

GENERATIONS

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MAGAZINE

VOL 16/2 • MAR/APR 2026

A Hāna Tradition of 'Ohana & Integrity

Four generations sharing their community's values

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REVERSE MORTGAGE PROGRAMS



- 1 IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, HOW DOES THIS WORK?** There are many misconceptions about reverse mortgages, so it is important to know the facts. A reverse mortgage, or HECM (Home Equity Conversion Mortgage) is a federally insured loan that allows you to tap into the equity you have built up in your home.
- 2 DO MY CHILDREN/FAMILY MEMBERS LOSE THEIR INHERITANCE?** No. A borrower may designate an heir of their choosing. The heir(s) will inherit the home after the last surviving borrower passes away and may then choose to keep (by paying off the amount of reverse mortgage balance) or sell the home. Should they choose to sell, any remaining equity after paying off the loan (minus interest and/or fees) would be theirs.
- 3 IF I HAVE AN EXISTING MORTGAGE, CAN I GET A REVERSE MORTGAGE?** Yes. Many borrowers use a reverse mortgage to pay off their existing mortgage and eliminate their monthly mortgage payment. In many cases, there is a line of credit left over for the borrower.
- 4 HOW MUCH DO I QUALIFY FOR?** The amount you can borrow is dependent on several factors including: age, home appraisal value and current interest rates.
- 5 WILL A REVERSE MORTGAGE AFFECT MY SOCIAL SECURITY OR MEDICARE BENEFITS?** You should always check with your tax specialist before applying, however, in general, a reverse mortgage does not affect Social Security and/or Medicare.
- 6 WILL THE BANK OWN MY HOME?** The bank does not take ownership of your home, they simply extend a loan to you. You continue to own and live in your home and are responsible for payment of property taxes, required insurance and any applicable HOA fees.

7 DO I NEED TO BE SUFFERING A FINANCIAL HARDSHIP TO QUALIFY? No. It is another common misconception that reverse mortgages are only available to those who are struggling financially. In fact, many affluent borrowers who work with financial planners are using this as a tool to better their quality of life during retirement.

8 ARE THERE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON HOW I CAN SPEND MY LOAN PROCEEDS? There are no restrictions once any existing mortgages or liens are paid off. Many reverse mortgage borrowers use their cash payments to delay their Social Security payments, pay medical bills, travel or simply supplement their retirement income.

9 HOW DO I QUALIFY?

- Be 62 years or older
- Must be living in home as primary residence; vacation homes and investment properties do not qualify
- Complete a HUD-approved counseling session
- Must be able to pay homeowners taxes, insurance and any applicable HOA fees

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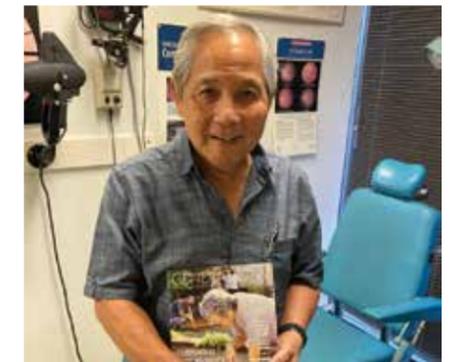
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Dr. Wayne Matsuyama, an 'Aiea optometrist, shares his Generations Magazine subscription with patients.

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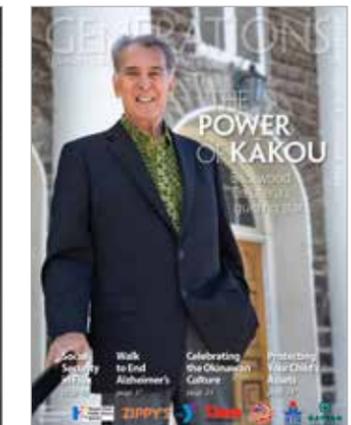
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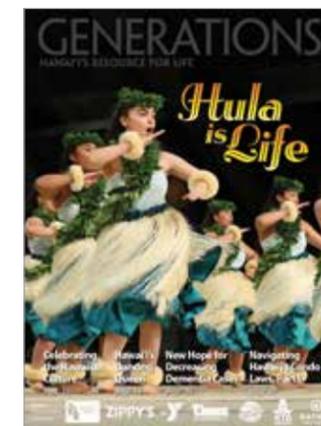
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Family has always been at the heart of everything I do, which is one of the reasons I chose to take over *Generations Magazine*. As the child of Baby Boomers and with my grandparents having already passed, I felt a strong calling to help other kūpuna navigate, understand and prepare using resources they will need as they move forward. At the same time, I wanted to support the Gen Xers who so often find themselves caring and advocating for their parents.

This magazine is and has always been about family, connection and community. That is why our feature story this issue felt especially meaningful to me. Hasegawa General Store, located in the small town of Hāna on Maui, is a beautiful example of a family business that has stood the test of time. Serving a remote, close-knit community, the store offers a little bit of everything—because that’s exactly what the community needs. Passed down through generations, Hasegawa General Store is more than a place to shop; it’s a gathering place, a lifeline and a testament to what happens when family traditions and community commitment come together. I love hearing stories about family-run businesses that continue to thrive. But what resonates most with me is when those businesses work not just for themselves, but for the people around them. Hasegawa General Store does exactly that and I’m honored to share their story with you (pg. 24).

We will hold two more community events on O’ahu this year, in addition to our Senior Fair at Windward Mall held in February and our annual Aging in Place workshop scheduled for Aug. 1. Also, mark your calendars for the Hawaii United Okinawa Association Senior Health and Fitness Fair on April 10 at the HUOA center in Waipio from 9am to 1pm.

If you live on Kaua’i, please attend the first Kaua’i Senior Resource and Disabilities Fair at the Kaua’i War Memorial Convention Hall in Līhu’e on May 6, from 10am to 1pm. The free event will feature educational information to help support seniors and those with disabilities, ‘ono food and prize drawings. Free bentos will go to the first 200 attendees.

More information on all our events will be included in our upcoming issues.

Thank you, as always, for being part of our *Generations* family. ■



Last year for our annual Goya family trip, we visited San Diego.



Aloha... and Roll Tide!
Cynthia Arnold, *Owner-Publisher*
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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.

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ROSA BARKER, a frequent Generations Magazine contributor, lives on Moloka'i and completed a BA in Humanities—Hawaiian-Pacific Studies at UH West O'ahu, via Distance Learning in 2025. She was born and raised in Stratford, a small rural town in Aotearoa (New Zealand). Prior to her retiring to Moloka'i in 2017, Rosa had careers in television production, database administration and copyediting in Aotearoa and California. Her interests include going down research rabbit holes, writing mele and short stories, playing 'ukulele, reading and travel.



CECILIA FONG is the Director/Administrator of Griswold Home Care for O'ahu, overseeing home care services and operations. With nearly 20 years in community engagement, public policy and nonprofit management, she strives to deliver on Griswold's commitment to improve the lives of everyone they touch by supporting them where they love to live. Joining the Griswold 'ohana enabled her to continue connecting people with opportunities and resources. She is inspired to make Hawai'i a thriving community to live in for her husband and three children.



AMELIA KYEWICH-KANEHOLANI, M.Ed., is a Program Specialist with the Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities. She strengthens community systems supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the lifespan. Amelia bridges aging and disability networks, advances inclusive community engagement, and helps families, providers and self-advocates navigate services and policy. She leads cross-sector partnerships, legislative efforts and develops culturally grounded resources honoring Hawai'i's communities.



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STEVEN SANTIAGO earned a master's degree in Organizational Management. He was employed by the City and County of Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation for 33 years in the Senior Citizens Section as a Specialist and as the Coordinator for the senior program. Steven retired at the end of 2025 and now stays busy as a Kicking Coach for Waipahu High School and is also the Head Coach for the Boys Soccer program. He is an active woodworker and loves raising Hawaiian lei plants.



SHASTA YAMADA is the Director of Development for the American Diabetes Association Hawaii Chapter, where she leads fundraising, community engagement and corporate partnerships to support its mission to prevent and cure diabetes and improve the lives of those affected by the disease. With a background in nonprofit development, event management and community relations, she works closely with volunteers, sponsors and healthcare partners to expand awareness, increase access to resources and drive support for diabetes research, education and advocacy.

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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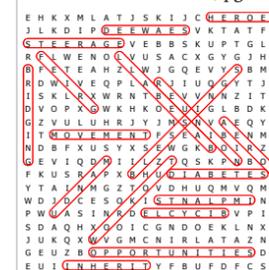
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The Kūpuna Power Movement & Mindset

by Brickwood Galuteria



Kūpuna Power, a platform that seeks to educate and empower Hawai'i's elderly, is both a movement and a mindset—a reminder that Hawai'i's elders carry not only our history, but our momentum. Born out of an immediate response to a church family member being scammed, I launched the initiative after witnessing firsthand how vulnerable kūpuna can be when clear, reliable information is hard to find—or when a kupuna is too embarrassed to reveal such a situation. The experience exposed an urgent need for information to accessible resources at the federal, state, county and private levels—and the spark that ignited Kūpuna Power.

Kūpuna Power is about helping them tap into resources that enable them to live their golden years the way they want to, as independently as possible and without worries. Kūpuna Power helps restore dignity, visibility and agency to the people who built the foundations we stand on today.

KŪPUNA POWER (5 minute segments)
KITV's "Island Life Live"
Thursdays, 10 am, 4 pm and 9 pm

THE BEST OF KŪPUNA POWER
(replays of TV shows)
KITV: Tuesdays, 12:30–1 pm
KIKU: Sundays, Noon–12:30 pm

At its core, the initiative insists that kūpuna are cultural anchors and political stabilizers whose lived experiences—from plantation life to the Hawaiian Renaissance—give them a clarity that Hawai'i still depends on. When elders speak, they bring generations of insight.

