

GENERATIONS

HAWAI'I'S RESOURCE FOR LIFE

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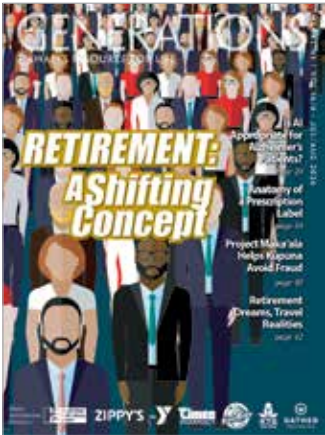
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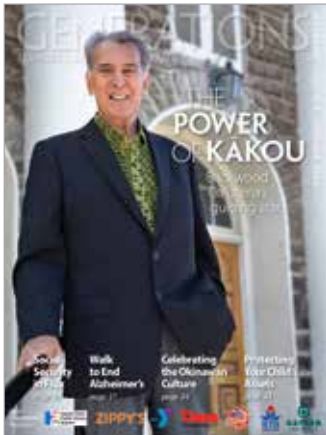
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Fall means football, y'all! I hope you are enjoying watching your favorite college or NFL team play this season. You can definitely hear me saying, "Roll Tide!" every Saturday while proudly wearing my red Bama shirt! Let's Go!

We are almost at the end of the year and I wanted to take a moment to say MAHALO to all of our readers, partners, supporters and especially our faithful staff. This magazine would not be the great resource it is for Hawai'i without their hard work, dedication and continued support. I am truly grateful for everyone who helps make *Generations Magazine* possible.

To close out the year, I wanted to shine a light on a disease that doesn't always get the attention it deserves: arthritis. This issue's feature focuses on arthritis and the Arthritis Foundation Hawai'i. Did you know that everyone on the GM team, as well as our writer Teri Pinney, has been affected by arthritis in some way? Isn't that crazy? After reading this issue, I hope you learn as much as I did about arthritis, discover how the AFHI can help you and how you can support their important work in our community.

From the famous Dr. Seuss book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, let's remember: "Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!" The holidays are a wonderful reminder that love, kindness and togetherness are gifts that can't be bought. Spend a little extra time with the people you love, check in on a neighbor or friend and remember those who may be alone or without family nearby. A simple phone call, a helping hand, an invitation to share a meal or even a kind smile can make a big difference. This holiday season, let's look for opportunities to spread a little kindness and make someone else feel remembered, valued and loved.

As we enter 2027, please remember that we are always looking for new ideas and suggestions! If you have an article topic, feature idea, event happening around the islands or a new resource that could benefit our kūpuna, we would love to hear from you. Please share your ideas with me at cynthia@generations808.com. Your suggestions help us continue to make *Generations* a valuable resource for our community.

Lastly, from my family to yours, we want to wish you all...

*A Very Happy Holidays
& a Happy New Year!*



Cynthia Arnold, Owner-Publisher
A Faithful Alabama Crimson Tide Fan



CYNTHIA ARNOLD
Owner–Publisher & Marketing
Cynthia@Generations808.com
808-258-6618

WILSON ANGEL
Art Director
Wilson@Generations808.com

DEBRA LORDAN
Senior Editor & Writer

HALEY BURFORD
Proofreader & Writer

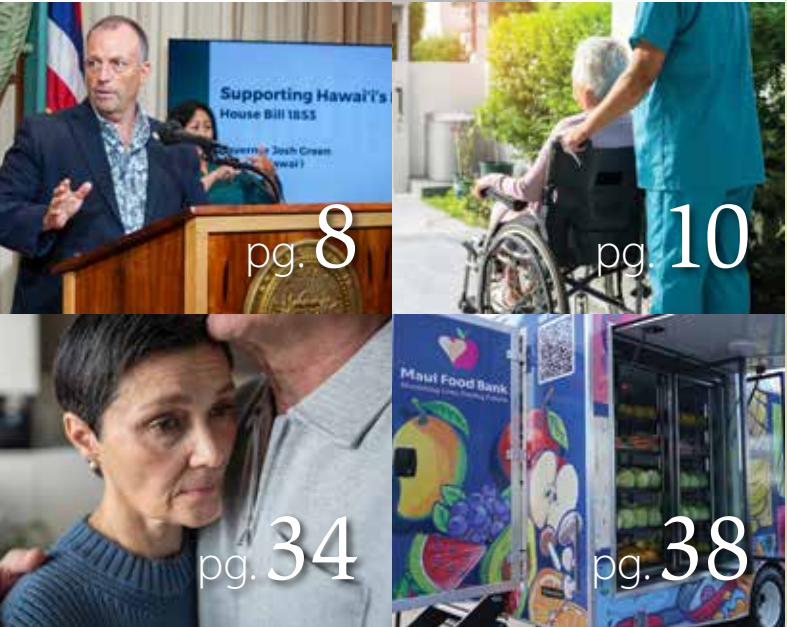
SHERRY GOYA
Community Relations
& Subscriptions
sgoyallc@aol.com
808-722-8487

