

GENERATIONS

HAWAII'S RESOURCE FOR

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*It's here! Kāne'ohe resident Roy, 93,
is enjoying his bimonthly subscrip-
tion to Generations Magazine.*

■ For distribution location information or requests, contact Cynthia at 808-258-6618 or cynthia@generations808.com

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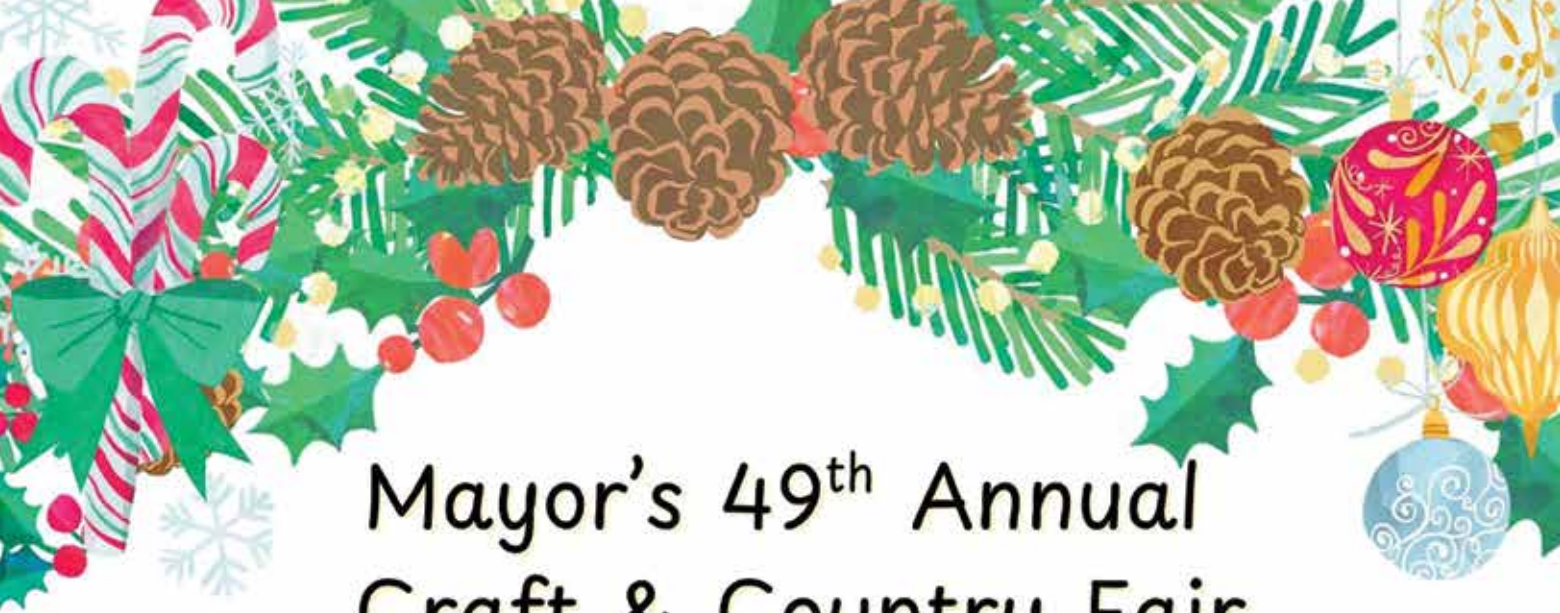
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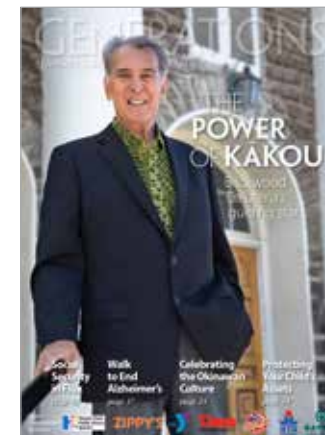
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Happy fall, y'all! I can't believe it is November and we are already right around the corner from Christmas and the start of 2026! The year has gone by so fast and I am so proud to say that we've had another fun and successful year bringing pertinent information and resources to all our kūpuna. I hope that you've been able to attend one of our many events, speak to our amazing Partners and gather as much educational information that you can. As a GenXer, I also hope that the adult kids of seniors are now reading our magazine online (generations808.com) or finding us on Facebook and Instagram. If not, please follow us at facebook.com/genmag808 and [@generations808](https://twitter.com/generations808).

In 2025, we celebrated some of Hawai'i's diverse cultures with an article and paired it with a recipe. We are thrilled to have six more cultures in the lineup for 2026. We are looking for family recipes from Korean, Samoan, Mexican, German, Jewish and Tahitian cultures. Please send me your recipes so we can share them with our readers (cynthia@generations808.com).

In this issue, I want to thank the Hawai'i Parkinson's Association and Glen Higa for providing us with important information about Parkinson's disease (pg. 24). Our feature article really put the disease into perspective and I learned more than I expected to. Parkinson's affects GenXers, as well. Early diagnosis and learning how to live with the disease are very important when it comes to having the best future possible. I hope you enjoy this article as much as I did.

"Tis the season," so if you have the opportunity to donate your time and/or funds, please do. Many nonprofits depend on monetary donations and support during the holidays. My family not only delivers meals with Hawai'i Meals On Wheels, but we've also participated in the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program. My daughter chooses a child and I select a senior in hopes that their Christmas will be a merrier one. There are opportunities for giving right in the pages of this magazine: Aloha Diaper Bank (pg. 37), Sounding Joy Music Therapy (pg. 32) and the Hawai'i Wildlife Fund (pg. 40).

We want to wish you all the very happiest of holidays and a Happy New Year, as well! May 2026 bring you much joy, love and happiness!



Aloha & Happy Holidays!
Cynthia Arnold, *Owner-Publisher*
A Faithful Alabama Crimson Tide Fan



My daughter Lexie and her friend Sophia delivered holiday meals for Hawai'i Meals on Wheels.



The entire family enjoyed California's Legoland this summer.

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Who's Behind Generations Magazine?

Generations Magazine relies on Hawai'i's experts—from financial and legal advisors to healthcare professionals and grandparents—to write articles that are important to seniors, their families and their caregivers. The magazine also employs and utilizes writers from across the island chain who are advocates for our kūpuna and passionate about issues that affect our senior community.



NINA GUERRERO, PhD, MT-BC, is the clinical director of Sounding Joy Music Therapy. She has 25 years of clinical and supervisory experience in music therapy in diverse settings, including senior care, rehabilitation and mental health. She earned a BA in Biology and Society at Cornell University and a PhD in Music Therapy at New York University. After returning to Hawai'i, she worked in the Behavioral Health division at the Queen's Medical Center before joining Sounding Joy.



ANNE KOMATSU, the founder and executive director of the Aloha Diaper Bank, has over 20 years of experience in nonprofit management and executive leadership. With a deep commitment to serving Hawai'i's families, she co-founded Moms on a Mission Hawai'i, which later led to the founding of the Aloha Diaper Bank in 2019. She continues to build strong partnerships and raise awareness about diaper need. Anne has also been an active leader in Rotary Club of East Honolulu.



KRISTI T. LOPEZ, MD, is a true local girl from Pearl City who earned her medical degree from the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine. She draws on her island roots and professional training to provide specialized care in Hawai'i. She has special interests in nutrition, digestive health issues, colon cancer prevention and heartburn's link to esophageal cancer. Her uncle had colon cancer and she is passionate about colonoscopy for colon cancer prevention.



KEALI'I LOPEZ is the state director of AARP Hawai'i, a nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. Prior to joining AARP, Keali'i was a lobbyist with the Hawai'i office of Dentons and also served as chair of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i. Previously, she served as director of the State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and president/CEO of 'Ōlelo Community Media.



JUDY TAKETA is the program director for the Case Management Program for the elderly at Catholic Charities Hawai'i. She has worked in the medical and community setting providing case management and counseling for 42 years. Many of those years were spent providing case management, long-term care planning and counseling primarily to the elderly population.

Mahalo to all of our writers and loyal contributing partners, whose dedication to the senior community is greatly appreciated and whose presence continues to enhance this magazine's value.

