

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai‘i Policy Initiative

Mana‘o from Speaker Kyle Quilausing

On September 14th, OYAH Policy Team members attended an event hosted by RYSE, in which Kyle Quilausing was the guest speaker.

Quilausing grew up with a loving and caring family who instilled good morals and beliefs in him, he said. His grandfather introduced him to golf, which he quickly grew to be very skilled in. Throughout his middle to high school career, Quilausing was state champion many times, even reaching 4th in world rank.

[T]hemes of hope."

Unfortunately, success and college offers had gotten to his head, and, he said, he became very arrogant. After making life mistakes, he was expelled from high school his senior year, just six months before graduation. The guilt, regret, and negative responses from his family and community pushed him over the edge, and he did something he promised he'd never succumb to - drugs.

A then 98-pound crystal meth addict, Quilausing, who briefly escaped from prison, was named one of Hawai‘i's Most Wanted. He spent over ten years in prison, with three of those years in solitary confinement. He told of his experiences in prison and solitary, which painted very frightening and solemn pictures of his time in the facilities.

Quilausing explained how he was able to turn his own life around, and how grateful he is to be able to stand in front of people and share his story. He wishes to inspire others to make the right choices, telling everyone he meets to "stay free." Youth and adults who attended the event seemed emotionally moved and compelled to learn more from Quilausing. He showed how one person's commitment to make a difference in the life of others can turn a story with tragic themes into one of hope.

Working with Quilausing

Quilausing was very excited when he heard about OYAH's efforts, especially the passing of the bill that limits the room confinement of minors, as he has experienced such terrible things himself.

The OYAH Policy Team hopes to keep in touch and work with Quilausing, helping to share his story with legislators and policymakers to inspire change with his very personal and impactful stories, possibly even testifying himself. He has also offered to speak to law students, hopefully catalyzing more interest and passion in OYAH's work and the fights for Native Hawaiian equity in the justice system. Quilausing is pictured below with retired public school teacher Virginia Young and policy intern Leah Delos Santos at the RYSE event.

