiple water systems on Kaua‘i.

#

For media inquiries or more information, please contact:

Laci Goshi
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
808-518-5480
lacianne.a.goshi@hawaii.gov

Janet M. Kelley
Mana Means Communications
808-521-1160 and 808-285-7712
janet@manameans.com