Currently he plays on the defensive line for the BYU football team in Provo, but Joshua Singh, a freshman business major from Laie, Hawaii, attributed his successes to his hometown community. “Growing up in Laie, I was always taught to be humble and to give back. That is one thing I hope to do one day. Give back to my community.”

For Singh, the road to BYU in Provo was not an easy one. Before COVID-19, he said he had several scholarship options to play football. However, he said he lost several of them because of the NCAA rule change, which gave college seniors another year of eligibility to play. This meant less spots were available on the roster for the upcoming year, explained Singh. In addition, he said he was not able to travel to visit schools because of the pandemic, leaving him unsure.

Luckily for Singh, BYU in Provo offered him a preferred walk-on position, meaning he would be able to play, but without a scholarship, he explained. With football and school requiring 12-hour days every day, Singh said he was very grateful when Built Bar, a sponsor of BYU in Provo’s football team, offered all the walk-ons full tuition coverage for Fall 2021, shared Singh.

His parents taught him if people “put the Lord first no matter what, he will provide a way for [them],” Singh shared. “Football has helped me develop as a person, to mature, and has taught me discipline. I’ve learned to be respectful, honest and humble.”

Singh said he owes his success to the “Laie Park big boys,” the local football team for third to eighth graders, and expressed appreciation for his coaches, uncles and aunts who have helped him throughout his life.

One of BYU in Provo’s football quarterbacks is Sol-Jay Maiava, a freshman majoring in communications from Hauula, Hawaii. He said, “All I ever wanted to do was play football at Kahuku High School like all my older cousins and uncles.”

His community played a key role in encouraging him to dream big as an athlete, Maiava shared. “The community back home has shaped me to understand my Polynesian heritage, culture and also the strength of the Church. I would just like to tell them thank you for inspiring my dreams as a student-athlete and that I love them all.”

BYU in Provo’s football tight end is Ethan Erickson, a freshman from Laie, Hawaii. Erickson said he owes 100 percent of his success to his Heavenly Father.

Going into his junior year at Kahuku High School, Erickson said he had high aspirations he would have a good year, but he did not see the field at all. Frustrated, Erickson said he remembered what he had

Former Kahuku football players, now at BYU in Provo, credit the local community for encouraging them to chase their dreams

BY KYLEE DENISON

FAITH FAILURE

Former Kahuku football players, now at BYU in Provo, credit the local community for encouraging them to chase their dreams. Conclusion: The community played a vital role in shaping the players’ dreams and aspirations. They attribute their successes to the support and encouragement they received from their hometown, emphasizing the importance of a strong community in the lives of student-athletes.
learned in Seminary, “Christ never turned inward. He turned outward to help other people and to make those around him better.”

Erickson said even though he was not playing in games, he was still practicing. He also said he made it a new goal to better others as Christ did. Erickson said when his focus shifted to others, it in turn made him a better football player.

Playing for BYU in Provo football is “a dream come true,” said Erickson. He said he was an avid BYU in Provo football fan growing up. In elementary school, he shared he even shaved a Y into the back of his head.

Erickson said their coach at BYU in Provo, Kalani Sitake, often shares his motto, “love and learn,” with his players. In response to losing their five-win streak on Oct. 9 to Boise State, Singh said, “Love and learn is our motto. That is what we really are about. We can get better, and we will. … [People] can learn more from losing than winning.”

The loss is not shaking their confidence or hurting their team chemistry, Erickson added. He emphasized no one is being blamed or blaming others for their loss, and they are all coming together to get better for the next game.

To the keiki in the Laie community, Singh said, “Anyone who has the will to play can play at the next level.”

Maiava advised the children to stay close to the gospel and listen to their parents’ counsel, even when it is hard.

Erickson said, “The world is bigger than a rock in the middle of the ocean … There is so much out here in the world to learn and know. Expand your horizons, go out and explore.”

He concluded, “Red Raiders for life.”

Joshua Singh plays defensive line (left) and Ethan Erickson is a tight end (right) for the BYU in Provo football team.
Photos provided by BYU in Provo.