

Maui and mainland groups join in quest to help felons

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WAILUKU >> A San Francisco-based group that has had a high success rate rehabilitating felons has agreed to help establish a similar program on Maui.

The Delancey Street Foundation yesterday announced it is forming a partnership with the nonprofit Maui Economic Opportunity Inc., which recently received grants to develop a program to rehabilitate former Hawaii inmates.

Maui Economic has received approval to obtain \$300,000 in federal grant money and also received a \$1 million construction authorization from the state Legislature.

Maui Economic Executive Director Gladys Baisa said the group planned to eventually build a facility not only to house clients, but also train and employ them in various businesses.

The facility would be developed under Maui Economic's "Being Empowered and Safe Together" program, which has been assisting inmates and former inmates in making the transition back into society.

Delancey Street officials said a little more than 80 percent of their clients stay out of prison.

The clients, some facing potential prison incarceration, are required to undergo at least a two-year program at Delancey. The average stay is between three and four years, Foundation officials said.

Delancey Street replication coordinator Shirley LaMarr said her group will be helping provide various components in its program to the Maui group, with assistance from the Milton Eisenhower Foundation.

The Delancey Street Foundation focuses on making ex-felons help themselves through training and education, including classes offered at a char-

tered high school.

In the early 1990s, its clients constructed a 400,000-square-foot building in the Embarcadero area that includes a restaurant, retail area and 177-unit apartment.

The building provides living quarters for its clients who receive training and employment at businesses in the facility, including a restaurant, furniture-making business and a furniture-moving company.

Foundation officials said that since its inception in the early 1970s, it has helped more than 10,000 people move from illiteracy to receiving their high school equivalency diploma.

LaMarr, a former heroin addict, said before she became an administrator, she worked in the kitchen at Delancey, then moved into a supervisory role, providing food to 250 clients.

"At Delancey, I learned how to run a full food-service department," she said.