Kūpuna Power channels that wisdom into present-day action by encouraging kūpuna to stay informed, vote, testify, organize and guide the lāhui (people) with the same steady hands that raised families and communities.

The movement also strengthens intergenerational connection, creating joyful, dignified spaces where young people learn directly from elders through stories, mele and lived truth. That exchange fuels coherence, unity and disciplined civic participation. ■

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Enjoy the Ride!

by Roy Kodani, Contributing Writer

Dr. Steve L. Chaplin, a 64-year-old Honolulu psychiatrist, has seen the world from a unique perspective. He has ridden his bicycle through South America, Asia and Europe, cycled through 39 countries, including Morocco, Myanmar, India, Chile and Vietnam, and most recently, biked through Iceland and Greenland.

What inspired him to see the world this way? Dr. Chaplin's father taught him to ride at age 6, but initial lessons didn't include how to stop by using his brakes, which caused him some scrapes. His interest in bicycling blossomed while biking with a friend in San Francisco. The bicycling bug really took hold of him as he navigated the city's highly textured topography. By then, of course, he had learned how to brake.

Today, adhering to the hypothesis "safety in numbers," his excursions always include a friend or a group. He says he has never experienced a bad bike trip. To the contrary, friendly foreigners often approach him, asking about the details of and reasons for his international bicycle trek. He says that riding a bicycle has proven to be an easy way to make friends in a foreign country, as natives are always eager to give him advice and share information about their country.

Dr. Chaplin says that the most interesting country he visited was Vietnam in 1995. The Vietnamese were very welcoming, saying, "America number one." And, of course, Dr. Chaplin fit naturally into the culture, as most Vietnamese rode bicycles as their primary transportation.

Riding his bicycle in a foreign country also gave Dr. Chaplin an opportunity to appreciate the culture and natural beauty at a pace that could not be accomplished in motorized travel mode, yielding time and space for contemplation and reflection, in addition to social interaction.

Dr. Chaplin says, "Somehow, foreign residents and I succeed in communicating. English seems to be an international language and there is always someone who can speak it to some extent. In the remote parts of a country, where English is barely spoken, we use hand motions and somehow we



manage. We smile, we laugh and catch on to what each is saying.

"For example, when a foreign resident points at my bicycle, I know from experience that they are asking me why I am traveling in their country on a bicycle, especially in a far-off region. Traveling to a foreign country is always an experience. It depends on your attitude of why you are there. So I tell them that riding a bicycle abroad is a priceless experience if your aim is to learn, have fun and meet the people. The bottom line is to be pleasant and patient."

Dr. Chaplin believes in exercise and encourages his patients to do so, because studies have shown that such activity promotes mental alertness, stamina and positive interactions. Such being the case, bicycling in a foreign country with his interest focused on a new environment stimulates his mind and memories of people and places.

Studies have shown that a human on a bicycle is more efficient than a swimming salmon or flying seagull and jet plane. Dr. Chaplin concurs that it reduces global warming and conserves natural resources as well as introduces the bicyclist to different cultures, cuisine, history and people—up close and personal. "There is no doubt that bicycling is good for the health, for the preservation of our Earth and if you travel to a foreign country, I like to believe that in some ways it leads to international understanding, friendship and world peace."

His philosophy of life is simple—"enjoy the moment. Enjoy the ride." ■

A Class Reunion Trip Down Memory Lane

by Rob Meldrum, a Generations Magazine Reader

When I got the save-the-date card for my 50th high school reunion, I was shocked! Hey, 50th reunions are for old people! Then I realized I must be one!

So I volunteered to be our Class of 1975 reunion secretary and sent out emails asking for life updates and attendance plans. As I sifted through the replies, I began getting information about classmates who had passed away. A girl I had dated died of cancer. Another I had a crush on had died the year before. I received a heart-breaking email from the widow of a wrestling team buddy saying he had passed. All told, I found out a dozen classmates had passed on.

Those sad responses convinced me that I must go to the reunion to reconnect with people with whom I had spent four important years.

When my wife and I arrived in my hometown for the reunion, we went for a long walk around the school grounds. Memories came flooding back. The next evening, we dined with our 50th reunion group. I was pleased that 36 classmates of the 100 (about) in our graduating class attended. Everyone looked great! Granted, now in our late 60s, our definition of "looking great" is far more forgiving than it used to be!

During dinner, we didn't compare accomplishments, cars or careers—we honored the past as we reminisced about our classmates who are no longer with us. We remembered a classmate I had known since we went to preschool together. After I shared precious memories of her, others who were close to her shared theirs. We remembered another friend—a funny, well-liked, brilliant and athletic student who became a leading brain surgeon at Johns Hopkins. His widow joined us; we all cried with her. And so it went through the list, with shared recollections triggering tears and eliciting laughs. I was pleasantly surprised that as we all told our stories, old friends recalled things that I had forgotten and I was able to jog their memories, as well.

As we talked, my classmates transformed in my mind's eye to how they looked in our school



The 50th reunion of Western Reserve Academy's Class of 1975 was well-attended. Following "the road less traveled," Rob paved his own path to a permanent home on Maui, where he enjoys life with wife Kelly.

days. Grey hair turned brown again and bald heads regrew shoulder-length locks. Guys shuffling painfully to their tables were once again fleet-footed soccer jocks and track stars. Grandmothers with etched laugh lines and crow's feet transformed into gorgeous young girls again.

Saying goodbye at the end of the reunion was bittersweet. I hugged it out with everyone.

I had viewed reunion group photos of the older classes above us, hanging in the hallways. Seeing fewer people in each five-year grouping, I realize that at our next reunion, I may not be seeing some of these dear friends again.

So I'm glad I went back for the Big Five-O and I'm going to attend all of my class reunions for as long as I am able, God willing. ■



ROB MELDRUM was born and raised in Hudson, Ohio, and graduated from Middlebury College in Vt. *summa cum laude*, with high honors for his senior thesis. After a 20-year career with AT&T, he started a telecomm software company and is a patent-holder. He and his wife, Kelly, moved from Seattle to Maui in 2019. In retirement Rob enjoys playing guitar, writing songs, playing pickleball and baking sourdough bread.

If you have a story to share, email the editor: debra@generations808.com.

Getting Old is Getting Old!

by Anita Stern, a Generations Magazine Reader



(L-R) My son-in-law Paul, daughter Kalei, husband Bill, me, son Kala'i and his partner, Lawrence.

Getting old has its blessings and its challenges. The blessings are many, especially here in Hawai'i where kūpuna are usually treated with a bounty of respect and kindness. However, I have found that to be less true while traveling on the continent.

Among my many blessings, I count my three kids. My eldest daughter, Kalei, age 54, who lives upstairs from me with her husband, Paul, are there to help when asked. Kala'i, age 51, and his partner, Lawrence, are also both willing and able to help in any way that they can. Puna, my youngest daughter, age 47, lives in Florida, but comes when needed, as she demonstrated when her father was diagnosed with brain cancer. She appeared two days later and stayed for two months.

But challenges are also many. Pesky little obstacles include being unable to recall the names of actors and classmates from long ago, and

forgetting appointments, even though they are in my cell phone calendar and written on a paper calendar. Trials include being unable to do the simple, everyday tasks that were once so easy to do, like bending to tie shoelaces, reaching for dishes from a high kitchen shelf, opening a jelly jar and even popping open a can of cola. All the little things...

The big things are getting short of breath during a slow, 18-minute walk halfway around the loop, or during a 45-minute sitting-fitness class at the YMCA, enduring the pain from my knees and feet from arthritis while walking and exercising or even just trying to fall asleep at night.

But the biggest challenge in my life is grieving for a lifetime companion who died and left me to survive without him, dealing with the pain of turning over in bed and seeing an empty pillow, preparing meals for one person instead of two, filling out forms required by the government after the death of spouse for VA, Social Security, military retirement, medical insurance...

Yes, getting old has its blessings and its challenges. Getting old is getting old! ■



ANITA 'ILIMA STERN is a retired elementary school teacher and writer who taught hula for 33 years. Her students liked learning hula and chant from her and appreciated the positive feedback they received. She lives in Kailua, O'ahu.

If you have thoughts or a story to share, email the editor: debra@generations808.com. It may be published in *Generations Magazine*, Facebook or our website.

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Her Handi-Van Heroes

by Debra Lordan, GM Senior Editor



Not all heroes wear capes. In fact, many go unnoticed, with their efforts sometimes taken for granted. These "unsung heroes" are a model of compassion who contribute valuable, often challenging work without receiving recognition or praise for their efforts. But once in a while, a recipient of their kindness steps up to sing their praises. O'ahu resident Diane Wright contacted us to help her make that happen.

"TheHandi-Van drivers do more on the van for passengers than most people know," says Diane. "They work hard and do it with compassion and care."

"They are well trained," says Diane. "The nice, friendly drivers greet you when you get onboard, then, if the van is full, the driver helps to space the people apart in the van so we can all fit. They move around a lot to help the passengers, buckling wheelchairs to the floor and strapping

in rollators and walkers. They even help seatbelt you in, if you need."

When the passengers disembark, the driver unbuckles each rider and helps them to the exit lift, lowering the lift so they can get out easily. "The drivers always say a friendly 'have a nice day' when we leave," adds Diane.