LEIGH DICKS
Content Coordinator
& Bookkeeper
Leigh@Generations808.com

MAHLON MOORE
Webmaster
& Social Media
Mahlon@Generations808.com



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

Vicki Boswell, Haley Burford, Jane Burigsay, Coby Chock, Leinani Costigan, Cecilia Fong, Craig Gima, Dan Haire, Kathleen Hayashi, Mike Hu, Nancy Kanter, Roy Kodani, Rob Meldrum, Maui Food Bank, Skye Morrison, Dominic Niyo, Todd Pang, Dr. Vinh Tran, Diane Terada, Dr. Theresa Wee, Michael Yee, Monica Yempuku, Stephen Yim, Dr. Ka'ahukane Leite-Ah Yo

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Coming Soon: HĀNAI Memory Network

by Coby Chock, Public Policy and Advocacy Director, Alzheimer's Association – Hawai'i



Gov. Josh Green (center, front row) signed House Bill 1853 (Act 245) into law on July 14, 2026, establishing the HĀNAI Memory Network Program. In attendance were (L–R, front row) Calvin Hara, Dr. Gina Fujikami, Jerry Perone, Kamal Masaki, LJ Duenas, (second row) Hayden Cobb, Chris Lutz, Barbara Black (back row) Peter Black and Coby Chock.

momentum holds, families should see HĀNAI up and running by mid-to-late 2027, giving Hawai'i families a trusted place to turn for care.

If you have any questions about the HĀNAI Memory Network, please contact the Alzheimer's Association – Hawai'i ■

For families across Hawai'i facing the uncertainty of memory concerns, help is on the way — and it carries a name rooted in our local values. The HĀNAI Memory Network, an acronym for Hawai'i's Assistance for the Navigation of Alzheimer's Intervention, was signed into law in 2026 as Act 245, capping off this past session's advocacy efforts by the Alzheimer's Association and its community partners.

Hānai speaks to a cultural tradition of caring for others as 'ohana, extending support beyond blood ties — and that spirit shapes the program itself. Rather than leaving families to piece together care on their own, HĀNAI weaves clinical and nonclinical services into one coordinated system. Call it a “no wrong door” approach: Wherever someone enters, they're met with guidance toward diagnosis, treatment and ongoing support that honors both dignity and culture.

Two core pillars will carry the work forward:

1) Dementia Care Specialists will offer cognitive screening, assessment and referrals directly in their communities.

2) Memory Clinics, established in partnership with a health system in each county, will provide clinical diagnosis, care planning and access to emerging treatments — including therapies that clear amyloid plaque and slow disease progression.

With the law now in place, the Executive Office on Aging is collecting public input and preparing to release a Request for Proposal this fall. If

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Cryptocurrency Kiosk/ATM Fraud Protection

by Craig Gima, Communications Director, AARP Hawai'i



for the majority of the losses. The machines look like bank ATMs and could be found in grocery stores, convenience stores, pharmacies, gas stations and other locations.

“Fraudsters use cryptocurrency kiosks like a getaway car in a bank robbery,” Keali'i continues. “They convince consumers through romance scams, by posing as an IRS agent or other official, or through a technology scam, to take money out of their banks and deposit it in the cryptocurrency kiosk. And once the money is put into a scammer's cryptocurrency wallet, it is gone.” ■

Starting Oct. 1, cryptocurrency kiosk/ATMs that accept deposits will no longer be allowed in Hawai'i as a new consumer protection law takes effect.