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Kūpuna Caucus Promotes Aging Support

by Dominic Niyo, Editor – The Pinion, BBH Ambassador, and HSSC Representative, McKinley High School

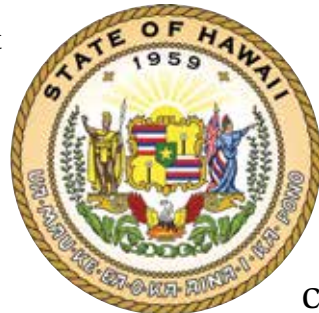
Aging well means more than just living longer. It means staying connected, supported and empowered in our communities. Whether it's access to affordable housing, healthcare or caregiving services, kūpuna face unique challenges that require thoughtful solutions.

The Kūpuna Caucus is a group of state legislators focused on creating and advancing policies that improve the quality of life for Hawai'i's aging population. The caucus meets monthly on the first Friday of the month at 2pm. Meetings are held virtually via Zoom and are open to community members. During these sessions, lawmakers provide updates on bills related to housing, healthcare, caregiving and other kūpuna issues. The caucus also hosts guest speakers, including doctors, health experts and social service providers who share insights and answer questions. Members coordinate with community organizations to address ongoing challenges. All meetings are livestreamed and recorded on the Kūpuna Caucus YouTube channel (youtube.com/@kupunacaucus).

These efforts align with the Hawai'i State Plan on Aging 2023–2027, a strategic framework developed by the Executive Office on Aging that focuses on improving long-term care services, supporting caregivers and promoting programs such as the Kūpuna Care Program, which helps seniors live safely and independently in their homes and communities.

During the 2025 legislative session, the Kūpuna Caucus advanced bills to support kūpuna:

- **HB 703** – Kūpuna Rent Supplement Program Extension extends the rent supplement program through June 30, 2028. It provides rental assistance to income-eligible kūpuna, ensuring statewide support for affordable housing.
- **HB 705** – Medi-Medi Project establishes a pilot program to coordinate benefits between Medicare and Medicaid. It streamlines enrollment and improves access to healthcare services and subsidies by reducing administrative barriers.



Additional actions supported by the caucus include funding for long-term care ombudsman specialists, expansion of health insurance assistance programs and pilot projects addressing homelessness among kūpuna.

Staying connected with the Kūpuna Caucus ensures kūpuna voices continue to be heard and their needs prioritized in Hawai'i's policymaking. Seniors can stay informed and play an active role in shaping the policies that affect their lives by participating in meetings and following legislative updates:

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Medicare, Medicaid & 'One Big Beautiful Bill'

by Keali'i Lopez, AARP Hawai'i State Director

The One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB) that was signed into law this summer is big; it's complicated and hard to explain in a short article. But know this: Most of the changes don't take effect until 2027, so there should be time to learn how it may affect you and figure out how those who need coverage can still get coverage.

Medicare is federal health insurance for those 65 and older and Medicaid is a joint state and federal program for those of all ages with limited income and resources. In Hawai'i, Medicaid is known as QUEST. Know also that AARP is fighting to protect Medicare and fight harmful changes to Medicaid. Articles at aarp.org go into detail about the bill and what AARP is doing.

The bill has some impact on Medicare. It limits coverage to specific legal immigrant categories and drops coverage for those who don't qualify. It weakens some aspects of Medicare drug price negotiations by expanding the orphan drug exemption, reducing the number of medications eligible for price negotiations. The bill could also trigger automatic Medicare spending cuts of up to 4% unless waived by Congress.

Republicans and Democrats are saying different things about the OB BB, which is likely increasing confusion about it.

Republicans say the new law will reduce Medicaid fraud and waste and Democrats say it creates unnecessary paperwork that will result in people losing coverage. Democrats also say it is a threat to rural hospitals and clinics.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates some 10 million people may lose their Medicaid coverage over the next 10 years. The bill is also estimated to cut roughly \$911 billion from Medicaid through 2034.

The key phrase is "next 10 years." The biggest changes don't happen until 2027, after the 2026 mid-term elections.

States need to start planning for the changes and are awaiting guidance from the federal gov-



ernment. So, despite the passage of the bill, it's still largely unknown what people need to do to keep their coverage. It is likely that different states will implement the changes in different ways, adding complication.

One good thing in the OB BB that AARP supported is a new \$6,000 tax deduction taking effect in the 2025 tax year for those 65 and older whose modified adjusted gross income is less than \$175,000. The details are complicated, so go to AARP's website to find articles about it and you'll hear more about it next year as tax season approaches. ■

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Grief & the Holidays

by Felicia Marquez-Wong, M.S.W., Bereavement Network of Hawai'i

As the holidays approach, we may wonder how we will handle the festivities and get-togethers without our loved ones who have passed away. It will be different each year. But what matters is how we take care of ourselves. Thich Nhat Hanh, spiritual leader and peace activist, once said, "Do whatever works and change it when it no longer works."

So how do we take care of ourselves during the holidays? Maybe we spend time in nature, taking walks in botanical gardens and parks. Maybe we respond to holiday invitations by saying, "Let me check my calendar and get back to you," as you evaluate how to spend your time. Maybe we plan which tasks we want or do not want to do during the holidays. Maybe we practice breathing exercises, meditate, journal, sing, hum, garden, etc.



Then, how do we honor our loved ones during the holiday season? Maybe we prepare a favorite dish that our loved ones enjoyed. Maybe we wear their favorite hat or shirt. Maybe we exchange poignant and/or funny stories about our departed loved ones. Maybe we donate our time and/or gifts to charity work. Maybe we revise or create new holiday rituals for the family to enjoy.

Finding joy during difficult times can provide comfort and a sense of balance. And embracing joy helps foster resilience. Life is multifaceted and beauty can still exist amid sorrow. ■

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Take Action for Peace

by Kathleen Hayashi, President and Education Chair, 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans-Club 100



Sept. 2, 2025, marks 80 years since World War II ended. I was recently interviewed by Alasdair Baverstock with CGTN TV in order to share the WWII experience in Hawai'i and recognize this anniversary. The documentary can be found by searching the internet for "Rise from Ashes: Pearl Harbor: A turning point of WWII" or at tinyurl.com/RiseFromAshesPearlHarbor. Most of the interviewees agreed war should be avoided. So how can we take action to promote peace?

Local filmmaker Steve Sue's mission is to take action for peace by sharing aloha and values through his nonprofit, ID8. "Shaka, A Story of Aloha," his first film produced by ID8, won the 2024 Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary at the Hawai'i International Film Festival. It explores the shaka's origins, meaning and how it relates to creating and preserving paradise. Steve and Hawai'i State Legislators helped the shaka become the first official hand gesture in the US.

Steve's second film, "The 100TH, Seeds of Aloha," reveals the story of the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd RCT and the 522nd FAB. The film goes beyond the battlefield to explore how Americans of Japanese ancestry rose above clouds of discrimination to redefine heroism and valor. The combined 100th and 442nd was one of the most decorated in WWII, achieving military excellence while sharing the aloha spirit.

Post war, under the GI Bill, they became educated leaders, proving Americans come in all colors. President Harry Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in 1948, which desegregated the military, a significant civil rights event.

Steve is passionate about making the world a better place, drawing no compensation for his film work. His generosity inspired the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans-Club 100 to donate \$25,000. His dedication also inspired me to make a personal donation, and to invest my time and funds to fly to Italy, France and Germany to aid in the film's production by interviewing villagers I met on prior trips.

The film is targeted to be shown in 2026 to honor the 250th anniversary of our country.

Take action today through your donation to the film: 100thfilm.com/donate. ■

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EAH HOUSING

Just Getting Personal
by Sherry Goya

Life's Lessons from Kauai

If you have a story you'd like to share or a topic you'd like to read, contact Sherry Goya.

808-722-8487 | sgoyallc@aol.com

A very good friend of mine, Donna Umetsu of Elele, Kauai, spent a few days with me in mid-September. It was literally the day after I worked on a two-day conference for the Hawaii Pacific Gerontology Society at the Ala Moana Hotel. I showed Donna the conference program and she noticed Michael Cheang, a presenter at the conference.



Lori, Michael, Ashley, & Maile in 2018.

Just to show how Hawaii is such a "small place," Donna said that Michael started a savings program at Elele Elementary School for third graders back in 2009. As a UH associate professor specializing in gerontology and family resource management, Michael started the third grade "Kid's Savings Project" with a grant from the Hawaii Community Foundation. This program continues today with Gather Federal Credit Union, Elele Elementary School and the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Ashley Newton and Lori Carl (then later, Maile Mier), the third grade teachers at Elele Elementary School introduced their students and parents to the program to teach them how to save and spend money wisely and to develop the habit of saving their money early in life, which is a skill that will help them throughout their lives.