"TheHandi-Van drivers have a lot of compassion and patience, so I thought I'd tell others about them," says Diane. "I admire them. Thank you to all hard-working Handi-Van drivers who show compassion every day! ■

To share your story of gratitude for possible publication, email the editor at debra@generations808.com.

Just Getting Personal
by Sherry Goya

Spring is UH Baseball Season

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

Ever since I met my husband Clifford, we were University of Hawaii baseball fans. He and all my brothers played baseball so I've been watching games for years. Our UH memories of watching games goes back to 1975 when we were single, then ever since we got married in 1976. We were a part of the "centerfield free seats" outside of the stadium. Even Google couldn't tell me what we were called but we sat through the Tatsuno and Ako games when they pitched 17 and 16 innings that lasted until after midnight two nights in a row. We also sat on the COLD metal bleachers before the *Les Murakami Stadium* was built; and ever since then, we buy stadium seats under the roof on the first-base line for our immediate family of ten at the Saturday home games.



I think that since Rich Hill became the UH baseball head coach, he attracted Hawaii high school players who wanted to stay home and play in front of family and friends. There were a few sold-out games last year which was a lot of fun. Coach Hill also recruited many players who returned home to play, as well as Mainland players who blended in so well. The atmosphere at the stadium is electric with baseball fans from keiki to kupuna. My two grandchildren have been watching UH games since they were born - Tanner knew the letter "H" since he was two years old because it is prominently displayed on the field.

Hope you will take in a UH baseball game this year; however, if you can't get to the ball park, watch the games on TV when they are on OC16. That's what our family does on Friday nights.



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Where Do Implants Go After Cremation?

by Cullen Hayashida, Affiliate Faculty, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

If you or a loved one have surgical implants, be aware that metal implants will not be in your loved one's urn following cremation. Handling of incombustible semi-precious metal implants following cremation is not something we think about when we are grieving. However, there are a few reasons why this will be a consumer protection concern increasingly affecting a growing segment of Hawai'i:



Hawai'i's mortuaries are doing. Meanwhile, companies in the continental US are harvesting these metals from mortuaries. Some company websites indicate that they can donate the proceeds to a nonprofit upon a mortuary's request. The proceeds can also provide the mortuary with an additional revenue stream.

But what is happening in Hawai'i is unclear. The mortuary industry is silent. If a financial transaction is made, should mortuaries reimburse families for the value of these metals? That might be an insurmountable administrative task and a challenge to enforce. If there is revenue, a donation to a nonprofit would impress the community. Through community dialogue, it is possible to create a collaborative framework that ensures transparency, ethics and community benefits. ■

1. Hawai'i, like much of the US, is experiencing a rapid growth in its retiree population.
2. Significant medical advances and the increased use of surgical implants are becoming commonplace for repairing or replacing bones and joints due to deterioration or fractures.
3. Hawai'i has the fourth-highest cremation rate in the US, therefore, a continued accumulation of surgical implants after cremation is likely.

These incombustible remains will need to be discarded, recycled or resold by the mortuary industry in Hawai'i. These metals may include, but are not limited to, silver, gold, titanium, platinum and palladium, in the form of dental fillings, plates, rods and screws for your teeth, neck, spine, hip and other joints. What happens to them? Are they donated, recycled, sold or discarded in a landfill? Are families providing their informed consent regarding their approved method of disposition?

Is there evidence of unreported revenue generation? The fact is, we do not know what



CULLEN T. HAYASHIDA is an affiliate faculty member with the Center on Aging, and the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Over the past 50 years, he has been involved with developing over 50 elder care service projects in hospital, nursing home, home care, college and community settings, and has provided technical assistance to other organizations locally, nationally and in East Asia. He has taught at the University of Washington, Willamette University, Case Western Reserve University, Kapi'olani Community College, University of Hawai'i and JF Oberlin University.

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How to Best Support Grieving Keiki

by Bonyen Colunga, Licensed Social Worker, Bereavement Network of Hawai'i

Children process and experience grief according to their developmental stage. If we try to determine their grief status by an adult measure, then something may be missed.



Grieving kids can experience a wide range of emotions, expressing sorrow through tears one moment and wanting to play the next. From an adult lens, this can be perceived as the child being "fine," but in actuality, playing is one way they process their emotions. Another indicator of grief in children may be a regression in behaviors. The child may have a consistent developmental skill, then suddenly, they are no longer exhibiting their typical abilities. For example, a child may have independent toileting skills, then they begin to have bathroom accidents. This can be frustrating for a parent or the child's caregiver,

especially if they are unaware of the root cause. Healthy support includes talking story with them using simple words about their feelings, allowing them to cry, assuring them that what they are going through is normal and modeling healthy coping skills.

Good conversation starters may include encouraging the child to draw their emotions, reading through a children's grief book or discussing a movie. Disney movies have many threads of grief sewn through their storylines.

Addressing grief can be uncomfortable, but it does not have to be overwhelming. ■

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JUNE 16
Care That Meets You Where You Are: Understanding Palliative and Hospice Care
by Lesley Milligan,
Navian Hawaii

Celebrating the Korean 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 eighth article of this ongoing series on the many cultures that comprise Hawai'i, we will focus on the Koreans, how they arrived in the Hawaiian Islands, the culture and celebrations.

Korean Arrival in Hawai'i

The story of Korean immigration to Hawai'i officially began on Jan. 13, 1903, when 56 men, 21 women and 25 children arrived in the islands. Like many other ethnic groups migrating to Hawai'i, the men were recruited as laborers for sugarcane plantations. Their situation was unique in that Korean laborers were primarily seen as strikebreakers when Japanese laborers refused to work under exploitative conditions.

By 1915, Korean presence in Hawai'i had grown to over 7,000 strong. In these early years of immigration to Hawai'i and then to the United States continent, some Korean intellectuals believed that emigrating from Korea would be useful in modernizing their homeland. As a result, the recruitment of Korean laborers and those willing to move to Hawai'i saw little issue. Today, around 55,000 residents of Hawai'i claim Korean heritage — about 4% of the population.

Culture and Tradition

The Koreans in Hawai'i were self-starters. They immediately began organizing themselves through churches, establishing schools/social organizations and becoming business owners, and

these practices continue today. As proof of this living history, Ke'eaumoku Street in Honolulu — also affectionately called “Koreamoku” — features plenty of Korean-owned businesses, restaurants and sites for communal gathering.

Many keiki grow up going to taekwondo practice and learning *soeye* (calligraphy). *Hallyu* (South Korean popular culture), Korean pop (K-Pop) and dramas are enjoyed across generations.

The most beloved manifestation of the different cultures in Hawai'i is, of course, food, and delicious and comforting Korean cuisine — like bulgogi, kalbi and meat jun, and *banchan* (sides) like kimchi and mandu — is no exception.

Celebrations

Organizations such as the United Korean Association of Hawaii and the Hawaii Korean Cultural Center offer culturally relevant classes and events throughout the year. The two largest cultural celebrations are the Korean Festival in August and the newer Kimchi Day Festival in November — both annual, held on O'ahu and featuring events such as dance and drum performances, eating contests and celebrations of the arts.

For more information, see the Hawai'i Korean Chamber of Commerce website (hawaii-korean-chamber.org) as well as *Generations Magazine's* Facebook page (facebook.com/genmag808) and website calendar (generations808.com/calendar) for community events and opportunities. ■

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



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Easiest Dumpling Soup (Mandu-guk)

by Hannah Kim

This soup has become a new tradition for the Kim family — the dumpling soup my kids ask for every time we want a quick, comforting and easy dinner. And it is simple enough that at age 10, my daughter, Sophia, could make it on her own. Mandu (dumplings) are usually made during holidays like the Korean New Year or Chuseok, an autumn harvest festival. Families make them together and eat them together. There's something special about a meal that is stress-free and still brings everyone to the table. On chilly days, manduguk is our go-to and a perfect recipe for kids who are learning their way around the kitchen.



Sophia Kim, age 13, began making this easy mandu soup with pre-made dumplings for her family at age 10.

Ingredients

1 pack	Store-bought beef bone broth
8–10	Store-bought dumplings (any brand)
1	egg
	Chopped green onions, to taste
	Minced garlic, to taste
	A little sesame oil

Directions

- 1) Pour 1 pack of store-bought beef bone broth into a pot and add the same amount of water. Bring to a boil.
- 2) While the broth is heating, mince the garlic and finely chop the green onions.
- 3) Crack the egg into a bowl and beat it lightly.
- 4) When the broth comes to a boil, add about 8–10 dumplings. Cook until the dumplings float to the surface.

- 5) Once the dumplings float, add the minced garlic and stir.
- 6) Slowly pour in the beaten egg in a circular motion. When the egg starts to set, gently stir with a spoon.
- 7) Add the green onions and a little sesame oil, then stir.
- 8) Season with salt and pepper if needed.

If you add sliced rice cakes (tteok) along with the dumplings, it becomes tteok-mandu-guk (rice cake and dumpling soup).

Prep & cook time: 45 minutes

Serves: 2 ■

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.



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Every Drop, a Lifeline for Hawai'i

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

The Blood Bank of Hawai'i (BBH) is the state's only center for blood collection and distribution, supplying all 18 civilian hospitals. Because shipments from the continental US take time, local donations are essential to meet daily patient needs. BBH often relies on 150 to 200 donors each day to support surgeries, cancer treatments and childbirth. When emergencies spike, demand can exceed 300 units. On days with low supply, reserves can fall below a single day's worth, forcing hospitals to make difficult choices about who receives life-saving treatment immediately and who must wait.

Traci Takehara, senior recruiter for donor services at BBH and a multiple-time donor herself, oversees Lifesaver Clubs and coordinates drives throughout the islands. "Every donation has the power to save a life right here in our community," Takehara says. "It's life, hope and time for families who need it most."