Hawai'i is now the 35th state to enact a law to protect consumers from losing money in scams involving cryptocurrency kiosk/ATMs and is the first state to ban kiosks that accept deposits. By November, there may be more than 35 states with new laws. Four other states have completely banned these machines. Other states have imposed transaction limits, mandated refunds for fraud, increased warning signs, required printed receipts and passed other consumer safeguards.

“The use of cryptocurrency kiosks in scams was increasing exponentially in Hawai'i and across the nation,” says Keali'i Lopez, AARP Hawai'i state director. “Last year, the FBI said Hawai'i consumers reported losing \$3.85 million through fraud involving cryptocurrency kioks. That's nearly four times the amount reported lost in 2024. That's why AARP fought hard to pass Act 224. We're grateful to our advocacy volunteers and others who shared fraud stories, testified, called and sent letters and emails to help pass the law. We're also thankful to lawmakers who acted decisively to protect consumers.”

The FBI said kūpuna were especially vulnerable to cryptocurrency kiosk/ATM fraud and accounted

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Navigating Kūpuna Living: A Housing Guide

by Dominic Niyo, Reporter, The GW Hatchet; Public Health, George Washington University Student

For many of Hawai'i's kūpuna, navigating life after retirement is a journey of kūlia, striving forward to find comfort and support as daily needs change. Whether it's considering a move, seeking more kōkua at home or planning ahead, the search for the right living arrangement can feel confusing. Choices differ in the type of support offered, how daily life is structured and what level of independence they allow.

According to the State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT), about 22.6% of Hawai'i's residents are age 65 or older, compared with roughly 19% nationally. DBEDT's most recent projections estimate that by 2030, kūpuna will make up about 24% of the state's population, continuing a trend that is outpacing the rest of the country. With Hawai'i's kūpuna population growing faster than the national average, retirement living across the islands is shifting in real time. This demographic change means more 'ohana are reaching these decisions sooner and with greater complexity as they look for options that align with their needs, values and the way they want to live in the years ahead.

■ Kōkua at Home: Aging in Place

For many kūpuna, remaining at home with added kōkua is one of the most familiar and preferred options. Costs in Hawai'i vary widely depending on the level of help needed. Part-time assistance—around seven hours per week—may cost under \$1,000 a month. Homemaker services and home health aides in Honolulu typically range from \$50 to \$100 per hour, depending on certification level, location and the services provided.

For kūpuna who qualify financially, Hawai'i's Med-QUEST program can cover home health services, homemaker support and personal care. As of 2026, the income limit is \$1,530 per month for individuals, with a one-time \$2,000 asset limit. Med-QUEST uses a share-of-cost model, meaning some applicants whose income exceeds the limit may still qualify by spending down on care expenses. Many 'ohana combine Med-QUEST coverage with private-pay support.

Beyond financial support, intentional home modifications can help kūpuna age in place safely and comfortably. Simple changes like improved lighting, removing tripping hazards and decluttering make a significant difference in daily safety. For those who need additional support, grab bars and rails in bathrooms and hallways provide stability, while chair lifts and stair lifts allow kūpuna to navigate their homes with greater independence.

According to the 2024 Healthcare Association of Hawai'i Workforce Report, Hawai'i has a 30% vacancy rate for home health aides, a gap that makes early planning for caregiver support even more important for kūpuna and their 'ohana.

■ Independent Living Communities

Independent living communities are designed for active, self-sufficient kūpuna who want to be part of a community but don't require daily assistance. Residents live in their own apartments or homes within a setting that typically offers group dining, social activities, fitness programs, transportation services and emergency response systems. Unlike assisted living, there's no staff support for personal care or medications—kūpuna manage their own daily routines.

According to Hawai'i senior living providers, independent living in Hawai'i costs range from around \$3,500 to \$10,000 or more per month, depending on unit size and location.

Medicaid and Medicare do not cover the cost of living in independent living communities, so most residents pay out of pocket, often using retirement savings, home sale proceeds or reverse mortgages. Hawai'i also has income-based senior housing communities designed for active kūpuna on fixed incomes.