Every month the staff from Gather FCU visits the third grade classroom or the students go to Gather to make deposits. Their goal is to continue teaching children that money should be put towards their adult life finances. Nicholle Ripley, of Gather FCU, said that "the program has a total of 587 new accounts opened in 12 years and a total of 1,567 participating students for a total saved record of \$244,143.94."



Generations Magazine & DPR City & County of Honolulu Dept. of Parks & Recreation

The Mayor's 49th Annual Craft & Country Fair Saturday, Nov. 22, 9am-1pm, Neal Blaisdell Exhibition Hall

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The Risks of Using Artificial Intelligence, Part II

by Chris Duque, HPD Detective, Retired

While AI has the potential to greatly benefit seniors (see the Sept.–Oct. issue), it also presents certain risks:

◆ PRIVACY CONCERNS

Data Security: AI systems often collect and store personal data, which can lead to privacy breaches. Seniors may be particularly vulnerable to data theft or misuse.

Surveillance: Increased use of AI in monitoring systems (home security cameras) can lead to concerns about loss of personal privacy.

◆ DEPENDENCE ON TECHNOLOGY

Over-reliance: Seniors may become overly dependent on AI technologies, which could diminish their ability to perform daily tasks independently if the technology fails or is unavailable.

Skill erosion: Relying on AI for cognitive tasks like remembering appointments may lead to a decline in memory and problem-solving skills.

◆ ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

Digital divide: Not all seniors are comfortable with or have access to technology. This can create disparities in who benefits from AI.

Complexity: Some AI systems may be too complex for seniors to use effectively, leading to frustration and disengagement.

◆ BIAS AND INACCURACY

Algorithmic bias: AI systems can reflect biases present in their training data, leading to inaccurate or unfair outcomes. For example, health recommendations may not be suitable for all demographics, including seniors.

Misinformation: AI-driven platforms may inadvertently provide incorrect information, which could lead to poor decision-making.

◆ SOCIAL ISOLATION

Reduced human interaction: While AI can provide companionship, it may replace direct interactions with family/friends, causing isolation.



Emotional disconnect: AI lacks the genuine empathy and emotional understanding that are important to seniors seeking human contact.

◆ HEALTH RISKS

Miscommunication: AI systems may misinterpret a senior's needs or conditions, leading to unfit or missed care.

Inadequate support: If seniors rely solely on AI for health management, they may neglect to seek necessary human medical advice or intervention.

◆ FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

Cost of technology: The financial burden of acquiring and maintaining AI technologies can be a concern for seniors on fixed incomes.

Scams and fraud: Seniors may be targeted by scams that exploit AI technologies (phishing attacks/fraudulent services that appear legitimate).

HOW SCAMMERS USE AI TO TARGET SENIORS

◆ PHISHING ATTACKS

Automated phishing: AI can generate convincing emails or messages that mimic legitimate organizations, tricking seniors into providing personal information, such as passwords or financial details.

Voice phishing (vishing): AI-generated voice calls can impersonate trusted entities to extract sensitive information from seniors.

◆ DEEPFAKE TECHNOLOGY

Impersonation: Scammers can use deepfake technology to create realistic videos or audio recordings of trusted individuals such as family members, making the scam more believable.

Fake news and misinformation: AI can generate false news stories or social media posts that manipulate seniors into making hasty decisions.

◆ CHATBOTS & VIRTUAL ASSISTANTS

Fraudulent chatbots: Scammers can deploy AI chatbots that engage seniors in conversation, providing false information or persuading them to share personal details or make payments.

Social engineering: AI can analyze social media profiles to craft personalized messages that persuade seniors to fall for a scam.

◆ TARGETED ADVERTISING

Data mining: Scammers use AI to analyze data from social media and online activities to target seniors with tailored ads for products/services.

Manipulative marketing: AI can create marketing messages that exploit seniors' fears or desires, making them buy or invest impulsively.

◆ INVESTMENT SCAMS

Automated trading bots: Scammers may use AI-driven trading platforms to lure seniors into fraudulent investment schemes.

Fake investment opportunities: AI can generate convincing promotional materials for fake/non-existent investment opportunities.

◆ SOCIAL MEDIA SCAMS

Fake profiles: Scammers can create fake profiles using AI-generated images and information to befriend seniors on social media, eventually leading to requests for money or personal information.

Romance scams: AI can help scammers craft romantic messages that appeal to seniors, building trust before asking for financial assistance.

◆ RANSOMWARE & MALWARE

Automated attacks: AI can automate the distribution of ransomware or malware, targeting devices to lock seniors out or steal information.

Phishing links: AI can generate convincing links that lead to malicious websites designed to harvest personal information or install harmful software.

REDUCING YOUR RISKS

◆ EDUCATION

Learn about common scams: Familiarize themselves with common scams that target seniors.

Understand AI technology: Gain a basic understanding of how AI works.

◆ BE CAUTIOUS WITH INFORMATION

Limit sharing: Avoid sharing personal information unless absolutely necessary.

Verify requests: Always verify requests for personal information by contacting the organization.

◆ USE TRUSTED SOURCES

Stick to reputable platforms: Use trusted websites/applications for online activities.

Check reviews: Before engaging with new services or products, ensure they are legitimate.

◆ ENABLE SECURITY FEATURES

Strong passwords: Change them regularly. Consider using a password manager.

Two-factor authentication: Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) for an added layer of security.

◆ BE SKEPTICAL

Question unexpected messages: Be cautious of unsolicited emails, phone calls or messages.

Look for red flags: Watch for poor grammar and requests for money or information.

◆ USE TECHNOLOGY WISELY

Privacy settings: Adjust privacy settings to limit personal information shared publicly.

Educate on AI tools: Learn how to use AI tools safely and learn their privacy policies.

◆ STAY CONNECTED

Communicate: Talk with family/friends about online activities and suspicious interactions.

Join community groups: Participate in local community groups or workshops focused on technology and online safety for seniors.

◆ REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Report scams: If they encounter a potential scam, seniors should report it to local authorities, consumer protection agencies or organizations like the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Seek help: If they feel uncertain about a situation, they should seek help from trusted family members or friends before taking any action.

Staying informed, cautious and connected can help reduce your risk of being scammed. Empowering yourself with knowledge and resources is key to navigating the digital landscape safely. ■

CHRIS DUQUE, Hawai'i's premier "cyber cop," is a retired Honolulu Police Department detective and nationally recognized expert on a variety of computer crimes. Email him at aikea808@gmail.com with your security questions.

Celebrating the Filipino Culture

by Haley Burford



Since more than 1,500 years ago, Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) have welcomed immigrants from every corner of the globe, cultivating and perpetuating a tapestry of diverse cultures. In the sixth article in this ongoing series on the many cultures that comprise Hawai'i, we will focus on the Filipino, how the people arrived in the Hawaiian Islands, their culture and celebrations such as the Barrio Fiesta and Flores de Mayo.

Filipino Arrival in Hawai'i

In the mid-1800s, the first few Filipinos (called "Manila men") settled in Hawai'i, finding work as cooks and musicians in the Royal Hawaiian Band. These men were some of the first *sakadas* (over-seas migrant workers).

In the early to mid-1900s, an estimated 125,000 Filipino workers immigrated to Hawai'i from the Ilocos and Visayas regions of the Philippines. Many of these workers were recruited to work on sugar plantations due to their agricultural knowledge, where they worked long hours under intense heat for little pay. In the beginning, most *sakadas* were single males, but as time went on, more workers brought their families with them. Today, people of Filipino descent make up the second largest ethnic group in Hawai'i at 25.1% of the population.

Culture and Tradition

The Filipino culture is heavily family-oriented, emphasizing respect for elders, hospitality and *bayanihan*, or a spirit of communal unity. Filipinos in Hawai'i often pack and send *balikbayan* boxes (care packages) full of clothes and snacks

for family in the Philippines, and bring *pasalu-bong* (souvenir gifts) from Hawai'i.

Perhaps the most pervasive feature of Filipino culture in Hawai'i is the cuisine. Go to any family gathering or graduation party, and more often than not, you'll see at least one of the following: lumpia, pork or chicken adobo, pancit and halo-halo. And who can forget about ube (purple yam) — in lattes, pastries, ice cream — sweetening up our lives?