Because blood cannot be manufactured, Hawai'i's hospitals depend entirely on volunteer donors to maintain a stable supply. Each unit has a limited shelf life, and demand fluctuates with surgeries and emergencies, making regular donations essential. All blood types are needed—including the most common—O-positive and A-positive—while O-negative remains especially valuable due to its universal compatibility.

Many kūpuna rely on a consistent blood supply, especially those managing chronic conditions or preparing for procedures like dialysis, heart treat-



ments or joint replacements. Yet fewer than 2% of Hawai'i residents donate regularly, leaving hospitals with little buffer when demand is high. One pint can support up to three patients, so supplies can run low quickly.

Different types of donations address specific medical needs. Whole blood, the most common, is used for a wide range of treatments. Platelets help cancer and trauma patients. Plasma supports burn-care and clotting disorders. Rare types like Jk3-negative, more common among Polynesian populations, are in high demand because they are harder to match.

Most adults in Hawai'i can donate if they are generally healthy, weigh at least 110 pounds and meet screening requirements. Many kūpuna remain eligible, depending on medications and medical history.

BBH operates fixed locations on O'ahu and regularly holds mobile drives to make donations accessible across the islands. Staff guide donors through every step, from check-in to recovery, and follow consistent safety protocols to protect both donors and patients. By maintaining a reliable supply, the Blood Bank supports care that keeps families together and ensures treatment remains close to home.

Takehara emphasizes, "A steady blood supply ensures hospitals can care for all patients without making impossible choices."

For more information or to schedule a donation, visit bbh.org. ■

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The Cure for Retirement Disease

by Steven Santiago, Former Coordinator of the Senior Program, Department of Parks and Recreation



Many of us have heard the paradox "all alone in a crowded room." For many of our island seniors, it is a reality. Social isolation and loneliness are major enemies of the senior population. They are the common challenges of life after work.

Imagine the situation: You have worked for over 50 years, many as supervisors in charge of others. And after all that time, you look forward to retiring. You see yourself as being free to do as you wish, when you wish and with whom you wish. But on that first day of retirement, you no longer have a place where you feel you belong. There are no "good morning" greetings—no afternoon lunch gossip.

This is a reality for many retirees. Of course, many are prepared. They had their travel group set up. They were all set to garden, babysit or meet their friends for kanikapila at a local McDonald's. But not all are prepared. Many seniors retire without having long-term plans in place. After the first month, they stop looking forward. They wake up, watch TV, eat alone and fall asleep. This becomes their new pattern. So, what do you do to prevent this? Start again.

Having worked for Parks and Recreation Senior Section for over 30 years, I met the people who gave in to "the disease of being retired." Others I met formed new beginnings. They joined clubs, set up a schedule of activities and rediscovered life. They found new reasons to wake up every day. Whether it was a senior club or just a group they met at the mall, life started to form anew.

Remember back when you started your career? Do it again and this time you are your own boss. Rekindle a former passion, challenge yourself with a new project, order yourself to join a club or start a club of your own. Create activities you have always wanted to do—travel, garden or work out at your local recreation center.

Look at opportunities to help others. I just started retirement and began a new career doing just that! My hobbies now dictate my deadlines. I feel renewed; I am just waiting for people to start telling me I look younger! ■

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What To Do With Unwanted Heirlooms

by Pi'ilani Shimabuku, Intern, Generations Magazine

If your family members and friends have declined your offer to pass your treasured heirlooms to them, you are not alone. Jon Vendiola, the owner of a decluttering and moving service for kūpuna called "Lets Move, LLC," has found this to be common among his customers. He cites differences in taste between generations and the lack of available space for storage in the smaller homes that are being purchased in a difficult housing market. Members of Gen X and Gen Z gravitate toward aspects of minimalism, and are more likely to value the memories, stories and the time spent together over the clutter.

But rather than lug these items to the landfill or drop them in a donation box, he recommends that you first explore other options. Take items that may have monetary value, such as tea sets,



furniture, antiques, vintage items and designer clothing to a consignment store to be appraised. But do some research online or give the consignment store a call first. Consignment stores are selective. The merchandise they accept must be in "pristine condition," says Jon. If they choose to accept an item, you retain ownership until it is sold. When the item is sold, the store will keep its commission and you take home the rest.

If all else fails, take your items to your local thrift shop, Goodwill, Salvation Army, homeless shelter or a domestic violence shelter. Or find a nonprofit thrift store that sells donated items to fund a charitable mission. Precious treasures that your family may reject could be highly prized by a perfect stranger—a win-win for everyone. ■

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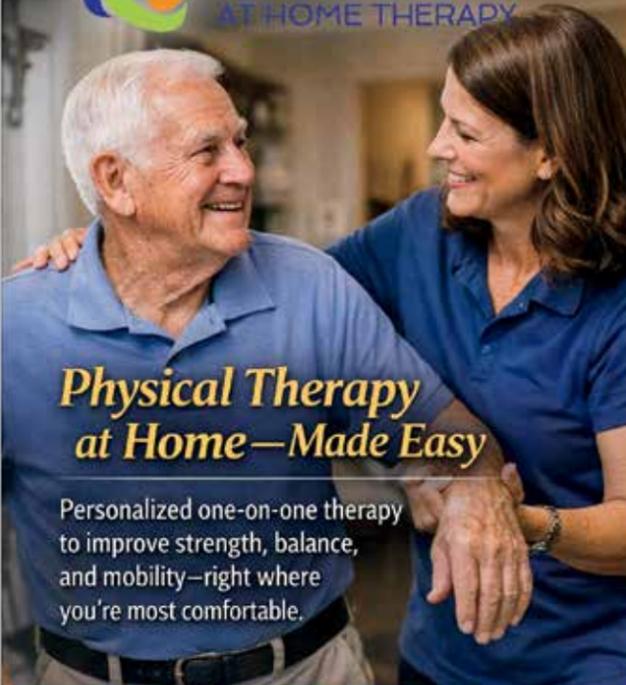
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A Hāna Tradition of 'Ohana & Integrity

Four generations sharing their community's values

By Rosa Barker
Photography by Hideharu Yoshikawa

When brothers Shoichi and Saburo Hasegawa opened their general store in Hāna in 1910, there was no legendary Road to Hāna. Goods and people traveled by boat to the wharf in Hāna Bay. The bustling sugar plantation town was just one of several on the east coast of Maui, from Ké'anae to Kīpahulu, each with a sugar mill, stores, churches and recreational amenities such as movie theaters and pool halls. Travel from one end of the district to the other could take days by horse or mule. A lot has changed since then, but fourth-generation general store operator Neil Hasegawa continues his family's tradition of serving both locals and tourists with grace, humor and a strong sense of deep-rooted responsibility a small-town business fosters that helps the surrounding community retain its character, prosper and thrive.

Shoichi and Saburo Open Original Store

In 1886, representatives of His Majesty the King of the Hawaiian Islands and His Majesty the Emperor of Japan signed a convention that stipulated that a representative from Hawai'i be based in Yokohama to facilitate the signing of work contracts no more than three years in length. The immigrants would also be granted "free steerage passage, including proper food, from Yokohama to Honolulu in first-class passenger steamers." This is likely how the Hasegawa brothers arrived, voyaging on from Honolulu to Hāna Bay.

The Hāna District had a population of 3,241 when Shoichi and Saburo opened their store in 1910. It was a family affair, with the children helping out from a very young age. Toshimasa was born that same year to Shoichi and Kiku, but in 1919, they took him and their other children back to Japan, leaving Saburo's family to run the business. Then, in 1926, Saburo and his oldest

son, Kengo, went to Japan to ask Toshimasa if he would come back and help them with the store.

Photos taken by Toshimasa in 1938 illustrate the store's extensive and eclectic range of goods. Although the road from Kahului to Hāna had been completed a decade before the photos were taken, it was extremely rugged, necessitating a huge inventory of tires. The interior featured a long lunch counter, cabinets with various household items and hardware, and food staples like rice.

Toshimasa and Shizuko Take Charge

Toshimasa wed Shizuko Hirose in 1932 and they took over store operations when his uncle Saburo returned to Japan in 1933. With the winding down of the plantation era from the 1920s onwards, population numbers declined by 1950 to about 1,000 still living in the Hāna District. Those remaining people still needed the necessities of life and the Hasegawa family continued to provide



Carol Oliveira, seen here with Neil Hasegawa, was born and raised in Hāna and has lived there all her life. She's worked at the store going on 16 years. "It's a good job. I like it. I cashier and sometimes stock the shelves in the store. The atmosphere is good; everybody gets along." She enjoys interacting with customers, both locals and tourists.

them through long hours of work. Improvements to the road linking the town to Kahului, a major arrival hub for tourists, as well as the area's natural beauty, brought transient customers to the store. It was within this context that Toshimasa built a new brick store with gas pumps in 1958. Toshimasa, an avid photographer, also added a photo developing studio.

Toshimasa and Shizuko had a house behind that store. Neil has fond memories of his grandparents' home. As children, he and his two sisters spent the most time with them — his cousins lived on O'ahu and in Southern California, so he and his siblings had them all to themselves. "I had a really good relationship. I'm the first-

born grandchild and I'm a man. In Japanese culture, that's a double whammy!" He and his sisters had chores in the store, weeded around the house and helped Shizuko in the hothouse behind the walk-in freezer at the back of the store. "She was really smart. She'd make friends with some of the hotel guests that would come on a regular basis and she would give them anthuriums, orchids, flowers and so forth. I think that was her way of marketing — a frequent-shopper kind of program!"

