

**From the Heart**  
*Honolulu Star-Advertiser*  
May 18, 2013


Online Circulation: 266,460  
Print Circulation: 135,000


## From the heart

**Isle teens learn about “bringing joy” to their community through volunteering**

By Nancy Arcayna

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, May 18, 2013  
LAST UPDATED: 02:09 a.m. HST, May 18, 2013

 Recommend

 Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

 +1  0



Sara Black recalls passing out goody boxes to homeless folks on Easter. That was several years ago, when she began her community service efforts. "It brightened their holidays and made me feel really good," she said. "Even at a young age, I realized that I was helping people."

Now 16, she has volunteered her time with service projects ranging from beach cleanups to assisting kids with special needs and reading stories to hospitalized children. Her latest venture is completing certification with the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "I always find things to do. I like bringing joy to others," she said.

Aime Black and her daughters, Sara and Shelby, launched an Oahu chapter of Lion's Heart, a nationwide volunteer service organization for kids in grades 6 to 12. Before the Blacks moved to Hawaii, they were involved with Lion's Heart in Trabuco Canyon, Calif., although the organization was originally geared toward boys. Some of the organizations that they worked with included the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation, the American Red Cross and Adopt-a-Beach.

"The girls got a lot out of it, so I wanted to extend that to the community here," Black said. "It teaches our kids values and the importance of giving back to others."

Each group elects its own teenage officers, runs its own meetings and gives members the choice of how they want to serve the community with little parental involvement. Headquartered in Southern California, Lion's Heart has 14 chapters in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia and Hawaii. No fundraising is allowed and members are expected to perform at least 30 hours of community service each year.

Thirteen-year-old Shelby said that one of her favorite service projects was distributing fliers on Alzheimer's awareness at the mall.

"I get to help make the community a better place but it also allows me to make friends with people that care about their future," she said. "I think that if everyone did a small act of service a day, our communities, state and the whole

planet would be a better place."

Lion's Heart members log their volunteer hours online and are eligible for service awards. Shelby received a bronze medal last year for 78 hours of service.

Black is happy with the lessons her daughters are learning. "It helps them receive skills that the real world will require of them," she said. "It's great that these kids can assess a situation, evaluate and prioritize. Their eyes are open to opportunities and ways to help out."

#### **SIGN UP**

Enrollment in Lion's Heart is Feb. 1 through Aug. 1 each year. Visit [www.lionsheartservice.org](http://www.lionsheartservice.org). The cost to join the group is \$100 and includes a T-shirt and entrance to the annual awards ceremony. There is a \$50 annual renewal fee.