Flores de Mayo & Filipino Fiesta

The culture is heavily influenced by Catholicism, introduced during Spanish colonization. Filipinos celebrate many Catholic holidays with several events held throughout the Hawaiian Islands. This past May, the 56th annual Barrio Fiesta was held on Maui with cultural performances, food and a pageant. Next May, the Filipino Community (FilCom) Center will host the Flores de Mayo & Filipino Fiesta, the largest celebration of Filipino culture on O'ahu. Traditionally celebrated as a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the upcoming celebration will feature a balut-eating (fertilized duck egg) contest, a cultural clothing market, tinikling (bamboo dance) and more.

For more information, see the FilCom Center's website (filcom.org) as well as *Generations Magazine's* Facebook page (facebook.com/genmag808) and calendar (generations808.com/calendar) for community events and opportunities. ■

The next article in this series will feature the influences of Samoan culture in Hawai'i.

Dinuguan (Pork Blood Stew)

Recipe by Rose Angel

The "blood" in the name of this dish may sound unpleasant to some, but I assure you that dinuguan is well-loved among Hawai'i locals, who have nicknamed it "chocolate meat." It's a traditional dish in Filipino culture, but each region of the Philippines has its own variations when it comes to spices and consistency. The north likes it dry; the south likes it more soupy. I use my own variation of ingredients, including lemongrass for aroma and coconut milk for a Visayan flair. Pork blood may be bought at any Asian store or local market.



Ingredients

3 lbs.	pork (<i>belly & lean meat</i>)
3 stalks	lemongrass
1/4 lb.	sweet chili peppers
1/2 cup	shallot onions (<i>sliced</i>)
2 tbsp.	fresh garlic (<i>diced</i>)
1 cup	fresh pork blood
5 cups	water
1/2 cup	coconut milk
2 tbsp.	fish sauce (<i>any brand</i>)
2 tbsp.	vinegar (<i>any type</i>)
5 leaves	bay leaf (<i>whole</i>)
1 tbsp.	peppercorns (<i>crushed</i>)
1/8 tsp.	salt (<i>to taste</i>)
1	calamansi (<i>Philippine lime</i>)

Prep & cook time: 1 hour

Serves: 7–10

Preparation:

Cut the two types of pork meat (belly and lean) into 3/4-inch cubes and put them in a bowl.

Crush the whole lemongrass stalks, then fold them in half and tie them into a bundle using one of the lemongrass leaves.

Dice the fresh garlic (about 2 or 3 cloves), slice the shallots and crush the peppercorns into large granules. (Note: crushed peppercorns are preferred over ground pepper.)

All the other ingredients may be prepped ahead of time or done during cooking.

Cooking directions:

1) Use a wok (preferred) or a deep frying pan with a lid. Brown the pork belly on medium heat. No oil is used, so stir the meat constantly to prevent it from sticking to the pan.

2) After the pork belly has rendered some fat, add the garlic, shallots and lean meat. Stir while cooking the lean meat halfway through — for about one minute.

3) Add the bay leaves, crushed peppercorn and salt (to taste) and sauté for 2 minutes.

4) Add 5 cups of water, the fish sauce and lemongrass bundle. Boil for 1 minute. Lower the heat. Cover and simmer the mixture for 25 minutes.

5) Add the sweet chili peppers. Simmer for about 5 minutes. Add more salt if needed. Remove the bundled lemongrass. Continue to simmer.

6) Dribble the vinegar evenly. Do not stir. Simmer for 1 minute, then stir to mix all of the ingredients. Pour in the coconut milk and stir again.

8) Add 1 cup of pork blood, stirring constantly until the blood turns to a chocolate color, indicating the blood had been cooked. Stir and simmer to the desired consistency. Add more vinegar to your taste.

Serve with a slice of calamansi for squeezing over the dish. Enjoy with steamed rice or *puto* (steamed rice cake) or simply as a *pulutan* (appetizer) with your favorite beverage. ■

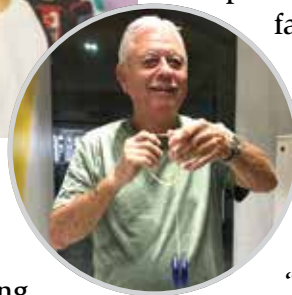
Do you have a favorite recipe and story to share? For consideration, include a photo and mail them to Generations Recipe, PO Box 4213, Honolulu, HI 96812, or email them to Cynthia@generations808.com.

Spinning a Yo-Yo, One Trick at a Time

by Dominic Niyo, Editor—The Pinion, BBH Ambassador and HSSC Representative, McKinley High School



including family nights at Nehelani, alongside the students he trained. They demonstrated tricks like Walk the Dog and Rock the Baby, encouraging attendees to try them. Weekends became informal classrooms, where children learned everything from basic spins to advanced flips. Through patience and precision, Lee's lessons went far beyond the yo-yo, helping kids build confidence, resilience and pride.



You might remember the yo-yo craze of the 1950s—kids rushing to grab the latest models and daring each other to master every spin, loop and flip.

Amid the frenzy, young Richard Lee of Honolulu discovered a passion that would shape his life. He spent countless hours practicing at the Ben Franklin store in Kaimukī and in local parks, refining his tricks under the watchful eyes of friends and competitors. However, Lee's family didn't always understand his obsession with the toy. That lack of support only strengthened his resolve, driving him to mastering the yo-yo.

By 1951, Richard's commitment paid off: He claimed his first national championship at the Duncan Yo-Yo Tournament, followed by consecutive victories in 1952 and 1953. Audiences were captivated by his precision and flair, particularly his Flying Trapeze trick, which became the hallmark of his performances.

Long before it became popular, the yo-yo traveled from the Philippines, where it was called a "come-come" and used for hunting and skillful play. By the time it reached Honolulu, it had evolved into a test of dexterity and style—a challenge he embraced wholeheartedly. For him, mastery wasn't just about applause or awards; it became a way to give back. He discovered fulfillment in teaching, guiding players as they learned the tricks and discipline that shaped his own journey.

After his championship years, Richard turned to mentoring the next generation. In the 1980s and 1990s, he performed at community events,

Richard can still be found demonstrating tricks, mentoring young enthusiasts and keeping the yo-yo alive on weekends at Ala Moana and Kāhala Mall. Known affectionately as "Yo-Yo Man" and "Big Daddy," his legacy extends beyond trophies—it lives in the hands of every child who learns to loop, flip and spin. Richard Lee's influence continues to spread across the islands, one yo-yo at a time. ■

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HOPE for the FUTURE

by Debra Lordan
Photography by
Steve Nohara

Research and technology advancements are on target for improved neurodegenerative disease therapies and management.

Glen Higa of Kalihi has much in common with Michael J. Fox. Like the “Back to the Future” star, he faces his challenges with gratitude and optimism, focusing on finding meaning in the face of adversity. Like Michael, he emphasizes that challenges don’t define a person — their actions do. He believes in the power of acceptance and the importance of making the best of a difficult situation. Like Michael, he has dedicated himself to making a profound difference in the lives of those affected by a debilitating condition.

In 1998, Michael J. Fox stunned the world by announcing he had been diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson’s disease (PD), also called early-onset Parkinson’s — a degenerative neurological condition. He was diagnosed in 1991 at age 29, but had kept it a secret for seven years.

His memoirs chronicle his Parkinson’s journey and his advocacy work. “Lucky Man,” “Always Looking Up,” “No Time Like the Future” and “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Future” describe what it’s like to be a 30-year-old who has been told he has an 80-year-old’s disease. He shares an inspiring account of his experiences and the lessons he has learned.

Before his diagnosis, the aspiring young actor envisioned a future centered on a flourishing career and family life. PD prompted a paradigm shift, leading him to prioritize the here and now. He established the Michael J. Fox Foundation (MFF) for Parkinson’s Research in 2000, which has become the axis around which his life revolves. The foundation is the driving force and primary focus of his existence and aspirations for the future.

Glen’s Life Transformation

“I was diagnosed seven years ago in 2018 at the age of 48, though looking back, I had developed symptoms over five years before,” says Glen, now 55. “Six months after my diagnosis, I left my longtime career as a sales and marketing executive to focus on my health.”

Glen’s proactive attitude is key to successfully managing PD. “I started working with a personal

trainer a year after I was diagnosed and it transformed my life,” says Glen. “I did so well with my exercise therapy that I resumed playing softball.” Since being diagnosed, he has participated in the Los Angeles Dodgers Adult Baseball Camp and continues to play competitive softball.