Toshimasa and Shizuko retired to a new home in Kahului, where he took up painting and pottery, and she continued nurturing plants with her green thumbs. He passed away at age 90 in 2000 and Shizuko followed him in 2009 at age 95.

Harry Takes the Reins

During the 1970s, their first-born son, Harry, took over running the store. His parents ensured he got a good education by sending him to Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu for high school and the University of Colorado in Boulder, where he majored in accounting. In the 1950s, he completed his military service, working in the accounting department at Tripler Army Medical Center. He and his wife, Nita, made their home in Hāna after their marriage in 1962 and they both worked in the store, taking it over when his parents retired.

In 1961, Paul Weston wrote “The Hasegawa General Store,” a song about the huge variety of goods available there. It became popular when Pua Alameida sang it on the radio show Hawaii Calls and was later recorded by many different artists. Capitalizing on the publicity the song brought, Harry and Nita began selling Hasegawa General Store T-shirts and related merchandise. And each year, they would go to a trade show on the continental US to help ensure the hardware inventory was the latest and best they could provide their No. 1 customer — Hāna locals.

This customer-centered ethos passed on to Harry by his parents is also exemplified perfectly in an anecdote told by one of the store’s visitors. He and his wife had neglected to fill their car with

gas before embarking on the road to Hāna on a sight-seeing day trip. They didn’t have enough gas to get back to Kahului and they also didn’t have enough money to pay for a night’s accommodation in Hāna. When they told their tale of woe to the waiter at the restaurant where they were having dinner, he re-told it to Harry, who was dining there with his family. So Harry opened up the gas station and even provided them with some snacks for the long drive back.

Had they needed a document notarized, Harry could have done that, too. He became a notary public when he realized the community didn’t have one. He also served on planning boards and the Hāna Maui Trust, providing scholarships to local students and grants to help community members from 1970 to 2018. During his 20-plus years as president, the trust’s outreach to the Hāna community grew exponentially. In a 1988 KHET TV documentary about Hāna, Harry shared his feelings about the town: “I think of Hāna as a very rural Hawaiian place and I’d rather live in that type of setting, so I’d like to set my life in those terms. I think everybody has that in mind when they come to Hāna. As the other parts of the island build and become more like a city, Hāna can remain as it is — rural and not over-developed. I think our value is increased and I think that is what we should be looking for.”



Toshimasa photographed the original Hasegawa General Store in 1938. In the foreground is Harry and his mother, Shizuko. His brother, Ed, is seated on the counter, and a cashier stands behind him. The sugar plantation era in Hāna lasted from 1849 until 1947. All the district’s freight came via Hāna Bay wharf during that time, and bagged sugar left that way. The wharf and its facilities were destroyed by the 1946 tsunami. The last East Maui sugar mill ceased operations that same year. The road to Hāna wasn’t completely paved until 1962.



[L-R] In this image of a 1970s promotional travel agency postcard, Toshimasa Hasegawa, visiting radio personality Arthur Godfrey and local marine biologist Tad Pryor stand in front of the general store built in 1958.

that’s not going to be a good life. That negativity surrounds you. Let the police handle the investigation and all of that stuff. How can we continue in a good way?”

They were able to get the gas station running again and built a film studio in part of the old building so they could develop pictures as well. Keola-Hana Maui, owners of Hāna Ranch at that time, offered the family the use of Hāna Ranch Theatre. Its last movie showing was in 1979. “A lot of our guys helped renovate the theatre,” says Neil. “We had a general contractor who came in and we were his crew. It made a lot of sense doing it that way.” All their staff remained employed and the new store opened for business in August, 1991. You can still see the holes for the projectors high up on the back wall. In 2008, plans to rebuild on the old site fell through, so it is now used as a food truck lot by local entrepreneurs.

Neil and his wife, Mitzi, have two adult children, Brayden and Caelyn. Caelyn worked in the store as a cashier one summer, but when Neil wanted to give his 15-year-old son a job there, he wasn’t able to because the minimum age to get a liquor card is 16. He laughs when recounting his conversation with the liquor commission when he said that he’d been working in the store since he was 10. “They go, ‘Mr. Hasegawa, that was a long time ago!’” Brayden and his wife, Sydney, both graduates of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, live and work there. “They’re living their life up there. If they feel like they want to come back and run the store, that’s their decision. I don’t want to force anybody.” Caelyn is majoring in kinesiology at Missouri Southern State University.

Community Needs Remain the Priority

It’s easy to take for granted the items we see on store shelves in urban and less isolated rural areas. “Normally, product merchandisers for companies like Meadow Gold come in and stock up, pull expired product, give credits and so on. We do everything on our own,” says Neil. He places the orders and a private trucker based in Hāna goes to Kahului to pick them up. Redo Trucking

Harry passed in September 2024 at age 90 in an assisted living home in Kahului. For about three years “my Mom and I would go there every Thursday, spend the night, have lunch with him Fridays and then return,” says Neil. He lives next door to his mother and is her caregiver, making sure she’s comfortable and has all she needs.

Neil Returns

Like his father, Neil went to college on the mainland, studying business administration, marketing and management at the University of Redlands in Southern California. Upon graduating in 1988, Neil returned to Hāna to live with his parents and help run what he now calls the “old store.” That’s because, in August of 1990, the Hasegawa General Store was set ablaze. There was minor damage to the gas pump area, but everything inside the store was lost. Harry and Neil said a friend came to Harry’s home in Hāmoa at 4:30am to tell them the store was on fire. By the time they got there, it was completely gone. Fire investigators concluded it was arson, but the culprits were never found. “I felt really hurt that someone would do this to us,” said Neil.

What happened next is proof that the Hasegawa family’s sense of responsibility to their community is no one-way bridge. “When the store burnt down, several people in the community — and this was before GoFundMe — started soliciting donations for us and for our employees,” says Neil. “I thought that was a great gesture, especially coming out of that situation where I was so bitter. I had a really negative feeling about human nature at that point. Then the realization hit me, ‘You know what, if you’re gonna be that sour the rest of your life,

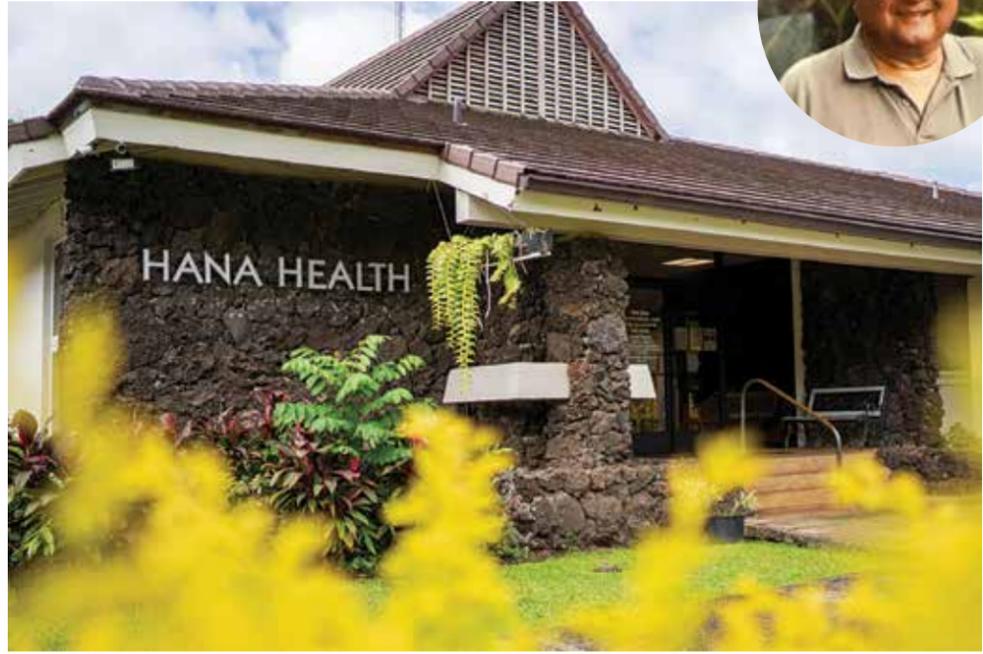
& Hauling is another multi-generational business. It was started by Valentine Redo as Redo Express in 1973 and is now run by his grandson, Sam Aina. Neil remembers Valentine “dropping stuff off at the old store to my dad and grandpa.”

An example of how local businesses put the needs of the community ahead of dollars and cents comes from when the Maui Nui Venison company began giving out free ground venison in 2024. They called Neil and asked if he wanted to be part of the giveaway and Neil called Sam to see if he would bring it down for free: “Yeah, no problem.” Maui Nui drops off cartons of the 1-pound packs of venison at VIP, a family-owned food distribution company in Kahului that provides chilled and frozen products to restaurants and businesses. “They accept the Maui Nui venison, put it on the pallet, Sam comes by, picks it up every other Thursday, brings it to us and then we put it in our freezer. People will just come and pick up. Maui Nui told me it’s two per family, per day, so use your discretion. It is such a big help to the community.” Previously, Hasegawa General Store had acted as a distribution point for free produce brought to them by a produce house “on the other side. People could just pick up the boxes and we’d keep track of the names. We did it for three or four months and then the grant ran out.”

When Hāna locals speak of “the other side,” they’re referring to the other side of Haleakalā,

Hāna Health, the only healthcare provider in the Hāna District, serves the primary healthcare needs of residents and visitors alike. Harry Hasegawa was a key figure in establishing the center when the state closed its clinic there. Providing a full range of primary healthcare, Hāna Health emphasizes preventive care. The Hāna Fresh Farm behind the center sells its produce, herbs and traditional Hawaiian medicinal crops from a nearby farm stand.

