

A foolproof way to get kids to eat veggies

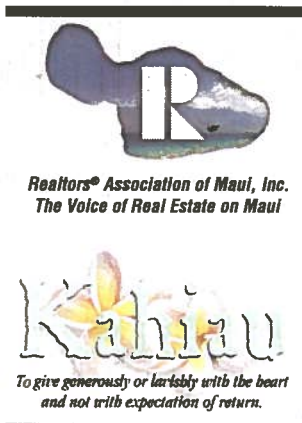
By **JOSEPH W. BEAN**

Kathy Becklin is a Realtor with the Aloha Realty Group. So, naturally, if you wanted to know about buying or selling real estate, you might take your questions to her.

If you wanted to convince your kids to eat their vegetables, she might not be the first person you think of, but maybe she should be. She and her two co-conspirators in the founding of Grow Some Good — Nio Kindla and Kirk Surry — absolutely know the secret.

Cutting to the chase, as they say, the answer is simple: Kids will eagerly eat vegetables that they grow themselves. So, if only you were a farmer or had an idle garden plot at your house or on your condo lanai. Oh, and you might still need a good deal of knowledge, time and patience, too. Yeah, right. Try that, but you know it will be an uphill battle. Who took care of the puppy or goldfish, eh?

Maybe instead you'll be lucky enough to have your children enrolled in a school that's in the Grow Some Good program. "We are now supporting over 2,500 students at six schools," Becklin



said. Those schools are Kamali'i Elementary, Kihei Charter Middle School, Kihei Elementary, Lokelani Intermediate and Wailuku Elementary, plus starting right now, Baldwin High School. And, who knows? Maybe the school in your neighborhood is next.

This program has been growing like a bitter melon vine in an abandoned lot for about seven years.

What the program is and does sounds simple. Grow Some Good, as described online, is "a nonprofit community program dedicated to creating hands-on, outdoor learning experiences that cultivate curiosity about natural

life cycles, connect students to their food sources and inspire better nutrition choices. In addition to helping establish food gardens and living science labs in local schools, we provide resources and curriculum-support through community partnerships in agriculture, science, food education and nutrition." Way simpler version: The volunteers help make gardens in schools; everything else follows from that.

Grow Some Good's second annual fundraiser — Taste of School Gardens — was held March 8 with 350 attendees. It was a great event, bringing in more than \$39,000. They had music by the Brown-Chicken BrownCow String Band; Dean Wong, Executive Director of Imua Family Services, served as master of ceremonies. There was food by local star chefs and great live and silent auctions. "And don't forget," Becklin said, "we had a gorgeous sunset view from the Hotel Wailea. They were so good to us."

Are you sorry you missed it? Don't miss the next event. Go to GrowSomeGood.org and click on events to stay informed. While you're there,



Kathy Becklin is one of the founders of Grow Some Good. But what really matters is the future growth of the organization, which she hopes we will all help to guarantee.

look at what's behind the "Volunteer" tab, too. You don't have to be a super-farmer. Watering and general maintenance is a category of volunteering, and if you're up to it, there's also an opportunity called "class time with students." You might also support Grow Some Good by contributing in-kind donations of equipment or supplies, or (of course) by making a cash donation to the program.

We need for our kids to get excited about science, to understand that what they learn in school has meaning in the real world, and at the same time, to be interested in eating a decent diet that includes fresh, nutritious food. Grow Some Good contributes to and even inspires all of that and so much more.

Becklin is eager to share credit for the amazing accomplishments of Grow Some

Good with her cofounders, Kindla and Surry, and also with the many volunteers and donors who keep the program working and growing. She says that she is "unofficially the treasurer, and officially the webmaster." Adding for the comfort of donors: "We are working at forming our own 501(c)3, but currently are operating under Tri-Isle Resource Conservation and Development." What does that mean? Gifts are already tax deductible, so give in peace.

What you'll be supporting is the health, education and no matter how much broccoli-hating kids deny it, the happiness of the growing generation. When children not exposed to the experience of growing food see the USDA "My Plate" model of what they really should eat, they look at it and wonder where are the fries and ketchup, what happened to my fast food, and where are gummy candies and peeps in this model? That's without even getting into the question of pizza, burgers and chips.

When Grow Some Good evolved out of South Maui Sustainability a good thing came to life, a thing well worth our support.