Ultimately, Glen turned his own therapy into a new career by becoming a personal trainer three years after being diagnosed, working exclusively with people who have Parkinson’s.

What is Parkinson’s Disease?

PD is the fastest growing neurodegenerative disease in the world. Nearly 1 million people in the US and more than 6 million people worldwide are affected. PD occurs when brain cells that make dopamine, a chemical that coordinates movement, stop working or die, according to michaeljfox.org, an informational website Glen recommends highly. This “movement disorder” can cause tremor, slowness, stiffness, and walking and balance problems. Constipation, depression, memory problems and other non-movement symptoms can also surface as symptoms.

PD is a lifelong progressive disease — symptoms slowly worsen over time. But the experience of living with PD is unique to each person. As symptoms and progression vary from person to person, neither you nor your doctor can predict which symptoms you will get, when you will get them or how severe they will be. Even though similarities are observed among individuals with PD as the disease progresses, there is no guarantee you will experience what you see in others.

What is Early-Onset PD?

According to Fox's website, about 10% to 20% of people with PD experience symptoms before age 50. While treatments are the same for early-onset Parkinson's disease (EOPD), younger people may experience the disease differently.

People with EOPD may have a longer journey to diagnosis, sometimes seeing multiple doctors and undergoing several tests before reaching a correct conclusion. As with PD diagnosed later in life, EOPD is diagnosed based on a person's medical history and physical examination.

When younger people and their clinicians are not expecting PD, the diagnosis may be missed or delayed. It's not uncommon for arm or shoulder stiffness to be attributed to arthritis or even a sports injury before PD is eventually diagnosed. Scientists are working to understand the causes of early-onset Parkinson's.

What is Wrong With Me?

Glen describes his initial suspicions and symptoms that led him to seek medical intervention.

"My girlfriend and I would walk daily around Diamond Head after work and she noticed I

stopped swinging my arms and that I shuffled my feet while walking," says Glen. "My legs started to feel heavy. Soon after, I started experiencing shoulder and neck stiffness and a tremor in my left hand. But an official diagnosis wouldn't come until more than two years later."

"My first thought after the EOPD diagnosis was a sense of relief," says Glen. "Honestly! I didn't know what was going on in my head—if I had a stroke, tumor, aneurysm or something else!"

"I was seeing a physical therapist who told me I was showing symptoms of Parkinson's, but I guess I didn't take his comments seriously at first. But when my neurologist told me I could still live a good life with Parkinson's, she eased my mind and I was ready to do what I had to do to achieve that good life."

"Most of my friends, family and coworkers noticed something was not right before I was diagnosed," Glen adds. "So I told everyone about it and didn't try to hide it from anyone. Almost everyone reacted positively and said they were ready to help when needed. Being supportive and showing empathy—but not sympathy—go a long way."

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF PD

Tremors, bradykinesia (slow movements), muscle rigidity and a history of falling or losing your balance are among the most common symptoms.

According to the Michael J. Fox Foundation, PD symptoms are different for different people and are difficult for even doctors to detect. Others are obvious, even to an untrained eye.

• Motor Symptoms

Motor or movement symptoms seen "from the outside" are used by doctors to make a diagnosis. The three "cardinal" motor symptoms are:

- 1) **Muscle stiffness:** rigidity
- 2) **Bradykinesia:** a decrease in spontaneous and voluntary movement, such as slower walking, less arm swinging while walking, or decreased blinking or facial expression
- 3) **Resting tremor:** a rhythmic, involuntary shaking that occurs in a finger, hand or limb when it's relaxed, but not during voluntary movement

Not everyone with PD experiences all three motor symptoms, but slowness always is present. And although tremor is the most common symptom, not everyone with PD experiences tremor.

• Other Motor Symptoms

Walking, balance and coordination problems may occur any time in the course of PD, but are more likely as the disease advances.

• Non-Motor Symptoms

Non-movement symptoms are invisible. You can't see them from the outside. These common symptoms can affect almost every body system, occur any time in the course of disease (even before motor symptoms or diagnosis) and differ in severity per individual. Non-movement symptoms can significantly impact quality of life:

Autonomic dysfunction: PD can affect the automatic/involuntary functions that our bodies perform: constipation, low blood pressure, sexual problems, sweating problems and urine problems.



'You can live your best life.'

Glen first became involved with Hawai'i Parkinson's Association (HPA) in 2019, serving in a marketing and administrative support role. HPA, established in 1996, is a nonprofit volunteer group comprised of people with PD, caregivers, family members, healthcare professionals, educators and leaders in the business community. HPA aims to positively impact the lives of people affected by Parkinson's through support, programs, education and other valuable services.

Mood and cognitive changes: PD can impact how you feel and think, causing apathy, memory or thinking (cognitive) problems, mood disturbances, and hallucinations and delusions.

Other physical changes: PD can cause drooling, excessive daytime sleepiness or fatigue, pain, skin changes, sleep problems, smell loss, speech problems, swallowing problems, vision changes and weight changes.

The Fox website (michaeljfox.org) recommends visiting a movement disorder specialist if you think you're experiencing PD symptoms. Talk to your doctor, especially if what you are experiencing is interfering with activities you want or need to do.

For example, slowness of movement might make exercise more challenging or fatigue might make your workday less productive. Keep in mind that even if you have symptoms common among people with PD, they may be brought on by a completely different condition altogether.

"My advice as a personal trainer is to find the exercise you enjoy most so that you will do it every day."

"The reason why I ran for president was to show those diagnosed with EOPD and those who are living with PD to not be afraid of the condition," says Glen. "I wanted to spread the message that you can live your best life with PD and dispel the

myths believed by people who are not familiar with Parkinson's. It is not terminal. I also want to show everyone that people with Parkinson's are able and not disabled. While there is no cure and it is not a fun existence, you can still live a good life and do things that others do."

Glen's focus as the current president is to continue engaging the Parkinson's community through his position as a "local boy" with Parkinson's and encourage others there is HOPE—Healthy Overcomes Parkinson's Everyday.

"As president of HPA, I focus on reducing the perceived stigma of PD," says Glen. "While there is more awareness and people are more open about their diagnosis, there are still too many unwilling to disclose their condition out of fear, shame or guilt... Especially difficult to reach groups are those with EOPD, Asians (particularly males), Native Hawaiians, Polynesians and those who are economically disadvantaged."

As an EOPD patient and HPA president, Glen offers recommendations for those who are diagnosed with PD.

"The first step is to join a support group," he says. "We consider that the first line of defense against PD. Even if you haven't accepted your diagnosis, support groups provide the opportunity to learn and share best practices with others who are also battling the condition. The second step is exercise—which is the only therapy scientifically proven to slow down or even delay the progression of Parkinson's. While there are many theories on what type of exercise is best, my advice as a personal trainer is to find the exercise you enjoy most so that you will do it every day."

‘Why me?’

Who gets PD and why remains unknown, however, the risk of developing PD is higher for individuals with a family history of the disease, those exposed to certain environmental toxins and those with specific genetic mutations.

“Unfortunately, the science has not determined yet exactly what causes Parkinson’s aside from genetics and has not developed a cure, either,” says Glen. “There isn’t any confirmed information on PD prevention. Some thought has been given to getting regular exercise and eating a well-balanced diet, especially the Mediterranean diet, which has been linked to lower rates of PD. There’s also thought about limiting exposure to environmental toxins like pesticides, herbicides and air pollution to prevent PD.”

According to *michaeljfox.org*, in most cases, the cause of PD is unknown. “Better understanding of the complex genetic, environmental, aging and other factors that lead to Parkinson’s would be game-changing in our pursuit of preventive and therapeutic treatment options,” the site says.

HOPE THROUGH SCIENCE

Advanced & Emerging Treatments

- There is hope for people with neurodegenerative conditions such as PD and Alzheimer’s disease (AD), the most common form of dementia. Research is advancing on several fronts:
- **Deep Brain Stimulation:** DBS has long been used for movement problems associated with PD. Newer advancements, such as adaptive DBS, adjust electrical pulses in real-time based on brain signals, providing personalized and potentially more effective symptom control, including non-motor symptoms like mood and sleep dysfunction.
 - **Stem cell therapies:** Aim to repair or replace damaged brain cells in PD and AD, with therapies showing promise in clinical trials.
 - **Gene therapies:** Reprogram cells to stay healthy and function better, with therapies like AB-1005 (for PD) focusing on stimulating growth factors to minimize dopamine loss.
 - **Drug repurposing:** Medications for other conditions, like epilepsy and diabetes, are being investigated for potential AD and PD treatment.