Photo courtesy of Hana Health



the dormant volcano. Its lower slopes cradle the 52-mile road to Hāna, with its 620 curves—some of them hairpin bends—and 59 bridges, most of them one-way. The drive can take from two to four hours. Extreme weather events, wildfires or road and bridge repairs can mean it’s closed altogether. If the electricity grid gets shut down, as well, Hāna has several emergency generators for the community. Nowadays, of course, electricity is vital for store operations. Harry had the vision to computerize the store’s paper-based systems and replace the manual cash registers with electronic equipment. “It saved him time,” Neil explains—time that Harry could allocate to serving the community.

A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

Hāna Health is a private, nonprofit, federally qualified health center. Neil explains: “That was Harry’s baby. We’re a small community. We just weren’t getting the attention that we need. Especially in healthcare, you can’t be ‘the leftovers.’ He was the one who created a committee, got funding and brought in an executive director to help organize everything.” In 1995, the state-run Hāna Medical Center was on the verge of closure. Harry spearheaded the advocacy for Act 263, which was passed in 1996. It provided for the transfer of the state-run medical center to the new nonprofit organiza-

tion. Harry was a board member and president for several decades. Hāna Health offers primary medical, dental and behavioral healthcare, and 24-hour urgent care to all Hāna District residents, regardless of their economic circumstances.

Neil recalls how his father was very involved in the community. “We all are. He instilled in me, ‘the rising tide lifts all boats. The more you can do for Hāna, the better Hāna will become.’ Whether it be volunteering... just making it better.”

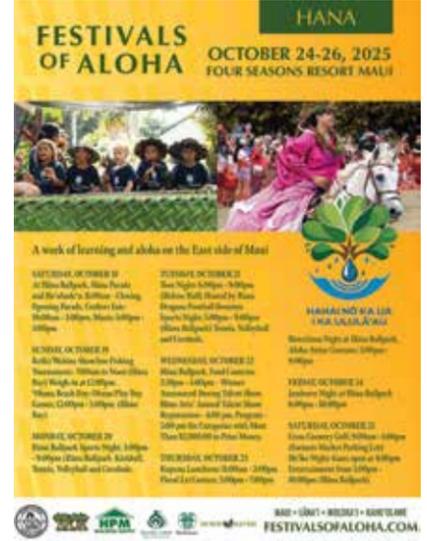
Neil’s “baby” is the Festivals of Aloha. “Festivals of Aloha was called ‘Aloha Week’ back in the ‘60s. There’s a lull in tourism in October and O’ahu businessmen wanted to create a destination event that would share Hawaiian culture with tourists.” The event spread to all the islands, but over the years was reduced to three days or a weekend. Hāna is the only community in the entire state that still has a weeklong festival.

The whole community gets involved, with individuals volunteering their time to help out at the events and small businesses donating and providing certificates and cash prizes. The festivities kick off with a parade on Saturday and end with Ho’ike Night lū’au with entertainment and food.

“We’re trying to work with the hotel to create a destination event for Hāna,” says Neil. “Fill up the hotel, fill up the vacation rentals, have tourists come, spend a week with us and get that there’s a strong Hawaiian culture presence.”

Hawaiian culture isn’t just lū’au, lei and aloha. There’s also the wave. When Neil’s cousin, Mark Hasegawa, retired to Hāna from Maryland, he bought Harry’s truck. “Small town, everybody knows everybody’s vehicles. They’ll wave. Just wave back,” Neil advised. “So tourist cars, any car... he’s just waving!” Mark grew up in Southern California and visited over the summer as a teenager.

That’s a typical pattern, not just for the Hawaiian diaspora, but also for families living on other islands. Most of Neil’s employees were born and raised in Hāna, a lot of them coming from large families that have spread out across the state.



When visitors come into the store and say they know a Hāna local, staff and visitors often find family connections.

Kukui Nuts, Cold Cuts, Surfer Pants and Papaya Plants

Paul Weston’s lyrics in the song that made the Hasegawa General Store famous ([youtube.com/watch?v=-dqBGR3Gkbwg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dqBGR3Gkbwg)) are no less true today than they were back in 1961, when it was first recorded. “You just name it, they’ve got it there.”

“I’m pretty much the specialist... I do the orders for hardware, fishing, liquor and beer,” says Neil. His office manager takes care of accounts payable. Several other people take care of buying. One of his assistant managers does the buying for different areas in the store, like health and beauty aids. “We have a lot of part-timers working as cashiers. We have a small crew... maybe 10 people.” Neil tries to source fresh produce locally so that he is both supporting the community

and keeping prices down. The store also acts as a pickup point for FedEx and UPS customers. “It’s in line with what we do: try to service the community wherever we feel we can be of help.”

A Reflection of the Community

In 2008, the Small Business Association’s Family-Owned Small Business Award for the County of Maui went to Neil. “Despite a fire that destroyed the store in 1990,” the award said, he has shown “resilience and determination by reopening the store in the old Hāna Theatre with new services and an improved mix of products that contributes to its continued growth, and remains Hāna’s one-stop shop.” In 2010, the store’s 100th anniversary year, Harry and Neil received the Mayor’s Lifetime Achievement Award for small businesses.

“The key to owning a business in Hāna, or any small town, is the relationship you have with the community and the decisions you make,” says Neil. “A lot of times, ours are not dollars-and-cents decisions. There’s an underlying responsibility we have so we can best serve our community.” ■

Choosing Your Next Chapter Before Life Chooses for You



Best Time to Plan Your Move Is Before You Need To:

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- Where can I go if staying home is no longer safe?
- What senior living options are available to me?
- Who can help me prepare my home for sale and guide the transition?
- Should I rent my home or sell it?

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Ask the Doctor: Caring for Your Kidneys

by Thomas Chen, MD, Chief, Nephrology, Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i

In this ongoing column, Kaiser Permanente doctors will answer commonly asked questions.

Your kidneys are small but mighty organs that keep your body in balance. They filter waste and toxins, regulate your blood pressure, and help maintain healthy bones and blood. When your kidneys are working well, you hardly notice them. But when they're under strain, it can affect your entire body, often without warning.

In Hawai'i, we see the US' highest rates of kidney disease due to two significant kidney risk factors: diabetes and high blood pressure, which are more common here, particularly among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

The connection between these conditions and kidney health is strong. When blood sugar or blood pressure stays high over time, it can injure the small blood vessels in the kidneys that act as filters. This damage builds up slowly and most people won't feel symptoms until the kidneys are already working much harder than they should. But the good news is that kidney disease doesn't happen overnight—and there's a lot you and your care team can do to prevent or slow it down.

When should someone get their kidneys checked, and what kind of tests are involved?

If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or a family history of kidney problems, get your kidneys checked at least once a year. Even if you feel healthy, these tests are the only way to know how your kidneys are doing.

Tests are quick and straightforward. A blood test checks how well your kidneys filter waste—what we call your “estimated glomerular filtration rate” or “eGFR.” A urine test looks for protein, which can be an early sign of damage. At Kaiser Permanente, we usually do both during your routine visits for diabetes or blood pressure care. These results help your doctor see trends over time and act early if something changes.

Regular labs can catch kidney issues long before symptoms appear—making all the difference.

If someone develops kidney disease, what are the treatment options before dialysis?

If you're told you have kidney disease, take heart—most people don't need dialysis and many live long, full lives by following a tailored care plan.

The first goal is to treat what's causing the problem. Managing blood pressure and blood sugar is key. Your doctor may adjust your medications or add new ones that protect your kidneys.

ACE inhibitors, ARBs or SGLT2 inhibitors are medications that can protect your kidneys and help them last longer.

Lifestyle is a huge factor. Eating less salt, staying hydrated, being active and avoiding extended use of over-the-counter pain relievers such as ibuprofen or naproxen can prevent further injury. Our care teams (doctors, dietitians and pharmacists) work closely together to help patients make small, sustainable changes that add up over time.

Kidney disease may be common here, but it doesn't have to be inevitable with early testing, good control of blood pressure and blood sugar, and regular check-ins with your care team.

Good kidney health is about partnership. When you and your care team work together, small changes can make a lifetime of difference. ■



DR. THOMAS CHEN serves as Chief of Nephrology and Medical Director of Pharmaceutical Services at Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i. Board-certified in nephrology and internal medicine, he earned his medical degree from Wake Forest University School of Medicine and completed his residency and fellowship training at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia. Dr. Chen is passionate about prevention, patient education and collaborative care—helping patients with kidney disease live healthier, fuller lives through early detection and coordinated treatment.

Kaiser Permanente will cover bladder control issues in the next issue. If you have a medical question for the doctor, email: cynthia@generations808.com.



Geriatric Care: Dementia Screening Tests

by Steven Ito, CEO, Care Plus by Ohana Pacific Medical LLC

Dementia screening is a key component of comprehensive geriatric care, allowing clinicians to identify early cognitive changes that may affect a patient's safety, independence and quality of life. Memory concerns are evaluated within the context of overall health, functional ability and environmental factors.

Effective dementia screening begins with assessing memory, mood and decision-making capacity. For example, the Clock Drawing Test helps detect early cognitive impairment. Depression and anxiety can mimic or worsen cognitive symptoms, so testing for them is important, too.

The Katz Index and Lawton–Brody Scale measure how well an individual manages personal care and complex tasks. Mobility evaluations, including the Timed Up and Go test, identify



gait issues that often accompany cognitive decline.

High-quality screening also considers nutrition, sensory changes and living environment. Medication burden (taking multiple medications) can also significantly affect cognition.