Standard independent living communities typically do not require entrance fees, though some may request a deposit. While visiting independent living communities, asking what activities and services are included, and being clear about your budget can help your 'ohana find an option that fits their needs.



■ Assisted Living & Residential Care: Support with Daily Living

Assisted living facilities and residential care homes provide support for kūpuna who can no longer manage daily activities independently at home. Both settings offer meals, medication management, help with bathing and dressing, housekeeping and 24/7 staff availability. The main difference is size: Assisted living facilities are larger communities with more amenities and social activities, while residential care homes (ARCHs) are smaller, home-like settings that typically house four to eight residents. In Hawai'i, assisted living averages \$9,340 to \$11,311 per month, though actual costs range from \$5,900 to \$12,200 depending on unit size (studios to shared units) and location. Residential care home pricing varies based on the level of care provided.

Before moving in, understand what's included and what isn't. Most facilities require a refundable deposit before admission; entrance fees vary. Some communities, particularly continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs), require substantial non-refundable entrance fees upfront. Some facilities also review income and assets before admitting residents. Many 'ohana pay out of pocket, use long-term care insurance or combine resources to cover costs. Speak with a financial advisor and ask questions about included services and additional charges.

■ Dementia Care: When Specialized Support is Needed

Memory care facilities provide specialized support for kūpuna with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. Unlike standard assisted living, memory care involves a secure environment, staff trained in dementia care and 24-hour supervision. These settings are designed for kūpuna who can no longer safely live independently or in regular assisted living—those who may wander, become confused about safety or need constant

monitoring. According to the Alzheimer's Association, more than 35,000 kūpuna in Hawai'i are currently living with dementia.

In Honolulu, monthly costs range from \$9,000 to \$12,000 or more; costs may differ on other islands. This includes room, board, meals, activities tailored to dementia and 24/7 care.

Understanding What Works for Your Family

What works for one kūpuna may not work for another—and what feels right today may shift as needs change. 'Ohana approach these decisions in different ways, shaped by values and finances.

Many 'ohana begin by exploring what matters most to their kūpuna—independence, community, proximity to family or the familiarity of home. Others look first at costs, available benefits or the types of care each setting provides. Facility visits, financial planning tools and conversations with providers can help 'ohana understand their options. Local resources, including Hawai'i's Area Agencies on Aging, provide information about programs, benefits and support services available statewide.

As Hawai'i's kūpuna population continues to grow, understanding the range of housing and care options becomes increasingly important. Clear information—about costs, services, eligibility and the realities of each setting—allows 'ohana to make decisions that reflect their needs, values and aloha for the years ahead. ■



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The Zen of Tango

by Roy Kodani, GM Columnist

The tango is a very deep human experience with a very long history. In the late 19th century, immigrants in Argentina listened to its haunting music and created a unique, intimate dance, eventually called the “tango.” Born from a unique blend of African, European and indigenous cultures in the working-class neighborhoods of Buenos Aires, modern tango is the result of an unbroken chain rooted in prehistoric times.

Tango is a social dance. The essence of the tango is finding connection with your partner, while communicating through movement. A good dance leader listens to his partner. If the leader is communicating effectively, he will adjust his movements for the pleasure of his partner.

“Tango is more than dancing and spiritually deeper than the dance itself,” says Josefina Stella-to, tango maestro at Still & Moving Center at 1024 Queen St. in Honolulu. From early childhood, Josefina had a desire to be a tango dancer. She was born in Tandil, Argentina, where she learned the dance as a child. She moved to Buenos Aires at age 17 to study tango with renowned teachers. She attended a variety of tango schools for about 22 years and danced in musical stage productions.

Josefina began teaching tango in Honolulu two years ago at the invitation of one of the top instructors in Honolulu. She has also taught in California, New York City, Boston and Washington, D.C. She says she would enjoy instructing students in Hawai‘i schools and in Japan.

“Tango is a beautiful dance,” she says. “It is a deep art. By embracing your partner, you communicate with even a first-time partner, not with

words, but with your movements. Tango is a conversation conducted through movement—communication of mutual feelings and trust, and stylized movement to show you care for another person.”