However, the site goes on to detail possible factors. Although for most people, the cause of PD is unknown (idiopathic), researchers believe that PD is caused by a combination of factors.

With genetic causes at one end and environmental causes at the other, people with PD fall at many different points along the continuum, with some cases due more to genetics, while others are more influenced by environmental factors.

“Scientists are working hard to understand the triggers and the cascade of cellular changes that lead to Parkinson’s. Knowing more about the cause could help researchers develop treatments to stop or even prevent the disease.”

- **Genetics:** About 30% of PD risk is explained by genetics. Less than 10% of this risk has been explained by known genetic links, so more PD genes have yet to be discovered. A handful of causal PD genes have been indentified in the past 10 years, where genetic mutations greatly increase risk. But not everyone who carries these mutations will get PD, so other factors must play a role.

Early Detection & Diagnosis

- **Biomarkers:** Advancements in identifying biomarkers for both PD and AD allow for earlier and more accurate diagnoses.
- **Advanced imaging:** PET scans and other imaging techniques are crucial for visualizing amyloid and tau deposits in the brain, aiding in both diagnosis and treatment monitoring.
- **AI predictive models:** New AI models can forecast brain aging, helping to identify subtle changes indicative of early neurodegenerative disease onset years before conventional methods.

Disease Understanding & Prevention

- **Genetic factors:** Research into genetic variations helps identify individuals at higher risk and explore potential prevention and treatment strategies.
- **Lifestyle interventions:** Studies on lifestyle factors like exercise, diet (e.g., MIND and Mediterranean diets), and management of chronic conditions reveal potential to delay or prevent symptoms.

- **Environment:** Head injury and exposure to pesticides have also been identified as factors. Several studies have linked smoking and caffeine consumption to lower rates of PD. “While we do not recommend smoking to prevent PD, understanding these connections can help guide research into the mechanisms and treatment...,” the MFF site says.
- **Aging:** Age is the greatest risk factor because our cells may be more susceptible to damage as they age. Researchers project the number of people with PD will double by 2040. In addition, the expression of our genes may change over time, which could set off a chain of cellular events that lead to PD.
- **Combination of Factors:** Genetics, environment and aging interact to cause disease. Not everyone with a genetic mutation linked to PD will develop the disease. Similarly, not everyone exposed to a pesticide will be diagnosed. Research into these different triggers continues aggressively every day, including biological/cellular changes.

Improved Care & Support

- **Personalized medicine:** Tailoring treatments based on an individual’s genetic profile and biomarkers holds promise for improving outcomes and minimizing side effects.
 - **Caregiver support:** Research focuses on developing strategies to support caregivers and improve the quality of life for those with dementia.
- While significant challenges remain, particularly in halting disease progression, these developments, ongoing research, advanced diagnostic tools and emerging treatments hold promise for better care, improved quality of life and potentially slowing the diseases’ advancement for individuals living with PD and AD.
- This information was extracted and summarized from three 2025 research articles: “This New Treatment Can Adjust to Parkinson’s Symptoms in Real Time,” “Research on Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias” and “Advancements in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease: a comprehensive review.”

Hope for the Future

There is significant hope for the future for people with neurodegenerative conditions such as PD. Research is advancing on several fronts. And although there is no simple solution in dealing with a life-changing PD diagnosis, the good news is that most people find acceptance and quality of life after an initial adjustment period.

“I’m more aware of the future now,” says Glen. “Previously, I lived in the moment, thinking only about the present. Now, I think about the future and how my actions now will impact my future. For instance, my personal goal is to never use a mobility device. To accomplish this, I need to consistently exercise and take care of my body and mind. I am living my best life with Parkinson’s by adhering to these simple rules: 1) Be on the right medication plan, which means being open and upfront with my neurologist. 2) You need to exercise. The best exercise is one that you enjoy and will do daily. 3) Finally, having a positive attitude is everything, but if you don’t feel good mentally and physically, it’s hard to have a positive attitude. That’s why being on the right medication plan and daily exercise is so important.”

Glen is a certified fitness professional, working with patients with Parkinson’s as a way to help others live their best lives. He offers Make It Happen Personal Training. Contact him at **808-348-2767**, makeithappen@glenhiga.com or parkinsonshawaii.org/exercise-classes.

For an in-depth guide to navigating PD and living well as the disease progresses, check out the Michael Fox Foundation’s Parkinson’s 360 toolkit at michaeljfox.org/parkinsons-360. ■

HAWAI’I PARKINSON ASSOCIATION (nonprofit)
Glen M. Higa, President
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The medical information contained in this article is for general information purposes only. The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research has a policy of refraining from advocating, endorsing or promoting any drug therapy, course of treatment, or specific company or institution. It is crucial that care and treatment decisions related to Parkinson’s disease and any other medical condition be made in consultation with a physician or other qualified medical professional.



The Power is Yours

The Hawai'i Parkinson Association (HPA) is a nonprofit, all-volunteer group comprised of people living with Parkinson's disease (PD), caregivers, family members, healthcare professionals, educators and leaders in the business community. You, too, can become part of the solution through your volunteerism and/or donations. Donations directly benefit those living with PD and their caregivers in our island community.



HPA RESOURCE CENTER

The HPA Resource Center is available to everyone in the community looking for information about Parkinson's disease. HPA has information on doctors, clinical trials and support groups on O'ahu, the Big Island, Maui and Kaua'i.

- ▶ **Medical specialists:** parkinsonshawaii.org/medical-specialists
- ▶ **Local clinical trials:** hawaiineuroscience.com, 808-261-4476
- ▶ **Online and in-person seminars:** Experts offer information on many different topics. If you have a topic you'd like to suggest, contact HPA.
- ▶ **Peer-to-peer connect:** Whether you're newly diagnosed, have had PD for a while, or are a caregiver or family member, HPA can connect you via phone or email to one of its volunteers.
- ▶ **Support groups:** parkinsonshawaii.org/support-groups: Support groups are a great way to make connections with other people with PD and their caregivers/partners and share experiences on living well with Parkinson's.



VOLUNTEER

Go to parkinsonshawaii.org/get-involved and fill out a form to indicate your volunteer interests.

DONATE

As an independent nonprofit, all funds raised in Hawai'i stay in Hawai'i. Donations are accepted online at parkinsonshawaii.org/donate or donate by mail. Checks are payable to *Hawai'i Parkinson Association* and can be mailed to the address below. Donations are fully tax-deductible.

Hawai'i Parkinson Association Resource Center
2228 Liliha St., Ste. 206
Honolulu, HI 96817

- ▶ **Books, brochures & flyers** are available from various PD organizations with information about symptom management, medical and complementary therapies, and adaptive equipment.
- ▶ **Lending library:** The center houses a growing library of books to borrow at no cost. Stop by or contact HPA for a list of available books. Reserve a book for pickup or donate a book that you'd like to share with others.
- ▶ **Exercise classes:** parkinsonshawaii.org/exercise-classes: Exercising is a very important part of managing PD. HPA can give you information about the people and places who can modify their classes for PD. From yoga to boxing, there is something available for you.
- ▶ **Assistive technology:**
 - Soderholm Mobility: soderholmmobility.com, denise@soderholmbus.com, 808-834-1417
 - Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii: atrc.org, 808-532-7112
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Music Therapy for Continuing Wellness

by Nina Guerrero, PhD, MT-BC, Clinical Director, Sounding Joy Music Therapy, Inc.



Sounding Joy Music Therapy, Hawai'i's first and only nonprofit music therapy organization, was established in 2002 by board-certified music therapist Keiko Kajiwaru to serve diverse local communities that value music as a cultural resource for healing and empowerment. Its mission is to improve well-being and quality of life through music therapy, especially in underserved communities. Services include music therapy for people with disabilities, medical/mental health challenges and those in at-risk circumstances, in collaboration with hospitals, rehabilitation and long-term care centers, senior programs, shelters, schools and other community sites. Public education and advocacy services include research, training and charitable events.

Music therapy participants engage in singing, movement and improvisation on a variety of instruments. The purpose of this therapy is creative self-expression and community-building, so no prior musical experience is required. Participants' diverse musical preferences and cultural

traditions are embraced in group music-making, honoring the wealth of knowledge and life experience of Sounding Joy's older adult participants.

The federal government has recommended music therapy as a mandatory service for senior programs, as it supports active engagement, rehabilitation and palliative care. It is also accessible for those with limited verbal communication.