Dementia screening is most effective when it is patient-centered, incorporates caregiver input and uses validated tools. When performed regularly, it supports early diagnosis, timely treatment and improved long-term outcomes for seniors. ■

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Diabetes 101

by Shasta Yamada, Director of Development, American Diabetes Association–Hawaii Chapter

Over 38 million Americans are living with diabetes. It continues to be one of the fastest growing chronic conditions in the world. One in three Americans aged 65 and older is living with diabetes (16.5 million seniors). Risk factors include age, a family history of diabetes, not getting enough physical activity and being overweight/obese. Diabetes is also more common in certain ethnic groups.

The American Diabetes Association® (ADA) recommends that adults aged 35 and older get screened regularly, regardless of risk factors.

Diabetes is a complex problem that causes blood glucose (blood sugar) levels to rise higher than normal.

The three most common types of diabetes:

◆ **TYPE 1 DIABETES:** In this type of diabetes, the immune system mistakenly destroys the beta cells in the pancreas that make insulin. When enough beta cells are gone, the pancreas stops making insulin or makes so little you need to take insulin to live. Along with insulin, a healthy diet and physical activity are part of managing Type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes develops most often in young people but can appear in adults.

◆ **TYPE 2 DIABETES** is the most common type. It develops when the body does not use the insulin it makes well or does not make enough insulin. Managing type 2 diabetes includes a healthy eating plan, physical activity, and medication.

◆ **GESTATIONAL DIABETES (GDM)** develops during pregnancy. After giving birth, blood glucose levels may return to normal. If they do not, the individual is considered to have Type 2 diabetes. Even if blood glucose levels return to normal, having had GDM increases the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes later in life.

Prediabetes is diagnosed when blood glucose levels are higher than normal but are not high enough to be determined to be diabetes. Treatment includes lifestyle changes, which may prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes.



A crucial part of ADA's work is spreading awareness. Early detection and treatment can significantly reduce the risk of developing complications.

Symptoms of diabetes can include:

- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry (even though you're eating)
- Frequent urination
- Blurred vision
- Extreme fatigue
- Cuts or bruises that heal slowly
- Weight loss even though you're eating more (Type 1)
- Tingling, pain, or numbness in hands or feet (Type 2)

Be aware that the symptoms of Type 2 diabetes may be so mild that they may not be noticed.

In addition to recognizing symptoms, it's also important to know your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. The ADA offers a free, 60-second Type 2 Diabetes Risk Test at diabetes.org/RiskTest. Those found to be at high risk should contact their doctor. The ADA also provides a list of National Diabetes Prevention Programs to learn about preventing or delaying Type 2 diabetes.

It takes all of us to end diabetes and support our loved ones who are impacted. Bringing the community together to raise awareness, connect people affected by diabetes, and support research, education and prevention efforts. This spring, the ADA will host its walkathon-style fundraiser event:

Step Out® Walk: Hawaii, Saturday, March 21
Kapi'olani Regional Park, 3840 Paki Ave., Honolulu

The walk is free to attend. All are encouraged to register at diabetes.org/StepOutHawaii. ■

AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION
– HAWAII CHAPTER (nonprofit)
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Local Foods for a Healthy Smile

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

Did you know the food on your plate can strengthen your smile? Hawaii's vibrant food culture offers delicious ways to support your oral health.

Limu and seaweed varieties like *miyeok* (wakame) and *gim* (dried seaweed) are rich in calcium and magnesium, helping maintain strong teeth while reducing inflammation. Fresh ahi and salmon in your poke bowl provide omega-3s that may help to fight gum disease. And don't forget our beloved Okinawan sweet potato, which is packed with vitamins A and C for healthy gums. The probiotics in kimchi may also support a healthy mouth by reducing harmful bacteria. Tofu provides calcium for enamel strength, while leafy *kkaennip* (perilla leaves) promote gum health. Even the garlic and ginger in your cooking act as natural antibacteri-



als. Local oxtail soup and *sagol-gukmul* (Korean bone broth) are warm, comforting options rich in collagen and minerals that support gum tissue.

While nutritious foods are a delicious and enjoyable approach to oral health, it's most important to maintain a strong oral hygiene routine that includes daily brushing, flossing, and regular dental visits. These simple habits protect your smile for years to come. Eat well, smile often, and take care of your oral health! ■

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Lawmakers Must Step Up for Caregivers

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



That nearly one in four people in Hawai'i is or recently was a family caregiver comes as no surprise to Judith Wong.

The Honolulu resident is caring for her husband, who was diagnosed with a degenerative muscular disease in 2016.

"His disease is very long-term," she said. "It will not kill him. It will disable him. So I have concerns about whether we will have adequate resources to carry us all the way through without putting us in a financial bind."

The "Caregiving in the U.S. 2025: Caring Across States" report confirms what we've long known: Family caregivers, numbering about 260,000 in Hawai'i, need our support.

Family caregivers like Judith provide more than \$2.6 billion in unpaid care each year in Hawai'i, helping adult family members remain at home—where they want to be. They help with bathing, cooking, managing medications, driving to the supermarket/doctor appointments and handling

medical tasks, sometimes with little or no caregiver training.

Being a caregiver is hard, demanding work. It takes a toll on your finances, on your body and on your mental health.

Caregivers who work must balance the needs of their jobs with the needs of their loved one. About 80% of caregivers pay out of their own pocket for caregiving expenses, an average of about \$7,200 a year. Many reduce work hours or quit working, further straining finances. About half report taking on debt and draining savings.

AARP Hawai'i is fighting to provide greater support to family caregivers through state and federal tax credits, paid family leave and incentives to ease the workforce shortage of paid caregivers. AARP Hawai'i offers free caregiving tools and resources at aarp.org/caregiving.

AARP Hawai'i also created a nationwide movement to empower family caregivers. Called "I Am A Caregiver," it asks caregivers—and people who support caregivers—to raise their hands and show lawmakers that they can't continue to ignore the needs of people who care for others.

Join AARP Hawai'i at aarp.org/iamacaregiver or share your caregiving story with us via email at hiaarp@aarp.org. ■

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A Family Legacy of Caregiving

by Savina "Savy" Makalena, CEO/President, Gimme A Break



To say Marie was a brat is an understatement! Her response was always a wrinkled-up nose and an "ewe-da!" Although we lived worlds apart, my cousin was like a sister to me. She grew up caring for her autistic brother. Then, when her parents divorced, she cleaned and cooked for her brother and mom while Mom worked.

Taking care of them left little time or energy for a husband, so her attempts at wedded bliss resulted in three failed marriages. Next, she moved into public housing and worked at a fast-food restaurant while caretaking her own two children, her brother and mother, who was now battling liver cancer. With her mom's care becoming more demanding, she reluctantly placed her brother in assisted care. Then Mom passed away, taking a piece of her daughter's heart with her.

On a routine visit, Marie found her brother unresponsive. He had taken his own life. Shaken to the core, she stopped working and relied on her now-grown children to support her.

The miracle of twin grandchildren renewed her energy and joy, attracting the love of her life. But then she received a diagnosis of Stage 4 liver cancer. With everything to live for, she fought hard to survive.

Ultimately, Marie lost her battle with cancer. Although her body was defeated, her enduring spirit lives on in my memories of her, giving me the strength to continue to care for caregivers. ■

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Traditions Shape Caregiving in Hawai'i

by Cecilia Fong, Administrator, Griswold Home Care for O'ahu

Caregiving in Hawai'i is strongest when it reflects local values and cultural understanding. Caregivers who live and work here bring knowledge shaped by the islands' traditions. They understand how families relate to their kūpuna and why cultural practices help elders feel secure, respected and connected.



naturally to the needs of kūpuna from Hawaiian, Japanese, Filipino and other communities. They understand how respect is shown, how elders communicate comfort or concern and how families prefer to stay involved. This awareness strengthens relationships, builds trust and brings peace of mind for all those involved.

Local caregivers recognize that caregiving involves more than completing tasks. It includes familiar comforts, preparing favorite local foods, sharing meals, using common greetings, supporting everyday cultural customs or offering quiet companionship that help kūpuna feel at home by creating a sense of continuity for seniors.

As Hawai'i's population ages, integrating cultural awareness into caregiving will remain essential. When caregivers honor local traditions, they help ensure that kūpuna feel valued. ■

Because many caregivers share similar cultural backgrounds or experiences, they respond

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The Gift of Planning Ahead

by Dan Haire, President and CEO, Navian Hawaii

Talking about serious illness, end-of-life wishes or the type of care we might need someday isn't easy. In many families, these topics are avoided. But experts agree—early, open conversations can be one of the greatest gifts we give our 'ohana.



where multigenerational living and caregiving are common, planning ahead can ease emotional strain and prevent conflict during a crisis.

April is National Advance Care Planning Month, a perfect time to start the conversation about advance care planning, which identifies what truly matters to a person. Do you prefer to be at home if your health declines? What makes you feel most at peace? What worries you? What brings you comfort? These answers help your 'ohana honor your wishes and reduce stress.

Start small by sharing a friend's experience. Talk about what quality of life means to you. Invite your family to reflect on their wishes. Once the dialogue begins, it becomes natural.

National surveys show that while 92% of adults think these conversations are important, only about one-third have had them. In Hawai'i,

Planning ahead is truly an act of love. Advance planning empowers your 'ohana, protects your wishes and ensures that the care you receive aligns with what matters most to you. ■

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VoTech Program Opens Career Doors

by Debra Lordan, GM Senior Editor



The Tradewinds VoTech awareness initiative offers learning in a practical setting, where students can gain real-world skills that are in high demand on Maui.

skills, especially for wildfire survivors, graduates and returning residents to rebuild the island's infrastructure and economy.

