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Local Book Club Project Helps Homeless in Hawaii

Submitted by Christi Higgins



The girls at one of the libraries, from left: Maddie Higgins, Kellen Scanlan, Kimi Klein and Mollie Swan
Photo provided

to a shelter in Hilo, adding to its existing Keiki (children's) room.

Kimi Palacio, volunteer coordinator for Hope Charities, had kind words for the group: "Thank you so much for the book donation for our West Hawaii Shelter! Our shelter residents have really enjoyed the access to so much variety of reading material. Our residents have even started a small book club, which is so beneficial for them to partake in! We can't thank you enough for all that you have done for us. People always say they want to help, but very few come through. We will never forget you."

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For nine years, four Lamorinda girls, Maddie Higgins (Orinda), Kimi Klein (Lafayette), Mollie Swan (Orinda), Kellen Scanlan (Moraga) and their mothers have gotten together to participate in a mother-daughter book club. Because the girls are graduating next year, they decided to celebrate their time together with a capstone project supporting literacy.

Through friends they learned about Hope Charities, an organization that supports and runs several homeless shelters on the big island of Hawaii. With the high cost of living, limited employment opportunities and few resources, helping the homeless is a major undertaking on the islands. But because of its reputation as a vacation destination, Hawaii's underprivileged population often fails to receive the appropriate aid that it needs. Working around sports, volunteer work and summer studies, the foursome and their mothers coordinated a literacy project for two shelters.

Soliciting help from friends, family, and Glorietta Elementary School, the girls gathered over 1,000 books with the intention of setting up two libraries in the shelters. In June, they met with program directors, planned the required space, and flew to the island to build book shelves and install the donated books. The majority of the books went to an adult shelter in Kona, and the remaining third went