Because music stimulates and integrates the functioning of different areas of the brain, it can address a variety of therapeutic goals—motor functioning, memory, communication, emotional expression and socialization. Research demonstrates beneficial music therapy outcomes for a wide range of conditions, including autism, dementia, developmental disabilities, movement disorders, chronic pain and trauma. The program has partnered with the Hawai'i Parkinson Association and others to offer music therapy to Parkinson's patients and their caregivers.

While Sounding Joy works with clients of all ages, the state's fast-growing population of seniors constitutes the largest age group. But there are less than 12 board-certified music therapists practicing in Hawai'i. To help make music therapy available to those in need, support Sounding Joy's Holiday Giving campaign using the donation link below. ■

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Kūpuna: Don't Let Cavities Go Untreated!

by Kahala Howser Pimentel, Wellness & Events Manager, Hawaii Dental Service

It's easy to think that cavities are something only kids need to worry about. But the truth is, kūpuna can still get cavities, even if they've had healthy teeth their whole lives. In fact, aging can bring new dental challenges that make cavities more likely, such as dry mouth from medications or gum recession.

If left untreated, cavities can lead to pain, infections, difficulty eating and even tooth loss. These issues can affect overall health, nutrition and daily comfort. Oral health is closely tied to overall well-being, especially in our later years.

The good news? Cavities are preventable with a few simple daily habits. Brush twice a day with



fluoride toothpaste to remove plaque. Floss once a day to clean between the teeth where a brush can't reach. And don't forget to see your dentist regularly! Routine check-ups can help catch small problems before they become big ones.

Taking care of your smile is an important part of staying healthy and living well. No matter your age, it's never too late to give your teeth the care they deserve. ■

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10 Early Signs of Dementia

by Tani Salazar, Dementia Services Coordinator, Executive Office on Aging



Everybody forgets something now and then. As the brain ages, it's normal to occasionally blank on a name, make a mistake with numbers or misplace your keys or phone. But with typical aging, we can usually recall it later and retrace our steps.

However, dementia presents differently and it affects more than just memory. These brain changes cause ongoing problems with everyday tasks and represent a noticeable shift from how someone normally functions. It's important to know the difference between normal lapses and more serious signs that could indicate dementia. Why pay attention to these early signs in yourself or those you love? Because when you know sooner, you can live better.

By talking to your healthcare provider early, you can learn whether memory changes are due to dementia or another treatable condition. An early diagnosis makes all the difference. While there is no cure for dementia, finding out sooner gives you access to FDA-approved treatments and lifestyle strategies that can slow mental decline and improve quality of life.

WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

Here are 10 early signs that you or someone you love may be experiencing dementia:

- ❶ **Memory loss that disrupts daily life.** This includes asking the same questions repeatedly and depending on memory aids or family members for things previously handled independently.
- ❷ **Challenges in planning or solving problems.** This may involve trouble developing and following a plan or working with numbers.

❸ **Difficulty completing familiar tasks.** Examples include trouble driving to familiar locations or remembering the rules of favorite games.

❹ **Confusion with time or place.** This includes losing track of dates, seasons or forgetting where they are or how they got there.

❺ **Difficulty with visual perception and spatial relationships.** Beyond cataract-related vision changes, this may involve problems with balance, reading, judging distance and determining color and contrast.

❻ **New problems with speaking or writing.** Examples include trouble following conversations, stopping or getting lost mid-conversation, or repeating oneself. There may also be difficulty remembering words or using wrong words.

❼ **Misplacing things and being unable to retrace steps.** While normal occasionally, it's concerning if this happens frequently and they can't retrace their steps.

❽ **Poor judgment and decision-making.** This may involve increased poor judgment with money or personal grooming.

❾ **Withdrawal from work or social activities.** As they notice thinking changes or difficulty holding a conversation, they may withdraw from work, hobbies and socializing.

❿ **Changes in mood and personality.** Becoming confused, depressed, fearful or anxious, or getting easily upset in situations out of their comfort zone are other early warning signs.

If you notice some of these signs in yourself or a loved one, don't wait. Schedule an appointment with a healthcare provider for a proper evaluation. Take steps today to protect your brain health. Know sooner and live better. ■

HAWAII DEMENTIA INITIATIVE
Executive Office on Aging, Hawaii State Dept. of Health
250 South Hotel St., Ste. 406, Honolulu, HI 96813-2831
DOH.Dementia@doh.hawaii.gov | hawaiiidementia.org
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What is Your Gut Trying to Tell You?

by Kristi Lopez, M.D., Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology, Kuakini Medical Center

Your gut is often the first to signal when something's not quite right. While occasional bloating or indigestion may be harmless, certain symptoms should never be ignored.

Gastroenterologists flag warning signs that call for further evaluation:

- Unintentional weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Changes in bowel movements — narrower, more or less frequent, a different color or consistency
- Blood in the stool — whether bright red, maroon, or black and tarry
- Chronic or recurrent abdominal pain, especially if it disrupts sleep
- Low blood counts (measured by your healthcare provider) fatigue or unexplained weakness



These red flags help your doctor determine when urgent testing is needed, because these symptoms may be early indicators of serious conditions like colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease or malabsorption disorders. And be aware that risk increases with age — especially after 50 — or with a family history of GI cancers.

But early detection saves lives. So if you have questions about your gut health, start by talking with your primary care provider, who may refer you to a specialist in gastroenterology.

Trust your gut. Take action when it speaks. ■

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Prepare for the Journey: As Memory Fades

by Judy Taketa, Program Director, Case Management Program for the Elderly, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

If you or a loved one has started to have memory loss, you may ask, "What will happen in the future? What can I do now to prepare?"

SHARE may be right for you!

Support, Health, Activities, Resources, Education (SHARE) is an evidence-based program that can help you or your loved one's care team plan for the future by helping the team better understand the disease process, opening up communication channels, and providing resources that acknowledge individual values and preferences.

The care team will include an individual at early stage of dementia or memory loss who is able to participate in discussion about their values, preferences and goals for the future. The other member of the care team is a care part-



ner — often a spouse/significant other, adult child, or good friend — someone who is committed to being present with the person at an early stage as they progress on their life journey.

A certified coach meets with the two-person care team in five sessions. The coach is a trained neutral party who will encourage communication and shares tips, skills and resources. A planning guidebook provided to the care team will serve as a tool to record plans for their future together.

SHARE—and prepare—for the journey. ■

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From Keiki to Kūpuna

by Anne Komatsu, Executive Director, Aloha Diaper Bank

Since 2019, Aloha Diaper Bank has supported Hawai'i's families by providing diapers and baby essentials to those in need. While our primary mission is keeping keiki healthy, we also gratefully accept donations of adult diapers, which are shared with kūpuna at our Windward Mall location and distributed to neighbor islands where the need is great.

Kūpuna are more than recipients—they are an essential part of our organization. Many volunteer their time to wrap and inventory diapers and assist families visiting our site. Their involvement keeps them active, provides meaningful engagement, and allows them to share wisdom and experiences.

Many kūpuna also care for their mo'opuna (grandchildren), and we are honored to support them in that role. From keiki to kūpuna, every diaper donation impacts generations.



We also host kūpuna-centered activities that foster connection and joy. Weekly hanafuda card games and monthly 'ukulele classes with Joe Ahuna bring people together, encourage social interaction and celebrate lifelong learning.

Together, we thrive when every generation is cared for with aloha. ■

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Akamai Seniors: a Nonprofit for Seniors

by Edward Y. Motosue, Principal Officer, Akamai Seniors

I'm honored to share the heart of Akamai Seniors, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to serving Hawai'i's older adults. Our mission is simple: *to help you find peace of mind and live healthy, productive lives, ensuring you get more out of life while spreading the aloha spirit in the communities we serve.*

We're educators and a community outreach resource focusing on vital areas. Billions in benefits often go unclaimed because applications are complex. We step in to help. Our team provides crucial Medicare education, assisting with enrollment and ensuring you utilize the plan that best fits your needs. We also specialize in the Low-Income Subsidy (Extra Help) program. Half of all seniors qualify for this program that significantly lowers prescription drug costs and covers premiums.



Beyond finances, we champion your overall well-being. Our Senior Wellness Program offers education on everything from fall prevention, nutrition and Alzheimer's disease to combating social isolation. We also empower you with financial education, covering wills and trusts, Social Security and protection against scams.