“When you dance tango, you meet people and friendships blossom,” she says. “Tango is also beneficial for elders. It teaches you balance—one of the many benefits of dancing tango. In tango, your partner is embracing you. It is rare you would fall. If you can stand, you can dance the tango.”

Also, tango is broad in scope. It is ageless. Josefina’s thoughts about tango are deep and profound. She says, “In my private time, I think of the important things of tango. For example, if the communication from the leader to his partner is done well, the partner will relax, trust the leader’s movements and the commitment to the dance deepens. The heart, mind and soul are in the present. The joy of tango is to attain peace of mind, calmness of your emotions and serenity through the dance movements of tango.”

“While dancing, I am in another mental state,” she says. The art of mindful movement, a moving meditation, a grounded exercise in awareness, presence, connection and creative expression... Yes, tango can be surprisingly Zen-like. At its best, it demands the same qualities as meditation: presence, awareness, acceptance and letting go. Time disappears—the outside world falls away... ■



DOE Pilot Program to Spotlight Nisei Heroes

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



(L–R, front) Hawai‘i Technology Academy (HTA) Teacher Shiloh Francis, DOE Superintendent Keith Hayashi and (back) HTA students Maria and Alishay are learning about the enduring impact of the 100th Infantry Battalion through letters written to Lt. Col. Farrant Turner, the first commanding officer of the battalion.

In the classes, students will identify a problem facing Hawai‘i, study the values that guided the soldiers of the 100th and create community service projects of their own so they can leave their own lasting mark—a legacy handed down to students from 100th and 442nd kūpuna. ■

The 100th Infantry Battalion was a segregated fighting unit composed almost entirely of second-generation American soldiers of Japanese ancestry (Nisei). Hawai‘i’s One Puka Puka (100th) boys overcame many obstacles and, with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT), became the most decorated unit in US military history. But after over 80 years, the legacy of these Nisei soldiers seems to be fading.

In response, Hawai‘i State Department of Education (DOE) Superintendent Keith Hayashi and educators, in collaboration with the Hawai‘i State DOE and the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans’ board, will introduce students to the history, values and enduring impact of the battalion through embedded lessons that will educate students about their sacrifices.

Beginning this school year, the lessons will be piloted at James Campbell, Kalani, Maui and Mililani High Schools for 9th and 10th graders. The intent of the pilot is to refine and then share the lesson plan with all public high schools in the state. The coursework will be incorporated into existing US and modern Hawai‘i history curricula instead of being presented in a standalone class to give more students the opportunity to learn how the values of courage, service and community continue to shape Hawai‘i.

“It’s important for our keiki to know where they are going, important to know who came before them and the sacrifices that were made so that they can enjoy the freedoms and democracy that we have today,” Superintendent Hayashi says.

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The Quiet Comfort of Just Being There

by Rob Meldrum, GM Contributor



Recently, my wife and I received sad news from one of our best friends. Her husband had passed away. While processing our own shock and sadness, we asked ourselves what we could do to help and comfort

her. When we asked her if she would like us to come right away, she declined. Then she asked just my wife to spend a few days with her around the time of his celebration of life.

I didn't feel hurt that she did not ask me to come with my wife. I thought about her request and the needs of an increasing number of people in our age group after the loss of a spouse. I recalled Sting's words, "The bed's too big without you." The loss of a life partner affects every part of life. So it made sense that our friend wanted only my wife to come. Being with another couple might amplify her new solitary state—the fact that she is no longer part of a couple. So having one person there might better help her deal with her initial stages of grief.

To console our friend, my wife and I agreed that it would be best to keep our expressions of sympathy brief. "I'm so sorry for your loss." There is no explaining the death of a spouse. Our words, perspectives and predictions of the future in an attempt to comfort, can inadvertently serve as painful triggers. Our well-intentioned attempts to comfort may actually make things worse, bringing crisis, not comfort. We decided it may be better to express our sympathies with long, warm hugs and brief, heartfelt words.

Also in the category of unintended consequences, doing something as simple as making a traditional casserole for a solitary grieving person may only accentuate their new state of solitude. Instead, if you share a love for a special dish, make it and bring it over to their house and join them for din-

ner. Or, a change of scenery via an outing to lunch or dinner may be another option.

