

NEWS RELEASE

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Amid COVID-19 Stay at Home Orders, An Innovative Education Model Emerges as a Next Generation Hackathon

Hawaii Island Students and Global Mentors Collaborate on New Innovation-Learning Platform to Create Kilauea Eruption Recovery Apps

HILO, HAWAII - Billed as the Aloha State's first virtual hackathon, more than 45 students from the University of Hawaii at Hilo (UH Hilo) and Hawaii Community College (HCC) will compete to develop app-based solutions for lava recovery efforts from the 2018 Kilauea eruption. The hackathon will take place April 4 – 5, 2020 from 10am-5pm each day and present \$5,000 in cash prizes to winning teams.

“While our hackathon was originally planned to take place on the UH Hilo campus, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced what is normally a live invention event to adapt as a 100 percent remote experience,” said Jason Ueki, Executive Director of HIplan. “We selected [BizzyB.com](https://www.bizzyb.com), an online collaborative invention platform for students to run our hack on. With BizzyB, we've realized that we can connect students and mentors in deeper and more efficient ways as well as ensure more comprehensive coverage of innovation concepts. This takes hacks and STEM education to new heights. I'm convinced that BizzyB represents the future of education, irrespective of the current Coronavirus threat.”

The goal of any hackathon is to challenge students to address real-world problems, in this case, conceptualizing app-based solutions to support the Kilauea Volcano eruption recovery effort facing Hawaii County. Teams will create app concepts with the potential to become real startups. By participating in hands-on concept development activities, students will learn creative problem-solving and other “Soft Skills” that are increasingly demanded in the business world.

“When schools began closing due to Coronavirus, we made BizzyB entirely free for the rest of the school year,” says BizzyB author and Bizgenics Foundation Chairman Steve Sue. “The HIplan Hackathon is a smart, forward-looking application of BizzyB's Contest Module that was created to serve in-class challenges, hackathons, business plan competitions and accelerators. We're happy to support HIplan and other producers of innovation-based learning programs.”

BizzyB's approach combines self-directed learning, 4Cs learning (Creativity, Critical-Thinking, Collaboration & Communication), STEM learning (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) and SEL (Social Emotional Learning). The result is an online innovation Concept Canvas where student teams collaborate on five essential themes of an innovation project. This canvas supports remote collaboration via sidebar comment channels, built-in feedback surveys, pitch deck builder and showcase presentation functions. Mentors can view team content and advise remotely from anywhere, anytime. Team members also experience corporate leadership roles serving as facilitators of the five themes. 21st Century Soft Skill measurement standards are measured in the system by pre- and post-project user surveys. Outcomes are reported through contest public pages and through individual student portfolios that feature project summaries, awards, certifications, badges and Soft Skill assessments.



Student admission to the hackathon is free, with signups available on a first-come basis. Educators are invited to watch the live showcase via video conference Sunday, April 5, 2pm Hawaii Standard Time. A recorded version of the showcase will be published following the event. For information, visit <https://bizzyb.com/hiplan-hackathon-2020/>.

The event is being sponsored by Kamehameha Schools, Ulupono Initiative, County of Hawaii, UH Hilo, and HCC. It is being produced by the [Hawaii Island Business Plan Competition \(HIplan\)](#) and the nonprofit [Bizgenics Foundation](#).

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Judges include State Senator Russell Ruderman, Dean of Liberal Arts & Public Services at HCC Melanie Wilson, Associate Professor of Computer Science & Engineering at HCC Shawon Rahman. Mentors include Director of Accelerator Operations at Elemental Excelerator Sherrie Totoki in San Francisco, Americas Advisory Learning Leader Louise Lorton of Ernst & Young in North Carolina, and a team of coders in Bangladesh. Facilitators include local entrepreneur Mike Nakamura, former tech executive Wayne Morris, and retired tech professional Mr. Walter McCoy.

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About HIplan

HIplan is a Hawaii-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit that seeks to stimulate the development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem on Hawaii Island through education in business planning and communication skills.

About Bizgenics

Bizgenics Foundation is a Hawaii-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit that seeks to empower all people to discover unique personal skills and learn positive social values to catalyze a bright future. Bizgenics specializes in creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship K-12 student programs including Lemonade Alley, Project Lemon Tree and [BizzyB.com](#). Learn more at [bizgenics.org](#)

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