Akamai Seniors is your resource for aging and healthy living. We love our seniors and are always striving to best serve your needs. We believe every kupuna deserves to thrive! ■

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Helping to Protect Sea Turtles

by Alex Aguilar, Sea Turtle Recovery Project Coordinator, Hawai'i Wildlife Fund

Under the cover of a moonlit sky, a familiar hawksbill sea turtle, Orion, hauls herself up the beach with slow, powerful strokes. Now in her fifth nesting season, she begins meticulously carving into the sand, preparing a nest chamber to hold the next generation of hatchlings. One day, they too will repeat this prehistoric cycle.

For nearly three decades, Hawai'i Wildlife Fund (HWF) has been protecting nesting sea turtles, including the endangered hawksbill, helping to ensure the continuation of this cycle into an uncertain future. As a community-driven nonprofit organization, HWF is dedicated to the conservation of Hawai'i's coastal and marine species through research, education, marine debris removal and habitat restoration. On Maui, HWF leads several programs with a strong focus on safeguarding hatchlings and nesting sea turtles, including Dawn Patrol, Night Patrol and Nest Watch.

Dawn Patrol staff and volunteers go out early looking for sea turtle tracks or an indication of a nest that has been laid. The Night Patrol looks for guards and monitors nesting females. Nest Watch occurs day and night, watching over the nests to keep hatchlings safe from disturbance.

However, the path to stronger sea turtle conservation on Maui has not been without its hardships. In 1993 and 1996, two hawksbill turtles searching for suitable nesting sites at Kealia Beach were tragically drawn off course by artificial lights from the nearby road. Both turtles, laden with eggs, were subsequently struck and killed by passing cars. Though heartbreaking and all too familiar, this incident marked a turning point for sea



turtle conservation on Maui. In response, HWF and partnered agencies launched the Sea Turtle Recovery

Project to address the many challenges sea turtles face through monitoring, researching, and the protection of nesting hawksbill and green turtles.

Since then, with tireless support from our community, HWF has monitored 154 nests and protected 13,047 hatchlings as they made their way to the ocean. Each nesting season brings stories of resilience and survival, serving as a powerful reminder of the importance of this work. Nonetheless, every step forward is only possible through the dedication of our community. Every volunteer, from students to kūpuna, plays a vital role in our efforts. Join us in helping ensure that turtles like Orion — and even her hatchlings, who may now be finding their way back — continue to return and nest on the beaches of Maui for generations. Learn more or get involved on Maui via wildhawaii.org/get-involved/volunteer. ■

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Managing Aging Parents' Finances

by Michael W. K. Yee, Financial Advisor and Certified Financial Planner, Ameriprise

Making financial decisions takes time, attention and energy at any age. In the case of elderly adults, it may become increasingly difficult to manage finances, particularly if their health is declining or they're experiencing a cognitive issue. If you're providing support to aging parents—or plan to in the future—here are some tips on how to handle the situation and prepare for what's to come.

■ **Don't wait to start talking about money.**

It may be uncomfortable to ask your parents to discuss their finances with you, but it's essential that you are familiar with their intentions for future care and the plans they have in place. When you broach the subject, emphasize that you are looking for only a high-level overview so that you can have more peace of mind about your parents being well cared for. This initial conversation can help set the groundwork for future discussions.

■ **Create a contact list.** If your parents experience a sudden change in health that affects their ability to manage their affairs, it's important to have a game plan. If you anticipate paying bills, making insurance claims and handling other financial tasks, ask your parents for a contact list for the professionals they work with and where their accounts are held. You may need to be an authorized user or power of attorney to be allowed access to certain accounts. Consult a lawyer to talk through what permissions may be necessary for you to step in if the need arises.

■ **Build a support network.** Talk with siblings or other trusted family members about what your parent's possible care plan could look like. While this conversation can be tough to initiate, it's often easier to bring everyone together while your parents are still in good mental and physical health. Discuss who can realistically provide support: in what way and at what cost. Proactively deciding who can drive your parents to appointments, manage financial affairs, care for their home and handle other tasks can help avoid a strain down the road.



■ **Anticipate future lifestyle changes and challenges.** Even if they aren't yet needed, explore options and costs at various assisted living and memory care services. Check your parents' insurance policies to see if and how services might be covered. You may want to explore whether their home or yours could be modified to provide additional space or comforts, such as wheelchair access. Knowing what choices exist and how your parents feel about each one can help you make future decisions with more confidence.

■ **Know your rights at work.** The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) allows covered employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to provide care for a family member with a serious health condition. Consult your employer's human resources department to learn about their policies for employees who are caring for a parent and how to initiate a claim. Many employers have access to resources and support groups to help you manage home and at work duties.

■ **Maintain momentum on your own financial goals.** It's prudent to look at your finances to see how much support you could provide your parents, if needed, without jeopardizing your retirement and future health care needs. Your financial advisor and lawyer can help you take the steps necessary to feel more confident. ■

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¹U.S. Department of Labor: The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/laws-and-regulations/laws/fmla>)

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The Good & Bad News About Estate Tax

by Stephen B. Yim, Esq., & Monica Yempuku, Esq. – Yim & Yempuka Law Firm

The One Big Beautiful Bill, now a law, “permanently” increased the maximum lifetime exclusion amount that any US citizen or resident can use to shelter gifted assets or assets passing at death from the federal gift or estate tax. The new estate and gift tax exclusion beginning in 2026 is \$15 million per US citizen and resident. The exclusion was originally slated to be reduced to \$5 million plus inflation in 2026.

“Permanent” is only permanent as long as the current administration is in control. However, the estate transfer tax system is a very unpopular tax. Consider three reasons why the federal estate tax exemption most likely will not be reduced:

1) In the past 100 years, the exclusion has only increased. In the 1980's, the estate tax was \$600,000. **2) Congress,** who is in charge of in-



creasing or decreasing the exclusion, for the most part, is made up of wealthy individuals. Would they pass a law that negatively impacts themselves?

3) The estate transfer tax feels very distasteful to so many US citizens and residents. When Frank Luntz, a word-smith, helped then-President Bush paint a negative perspective about the estate tax, he renamed the estate transfer tax “The Death Tax.” Immediately, US citizens and residents felt it was an unfair tax. As the saying goes, “How can we ask families to visit the taxman and the gravedigger on the same day?” ■

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Finding a Trustworthy Financial Advisor

by Cameron Nakashima, Media Engagement & Digital Campaigns Manager, BBB Great West + Pacific

Thinking about investing? You're not alone. According to Gallup, 85% of Americans are actively seeking financial guidance—but BBB finds that too often, people lose money to bad advice and fraudulent "investment gurus" posing as experts.

BBB's 2024 Scam Tracker Risk Report found that investment scams are the riskiest in North America, with the highest susceptibility rate and losses in the thousands!

With this in mind, working with a trustworthy financial advisor isn't just smart—it's safer.

According to Ramsey Solutions:

- 44% of people with advisors have \$100K-plus saved for retirement, vs. 9% of solo investors.
- 68% of millionaires surveyed used financial advisors to build their wealth.



Working with a trustworthy professional is a difference-maker. That's where third-party trust indicators such as the Better Business Bureau come in. While BBB doesn't give financial advice, it does help you find financial professionals you can trust.

Read reviews, check complaint histories, identify accreditation, get multiple quotes and use BBB's free Financial Wellness HQ tools: bbb.org/all/financial-wellness-hq. ■

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A Hui Hou

by Scott A. Makuakane, author of Est8Planning for Geniuses

All good things must come to an end, or so they say. This is the last article by this author that will appear in this publication. I wish the *Generations* team and readers all the best in every way.

I hope that over the past 15 years, you have gleaned from this column how important it is to have a clear, comprehensive estate plan—or, as I prefer to write it, "est8plan". There are so many things that are beyond our control, and our est8plans can help us and our loved ones when inevitable bad things, such as death and disability, happen down the line.

Please know and live the reality that through estate planning, you can create better, if not objectively good, outcomes for yourself and your loved ones as you transition through the stages of life. Your imagination and your collaboration with competent and creative advisors will

give rise to an est8plan that will help you sleep at night. You will rest easy in the knowledge that you have done everything you can to put yourself and your loved ones in the best possible position to face the future. "May the road rise to meet you" as you embark on your own estate planning adventure, and remember: an intellectual solves problems... but a genius avoids them. Your est8plan can help you and your 'ohana avoid the problems that must be solved when people fail to plan.

Aloha pumehana, Scott Makuakane ■

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