A practical way to help out may be an offer to be their chauffeur or "executive assistant" for a day or two, as needed. There are multitudes of necessary tasks that can be overwhelming in those first days and weeks. Sorting through bank accounts and insurance policies, along with many other details, can prove to be daunting. With so much to do, just ask how you can be useful.

But simple, quiet companionship may provide something far more comforting than a casserole or a car ride. Your presence alone may gently spark shared memories and fun times, giving your friend the opportunity to reminisce, laugh, cry and open up on their own terms, in their own time. Your friend may derive the most comfort in the quiet of you just being there. ■



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by Sherry Goya

Leaving a Legacy

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

When you think about leaving a legacy for your family, my husband and I hope our children, their spouses and our grandchildren will remember the annual "Goya Family Vacations" for many years to come. We have been planning vacations together for six years, sitting around the dining room table while searching on laptops for places to visit.



Lexie & Tanner

Our 2026 vacation was on Maui, where we visited the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center in Kahului. They preserve and pass down the history and legacy of the Nisei soldier by developing educational exhibits, hosting talks with authors and artists, while presenting workshops aimed at inspiring present and future generations.

Our family watched a wonderful video, read all the wall posters, saw artifacts, and talked with Deidre Tegarden, the Executive Director, who shared stories of the past. One that I remember was that Nisei soldiers wore a senninbari (fabric belt) with 1,000 stitches on them for good luck. It was sewn by women, usually the mother or wife of the soldier and others. The stitches were single-knots and each woman stitched only one knot, unless she was born in the Year of the Tiger; in that case, the soldier's senninbari would have as many knots as the woman's age.

Next time you are on Maui (or live on Maui), stop by 665 Kahului Beach Road or call 808-244-6862 to visit the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center. Their website is www.NiseiVetsMaui.org. I hope you are leaving a legacy for your family too.

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Celebrating the Jewish 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 12th and final article in this series on the many cultures that comprise Hawai'i, we will focus on the Jewish immigrants, their arrival to the Hawaiian islands, their traditions and celebrations such as Hanukkah (Chanukah).

Jewish Arrival in Hawai'i

Though there are no official records of the very first Jewish person to Hawai'i, the earliest record of Jewish people coming to the islands dates back to 1798, when a British whaling ship log revealed that King Kamehameha I brought a "Jew cook" on the boat with him.

In the century to follow, Jewish merchants would immigrate to Hawai'i, hailing primarily from San Francisco, England and Germany. These merchants traded their goods and supported sugar and coffee plantations.

The Jewish population in Hawai'i would continue to grow, and from the first recorded presence, Jewish travelers cultivated relationships with Hawaiian royalty. For example, traveler Elias Abraham Rosenberg presented King Kalākaua with the gift of a Torah scroll in 1886.

Though various community organizations were started, most did not last more than a few years, until Temple Emanu-El in Honolulu was established in 1960, offering the Jewish community a religious center and gathering place. Today, Jewish people are estimated to make up around .6% of Hawai'i's total population.

Culture and Traditions

Jewish culture and traditions casually manifest in weekly Shabbat (Sabbath), celebrated by families on Friday nights, complete with braided challah bread. Many Jewish congregations support Hawai'i's Jewish community throughout the islands. A major one is Temple Emanu-El in Honolulu, with local Chabad houses offering Shabbat meals and other services on O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island. Jewish culture and tradition culminates in Hanukkah, an eight-day celebration that follows the Hebrew calendar and generally takes place in December. During Hanukkah, or Festival of Lights, a menorah is lit every night, children spin dreidels and beloved foods such as latkes (small, fried potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jam-filled doughnuts) are eaten.

Celebrations

This year, Hanukkah takes place Dec. 4 to 12. Chabad of Hawai'i will host an annual celebration in Waikiki with public menorah lightings and parades. Chabad of Maui and the Kaua'i Jewish Center host celebrations on their respective islands, and other local Chabad centers and community groups host celebrations throughout the islands.

For more information, visit Chabad of Hawai'i's website (chabadofhawaii.com), as well as *Generations Magazine's* FaceBook page ([facebook.com/genmag808](https://www.facebook.com/genmag808)) and website calendar (generations808.com/calendar) for community events.