Students will gain real-world, practical insights into Maui's skilled trades, including plumbing, carpentry, electrical work, HVAC and more. Each module builds upon the last, offering students a deeper understanding of how these vital trades are interconnected and essential to Maui's success.

"Our goal is to provide graduating students with an awareness of how, with just a high school degree, they can access immediate opportunities for careers offering salaries that rival and in some cases exceed those of college graduates right here on Maui," says MFELC Executive Director Rich Sato. "We're here to open doors to career possibilities that many students may not have known existed."

Plans are also in the works to launch an online platform to engage more retirees. "We will match retired, skilled trades professionals with opportunities to put their skills to use—at their convenience—to help our member facilities augment their dwindling full-time—and in many cases overworked—teams," says Rich. They are currently beta-trialing the platform and look to launch it in the first quarter of 2026.

If your teen is not headed for college, help him or her find an alternate pathway to success on Maui. Businesses and retired seniors who are looking to re-engage and can offer their mentorship are also welcome to contact MFELC using the contact information below. ■

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"They helped me see bigger opportunities," says Chasthan Hernandez (right photo), a 2025 graduate of a Maui vocational technology awareness program that helps qualifying high school students gain high-demand skills in the facilities maintenance and engineering trades.

For high school seniors who are not college-bound, the nonprofit Maui Facilities and Engineering Leadership Council (MFELC), comprised of members of the island's major firms and businesses, offers another pathway to success. In this cross-generational education program, working and retired senior volunteers pass their knowledge about the trades to the next generation, helping to build careers through mentorship with qualifying high school seniors through communication, collaboration and education. A very impactful part of this program is the life experience and wisdom imparted by the instructors.

The State of Hawai'i Alternative Learning Programs, Services and Supports (ALPPS) program and the Baldwin-Kekaulike-Kulanihakoi-Maui Complex Area developed a hands-on learning experience tailored to graduating seniors who qualify and enroll in the program. The Tradewinds VoTech awareness initiative is a win-win for students and the community by giving students meaningful pathways to immediate, stable careers while closing the skilled worker gap and helping to ensure Maui's continued growth and prosperity. The program offers avenues to paid training in construction, tools, blueprints and engineering

Wellness Beyond the Workout

by Jenny Ostlind, Membership & Healthy Lifestyle Program Executive, YMCA of Honolulu

Wellness for kūpuna is often misunderstood. It is not just about staying physically strong or checking the right boxes at a doctor's visit. True well-being includes physical health, mental health and something just as important: social connection. One of the greatest risks to health as we age is isolation. One of the greatest protectors at any age is belonging. At the YMCA, we see this every day. Many kūpuna first come to the Y to stay active. What keeps them coming back is connection.

The Y offers classes on land and in the pool designed specifically for seniors, including strength, balance, water exercise and evidence-based programs like Enhance Fitness that help manage arthritis and support mobility. But the real magic happens beyond the workout.



Wellness at the Y looks like pickleball games/lessons, hula classes, garden clubs, nutrition workshops and digital classes. It includes celebrating birthdays and holidays, honoring veterans, recognizing achievements and sharing meals. Intergenerational activities include youth and senior hula classes.

The impact is real. In our Kūpuna Food & Fun program, 100% of participants say they have met new people, made new friends and feel a sense of belonging. Well-being grows in places where you feel welcomed, valued and at home. ■

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Beware of Medical Identity Theft

by Norma Kop, Director, SMP Hawai'i

When Auntie Lei's Medicare Summary Notice showed lab test charges she didn't recognize, she called SMP Hawai'i, a volunteer-based federal program that helps prevent Medicare fraud through education. The counselor helped her report the fraud, document each detail and understand how scammers target kūpuna through their Medicare numbers.

But Auntie Lei also wondered if these false charges would affect her benefits and future claims, so she was referred to Hawai'i State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). SHIP offers free, confidential and unbiased counseling, outreach and education to help Medicare beneficiaries make informed decisions about their health coverage. A SHIP counselor helped review her Medicare plan and check her claims,



and also taught her how to read her statements and understand her rights.

SMP protected her from fraud, while SHIP helped her understand and resolve Medicare issues.

Protect yourself: ❶ Never share your Medicare or Social Security number with unexpected callers; ❷ Review your Medicare Summary Notices and Explanation of Benefits regularly and ❸ Watch for bills, supplies or services you didn't request. ■

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Bridging Aging & Disability Care on Kaua'i

by Amelia Kyewich-Kaneholani, Program Specialist, Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities

In Hawai'i, many families care for both kūpuna and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. But aging and disability systems often operate separately, leaving families with gaps in services, caregiving support and long-term planning.

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) works to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families. It brings together community members, agencies and advocates to identify needs, shape policy and promote inclusive practices. On Kaua'i, the local DD Council plays a vital role in connecting partners and ensuring rural areas have access to coordinated support.

Through the Bridging Aging and Disability Networks (BADN) initiative, the DD Council convened aging and disability providers to share informa-



tion, align resources and strengthen care practices. This collaboration has led to community resource fairs, caregiver training, internship programs to grow the caregiving workforce and practical tools like emergency forms for families and first responders. BADN also emphasizes culturally grounded practices, respect for family caregiving traditions and proactive planning to reduce unnecessary institutionalization.

Bridging these networks strengthens local capacity and supports Hawai'i's caregivers. ■

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Distribution Rules for Inherited IRAs

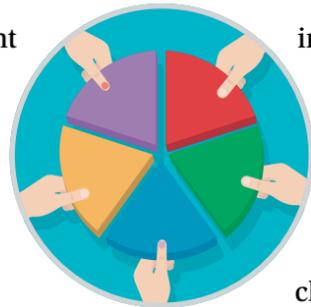
by Michael W. K. Yee, Financial Advisor and Certified Financial Planner, Ameriprise

An inherited individual retirement account (IRA) is a potential financial windfall that may create new opportunities for achieving your financial goals. If you are a beneficiary or expect to be one in the future, know that recent legal changes regarding inherited IRAs can result in costly implications if not followed properly. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has clarified rules included in the 2019 SECURE Act that are important for IRA beneficiaries to understand. Determine if these new rules are applicable to your situation:

■ **Different beneficiaries have different rules.** Spouse beneficiaries will ultimately have much more flexibility with how they utilize an inherited IRA. Spouses can spread withdrawals from the account over their lifetime or roll the funds into their own IRA. For most other beneficiaries, such as children or grandchildren, the rules are more rigid. Non-spouse beneficiaries inheriting an IRA between 2020 and 2024 were required to withdraw all assets from the account within 10 years of the original account owner's death.

■ **New, more stringent rules in 2025.** Those who inherited an IRA beginning in 2025 face more restrictions. In most cases, non-spouse beneficiaries must take annual IRA distributions from the inherited account. The annual distribution requirement applies if the account was inherited from an IRA owner who already reached the required minimum distribution (RMD) age before death, which, under current law, is age 73.

Annual distributions are determined using the IRS life expectancy calculation tables. The distribution must, at a minimum, equal this calculated distribution amount. The beneficiary can take larger distributions, but annual minimum withdrawal requirements must be met for the first nine years. In year 10, the balance of the IRA must be distributed. Failure to withdraw at least the minimum amount can result in a penalty equal to 25% of the under-distributed amount. For example, if you are required to withdraw \$20,000 from the



inherited IRA, but only took \$10,000, you could be subject to a \$2,500 penalty.

If the account was inherited from an owner who did not yet reach RMD age, the beneficiary still has 10 years to withdraw all the money. The beneficiary will also have the choice to determine how much and how often. The new, more stringent rules don't apply to beneficiaries who are minor children, have a disability/chronic illness or for IRAs held in certain trusts. If these exceptions are met, beneficiaries can "stretch" inherited IRA withdrawals over their lifetime. To determine if your inherited IRA is subject to new distribution rules, contact a financial advisor and tax professional.

■ **Planning is even more critical.** Withdrawals from an inherited traditional IRA result in more taxable income. Consider the financial and tax implications of your withdrawal strategy, including whether the distributions will change your tax bracket. Distributions could mean your income reaches thresholds that result in increased taxes, higher premiums for marketplace health insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act, or a higher tier for Medicare Part B and D premiums.

Contact your financial advisor to discuss the impact of an inherited IRA. ■

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Making Tough Care Decisions

by Stephen B. Yim, Esq., LL.M., & Monica M.M. Yempuku, Esq. – Yim & Yempuku, LLLC

Making long-term care decisions for aging parents can be emotional, stressful and complicated. The biggest challenge is navigating differences without damaging family relationships.

◆ **Different views are normal:** Each sibling brings a unique perspective. One may prioritize safety, another independence and another cost/logistics. Different priorities don't mean someone is wrong—they reflect different experiences and concerns.

◆ **There's no perfect answer:** When it comes to long-term care, there is rarely a single "right" solution. In-home care, assisted living, memory care and nursing facilities all involve trade-offs, so focus on what reasonably meets your parent's safety, dignity and quality-of-life needs.



◆ **Help exists:** Geriatric care managers, eldercare attorneys, social workers, patient advocates and support groups can help guide difficult decisions. Kupuna Pono also offers family conferencing and mediation to help resolve kupuna care disagreements.

◆ **Keep relationships first:** Aim for 80% agreement on the plan, then commit 100% to supporting it. Protecting family relationships matters more than being right. Disagreements happen, but remember that help is available and families can move forward together with the right support and perspective. ■

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Answers on pg.9

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