



## ***For Immediate Release***

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### **Kona Community Hospital Leading the Way with Healthy Food Initiative**

*Menu revamp includes more fresh, local foods for Blue Zones Project Approved™ restaurant*

**October 2, 2018 – Kealahou, island of Hawaii.** The Ginger Café menu at Kona Community Hospital is being upgraded to increase fresh ingredients grown in Hawai'i, expand vegetable forward dishes, and improve flavor for scratch cooked meals.

The initiative is named *`Ai Pono, Ho'omaka ana* which translates to *Eat Healthy, New Beginnings*. The name, suggested by Marla Nora, a nurse at the hospital, reflects the meaning of "made from scratch". The program takes whole ingredients as they come from the farm to make healthy, nutrient dense meals.

Kona Community Hospital selected Chef Greg Christian, founder of Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partners to lead the healthy food initiative. "We chose Beyond Green Partners for their ability to impact the whole community," said Judy Donovan, Marketing and Strategic Planning Director. Construction workers, county employees, and others come to dine at the Ginger Café.

"*`Ai Pono. Ho'omaka ana – or Eat Healthy...New Beginning – emerged from the hospital education committee as a Blue Zones Project® to enhance our commitment to teaching people to make healthy choices, as well as, our commitment to elevating the skills of our cafeteria staff.*" Ms. Donovan adds.

Kona Community Hospital was recognized as the first hospital to become Blue Zones Project Approved™ on Hawai'i Island in April of this year. Brought to Hawai'i through an innovative sponsorship by HMSA, Blue Zones Project® is a community-led well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to lifestyle, environment, policy, and social networks.

Chef Greg Christian believes "waking up the creativity among the kitchen staff and bringing healthy local food to the community makes sense and creates wins for everyone." He says, "It's time for everyone to think of Kona Community Hospital's Ginger Café as a chef-driven local food restaurant."

Ginger Café customers are surveyed daily to fine tune the menu offerings. Overall responses have been positive. Staff taste tested pizza last week and one customer wrote, "I thought it was DELICIOUS! The crust reminded me of eating pizza at a pizzeria. The toppings and sauce had great flavor as well." The café is piloting a salad bar and new menu items such as local ono with lemon and garlic, vegetarian pesto pasta, and eggplant adobo are offered daily.

**KONA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**  
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**About Kona Community Hospital.** Founded in 1914, KCH is a 94-bed full-service acute care hospital with 24-hour emergency department recently designated as a Level III trauma center supporting the west region of the island of Hawaii. It is a member of the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, a special agency of the state of Hawaii established in 1996. It is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. KCH is dedicated to providing and enhancing accessible comprehensive healthcare services to the West Hawaii community.

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