Generations Magazine hopes you enjoyed this two-year-long duology about some of Hawai'i's cultures—the threads that make up the vibrant human tapestry of our island communities. ■

Noodle Kugel

by Nancy Kanter

My family enjoys this recipe during our Jewish holidays. It has also been a favorite of many for enjoying anytime. Jewish law prohibits cooking on the Sabbath, so this recipe became a perfect make-ahead dish, because it retains moisture and can be reheated for the festive Friday night and Saturday afternoon meals... or anytime.

Ingredients

1 lb.	extra-wide or wide egg noodles
6	large eggs, lightly beaten
2 cups	sugar
12 oz.	*cream cheese, softened
1 pint (16 oz.)	*sour cream
1 tsp.	vanilla extract
2 sticks	butter
2 cups	Frosted Flakes

Directions:

Prepare the noodles: Cook the noodles in salted water with a little oil according to package directions. When they are done, drain the noodles well and stir in 1/2 stick of butter. Set it aside.

Prepare the custard: With an electric mixer set at medium speed, combine the cream cheese and sugar, scraping the sides of the bowl. Change to low speed, add one stick of butter (melted), sour cream, vanilla extract and eggs. Mix until blended. Set it aside. **(Do not use low-fat or nonfat cream cheese or sour cream.)*



Prepare the topping: In a separate bowl, hand-crush the Frosted Flakes. Mix in 1/2 stick of butter, melted. Set it aside.

Mix and bake: Preheat the oven at 350 degrees. Grease a 9-by-12-inch pan. Mix the cooked noodles with the custard mix. Pour the noodle-custard mixture in the pan. Spread corn flakes topping evenly over the noodle-custard mixture.

Bake for approximately 45 minutes—until the mixture is set and the top surface is lightly browned. *(If using Pyrex, lower the cooking temperature to 325 degrees.)*

Remove from the oven.

Let it cool and then refrigerate it overnight or freeze it.

Serve: Slice when cold and heat in the oven covered with a loose foil tent on the top.

Prep & cooking time: 1.5 hrs

Serves: 12 squares ■

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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RSVP Offers Opportunities to Serve

by Mike Hu, Volunteer, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

When I retired from my 50-year teaching career and began looking for volunteer opportunities, I found the City and County of Honolulu's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for seniors 55 and over. Through RSVP, I became a GED tutor at the Susannah Wesley Center in Kalihi. As a Kalihi boy who speaks pidgin, I have social currency with the young people I tutor there and sharing academic skills is my way of giving back to the community where I grew up. I volunteer as a tutor because education changes lives. Although no longer in a classroom, I still have the knowledge, experience and passion to help students succeed. Every student has unique strengths and challenges. As a volunteer GED tutor, I give students the individual attention that a classroom may lack.



Volunteering makes a positive difference for me, as well. Seeing a student gain confidence, improve academically and attain success is very rewarding. In addition, tutoring keeps me intellectually motivated and physically active, and provides purpose and opportunities for engagement with students and other volunteers.

I hope to inspire students to value education, work hard and believe in themselves. Patient guidance and encouragement can make a tangible impact. Tutoring through RSVP enables me to continue what is important to me: helping others learn, grow and reach their potential. ■

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Retirement Reimagined

by Leinani Costigan, Senior Section Coordinator, Department of Parks and Recreation, C&C of Honolulu

Retirement is an invitation to explore, connect, learn and enjoy life in new ways. With more time comes the opportunity to discover activities that bring joy, purpose and connection. Parks and recreation can play an important role in this next chapter. A morning walk, fitness class, round of golf, community event, card game or simply relaxing outdoors can support physical and emotional well-being.

Open spaces, new adventures: Our parks, recreation centers, walking paths, gardens and community spaces offer opportunities to stay active at every level. Lifelong recreation is all about finding activities you enjoy and making movement part of your routine.

Friendly faces, stronger connections: Recreation is also about people. Joining a class or activity



can introduce you to new friends and meaningful social connections.

Keep learning, keep growing: Retirement is a great time to try something new. Learn a craft, play a new game, take a class, volunteer or share a skill you've developed over a lifetime. Recreation provides opportunities to participate and contribute.

