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CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

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CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

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KAREN M. RADIUS
BODE A. UALE

March 7, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is thank the Surfrider Foundation and Cynthia Y.H. Derosier, author of, The Surfer Spirit, for creating the Surfrider Spirit Sessions program and for their continuous support for this vital and innovative program. The Spirit Sessions are a wonderful asset to our community, serving the physical and emotional health and well being of Hawaii's at-risk young women.

The Surfrider Spirit Sessions teaches life lessons in an impactful and experiential way. Through it the girls learn that they are more, and can do more, than they think. That they are strong, capable, and that they can be successful. They've built more meaningful relationships and have a new found appreciation for their beaches and ocean.

As you know, the Spirit Sessions provide the Girls' Court participants and staff with a ten-week series of Saturday morning surfing lessons, supported by mentors[▼] and surfing instructors. Each lesson integrates an inspirational message taken from The Surfer Spirit, which is introduced to the girls' upon their arrival at the beach. The surf instructors and surf-mentors incorporate the day's message into the surf lesson, focusing the girls' attention on all of the ways in which surfing is just like life; full of challenges and successes, "wipe-outs" and waves ridden all the way to shore. After each surf session, the girls work with their mentors to journal their achievements and experiences. Girls Court staff reinforce how each lesson can be applied to so many of life's circumstances throughout the course of their work together.

The sessions significantly accelerated the girls' progress. Emma Pavich, Girl's Court Program therapist, noted that that after just four weeks of The Spirit Sessions the Girl's Court participants showed emotional progress such as enhanced trust, greater levels of openness and communication and gains in their self-esteem typically seen after 5 months in the Girls' Court

▼ The mentors for the last 10 Spirit Sessions included a newspaper reporter, a naturopathic physician, a yoga school owner/instructor, a marketing executive, a policewoman, an attorney, and an environmental scientist!

program.

The Spirit Sessions are spectacular for these young women and have become an integral component of the Hawaii Family Court's Girls Court program (See www.girlscourt.org). With the help of the Spirit Sessions, the girls learn to overcome their fears, to take risks, to deal with disappointments and to experience the growth associated with achievement. Initially, the girls could not believe that they could ever learn to surf, but by the end of the very first session, each of the girls and staff members were catching waves, surfing with huge smiles and feelings Accomplishment.

The girls who participated in the pilot program of the Spirit Session programs are all now engaged in schooling, Job Corps or employment training programs. Three girls are working part-time while going to school or training. All of the girls have ceased or greatly reduced their drug and/or alcohol use. The families of the girls report having much better relationships with their daughters. Three of last year's participants have asked to repeat the program in 2008! I believe that much of this success can be directly related to the Surfrider Spirit Sessions.

Our girls not only learned how to surf, but also learned valuable life lessons that they can apply to any challenge they may face. The girls learned that women and others in the community care about them and they grew in numerous ways because of their relationships with each other and with the mentors.

Thank you again for your continued support, and the support of the community and other funders. These are lessons that will last a lifetime. We look forward to the Surfrider Spirit Sessions in 2008 and beyond.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Adriane Abe our Girls Court coordinator at Adriane.C.Abe@courts.state.hi.us

Very truly yours,



Karen M. Radius
Family Court Judge
Girls Court Presiding Judge