



WHAT WILL WE NEED?

2000 AND BEYOND

By Gail Agas '00

Who do we want to be? What will we need? How will we relate? These were questions Kamehameha seniors Lindsay Ah Loo, Traci Bush, Shekinah Ilae and Michelle Mueller faced as part of KHON-TV's 2000 & Beyond, a community action program that culminated in a live, two-hour prime time television special on December 14, 1999.

Jumping into the new millennium, *2000 & Beyond* served as a venue for members of Hawaii's younger generation to voice their predictions and ideas for the future. Out of 23 Kamehameha seniors recommended by their teachers, Lindsay, Traci, Shekinah and Michelle were selected by KHON to represent this generation; they joined other high school and college students from various Hawai'i public and private schools.

Separated into three working groups, the students' task was to respond to one of three questions by way of active group participation and a media presentation to be aired on television. Community leaders including Circuit Court Judge Michael Town, Hawai'i Tourism Authority CEO Bob Fishman, and First Lady Vicky Cayetano worked as mentors with the student-participants while the KHON broadcast team catered to their

multimedia creative ideas.

Over four months, the students committed their personal time to meet with their working groups as often as four times a week.

Traci and Michelle's group answered the question, *Who do we want to be?* During their discussions, the group dealt with issues like stereotypes and narrow-mindedness that ultimately prevent us from being who we want to be good – role models for the younger generation. Among many ideas, the students suggested cultural diversity classes in which people are educated about various cultures, resulting in a more tolerant future society. Reaching consensus, the students concluded, "We are each individual patches of a beautiful quilt sewn together by different types of thread."

Shekinah's team explored the question, *What will we need?* They understood that to move smoothly into the future, we need *connectivity*, a term they defined as each person's own connection with the rest of society. Group members learned that for some, *connectivity* means participation in community or school services. According to Shekinah's group, the first way to

2000 & Beyond participants (from left) Traci Bush, Michelle Mueller, Shekinah Ilae and Lindsay Ah Loo.

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implement *connectivity* is through the school system. They also offered suggestions to strengthen relationships between parents and students, to build school pride and to recognize the achievements of each student. For Shekinah, “getting connected” meant looking into the past to where we come from – our cultures. She said, “Being connected to our culture will help us move into the future.”

Lindsay’s contingent looked at *How will we relate?* and honed in on the technological advances that might come in the future. By looking at how technology has dramatically morphed from the recent past to the present, Lindsay’s team predicted what technology might be like in the future and concluded that we will relate and be connected through advancements in technology like the Internet. But even as we move into the future, Lindsay does not forget the importance of the present. “Even if we’re in 2000,” she said, “it’s still just another day. It’s important not to lose sight of the present.” According to Lindsay, we mustn’t forget to live for today as well so we are not always caught up in the future.

As the *2000 & Beyond* program reached its

end, Lindsay, Traci, Shekinah and Michelle reflected on the “cool experience” they were fortunate to be a part of. All saw the program as an opportunity to have a voice and make a difference in a society that they’re about to take hold of. And since everyone is so caught up in the media, television seemed like a good way to reach many people.

Traci felt that the group interaction and sharing of opinions really brought about a sense of vulnerability. She commented, “Now that I’ve done it, I feel a lot better about who I am. The others, too, agreed that their participation really strengthened who they are and what they believe in.

Hawaii’s first lady also enjoyed her active support of *2000 & Beyond*. “I wanted to be involved,” Mrs. Cayetano said during the live television broadcast, “because these young people represent the generation that’s going to carry us into the new millennium.” And Lindsay, Traci, Shekinah and Michelle agreed that the experience was well worth their time.



The author, 17-year old KS senior Gail Agas is the features and opinion editor of Kamehameha Schools’ student newspaper *Ka Mōi*. Active with *Ka Mōi* since her sophomore year, Gail hopes to pursue a career in journalism. She is also a member of Keaka Kamehameha, Kamehameha Schools Drama Club.



LEFT—First Lady Vicky Cayetano with Lindsay Ah Loo (third from left).

ABOVE—Shekinah Ilae and Leslie Wilcox in front of Channel 2’s SCOOP van