

AMERICAN SAMOA

FA'ASAMOA ARTS

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OUR MISSION

"To perpetuate our traditional Samoan practices of seafaring by initiating a revival of knowledge and sharing our skills to inspire the next generation."

*Mole mamalu o alo ma fanau o Amerika Samoa ma ana paaga o loo aumau i itu uma e fa ole lalolagi ole lalolagi
(for the sons and daughters and friends of American Samoa that dwell in the four corners of the earth):*



We write this letter as a form of communication to you about something that pertains to the perpetuation of our heritage in navigation, wayfinding, and traditional seafaring. Pictured here is a 23' double hulled va'a named Apaula, built in Leone, made of various local woods and crafted under the direction of Su'a Tupuola Fitiao Wilson, a local artist whose dream has been to revive and retrace our traditional voyaging ways, simply because we- are -voyagers. History tells of a time when we were seen on the open ocean; there are documents written that call us the Navigator Islands because of our ocean voyaging skills in distant open sea (moana sausau). In 1768, French Admiral Louis de Bougainville visited the islands. He was so impressed with the Samoan's numerous canoes and their great skill in handling them that he called Samoa "The Navigator Islands."



We have launched an on-going effort to revive our voyaging ways. To date, we have accomplished the build and launch of Apaula. We have sailed her in and around Pago Pago Harbor. She has managed to touch the hearts and minds of our local people, especially our children who are fascinated by her, calling her MOANA from the shore. Her presence from the mouth of the harbor into the entire bay is an eye-catcher and a show-stopper. When the wind hits her sail, it's as if the ancestors are with us, guiding her and showing us how meaningful it is to bring back such a vital part of a Samoan tradition.



Coordinating Apaula's appearance at special events such as Flag Day, the Pacific Water Sports Summer Program, Coast Weeks, Tisa's Tattoo Festival and the American Samoa Junior Sailing Regatta has been very successful. These few events have led us to believe that there is a need to continue these efforts for our future generations. And, there is a need to expand our efforts, following in the footsteps of our Pacific brothers who have their fleet of va'atele. Although this dream began with Apaula, who has revived this innate love for seafaring in American Samoa, the motivation now is to expand. The objective now is to build a larger va'a-- a va'atele. To fulfill our ongoing dream, we will need your help. There is a Samoan proverb, "togi sau ma'a", which means something to the effect of "throw your rock so that your presence is made known". This means we are reaching out from our shores here in Tutuila American Samoa to ask for your consideration in lending a hand to the expansion of the voyaging efforts we've started.

We are writing to ask if you would be interested in helping to make this dream a reality. A monetary donation made for this cause would go to the making of a larger va'atele, one that can continue the education of our children and broaden their seafaring skills. To build a va'atele would enable us to travel beyond our shores, like our ancestors once did, and unite with our Pacific fleet of va'atele who sail together to all islands of the South Pacific. Check donations can be made out to LeSina, our Commercial Art Studio, which is initially where Apaula was hand-built, and is housed. Please be sure to memo this donation as Va'atele Project for American Samoa. Donations can also be made via Please visit our online Store where you can follow the fundraising campaign and support the cause by buying products featuring our artwork.

**FAAFETAI TELE LAVA MA IA TU IOEVA I LOU
TA VA SOIFUA MA IA MANUIA.**