So, what are you ready for? Your next adventure can include open spaces, friendly faces, lifelong recreation and much more! ■

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Walk With a Doc O'ahu 10th Anniversary

by Dr. Theresa Y. Wee, Founder & President, Walk With a Doc-O'ahu



In February 2026, Dr. Theresa Y. Wee, founder and president of the nonprofit organization Walk with a Doc-O'ahu, celebrated the 10th anniversary of her initiative.

The group gathers every Saturday from 8 to 9am at Patsy T. Mink Central O'ahu Regional Park in Waipi'o, near the tennis courts. The event is free, open to all ages and fitness levels, and encourages healthy lifestyle practices.

The international organization Walk with a Doc began 21 years ago in Columbus, Ohio, founded by cardiologist David Sabgir. Today, there are 725 groups worldwide, spanning 45 countries and 48 states. Inspired by this program while living in Ohio, Wee established Walk with a Doc-O'ahu in 2016.

The weekly sessions start with a health tip from Dr. Wee, followed by a warmup, a 45-minute walk, a recap of the health tip and a cooldown with healthy refreshments. Beyond promoting exercise and healthy lifestyles, Walk with a Doc-O'ahu emphasizes social connections and the importance of spending time outdoors.

"We gather with a common goal: to get healthier and to support one another in our quest to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives," says Dr. Wee.

"The impact of this program over the years has been remarkable and satisfying to witness," she added. "Many participants tell me that this was the exact nudge they needed to start their journey toward better health."

Dr. Wee continues to dedicate her life to helping others by sharing her expertise as a healthcare professional and mother of four through regular television appearances, radio segments and in-person presentations.

She resides in Koa Ridge with her husband, Martin Arinaga, and serves as the medical director at her clinic, Wee Pediatrics Inc., located at Wee Wellness Center. In her spare time, Dr. Wee enjoys traveling and spending time with her five grandchildren. Her hobbies include water aerobics, cooking and reading. ■

WALK WITH A DOC-O'AHU (nonprofit)

Theresa Y. Wee, MD

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TAKE CONTROL.

The collective effort to understand and overcome arthritis continues.

by Teri Pinney

Arthritis is our nation's leading cause of disability.

Like many people, I had always thought of arthritis as an inconvenient but inevitable result of aging: a little stiffness in the morning, an occasional complaint about the weather, perhaps a knee brace or two. It certainly didn't conjure up images of quietly living while immersed in chronic pain.

But, arthritis has a way of sneaking into our lives. Sometimes it arrives after a lifetime of wear and tear. Sometimes it follows a sports injury, accident or surgery. Often, it runs through generations like an unwanted family heirloom. Or it simply shows up one day like an uninvited guest, unpacks its bags and refuses to leave.

Nearly 60 million Americans live with some form of arthritis. Here in Hawai'i, an estimated 275,000 individuals have it. This includes approximately 150,000 kūpuna who navigate each day managing aches, stiffness, swollen joints and physical limitations.

Yes, arthritis boasts a big club made up of neighbors, strangers, friends and family members. I know, because I am a member of this club — *the club nobody wants to join*.

Thirty-five years ago, arthritis entered my life. I quickly learned that the disease wasn't a one-size-fits-all diagnosis. For more than three decades, these chronic conditions affected joints in my fingers, wrists, toes, jaw, neck and spine. Dressing up in high heels was out of the question. I gingerly twisted water faucets, unscrewed bottle caps and turned doorknobs as though they were torture devices. It hurt to stand and walk. It hurt to sit.



As a writer and educator, my career meant daily pecking on a computer keyboard. I remained silent about the persistent throbbing in my fingers and wrists. Articles had to be written and deadlines needed to be met. Walking across hilly school campuses was something I had to endure, one painful step at a time, as I hurried to class. It didn't matter whether my joints weren't cooperating, students were waiting.

Over time, I graduated from a cane to a walker, and when it was too painful to bear, a wheelchair. My calendar became less about social gatherings and more about appointments with rheumatologists, orthopedists, neurologists and pain specialists.

And everybody had a suggestion for me. *Do this or don't eat that*, they would say. I listened to the well-meaning advice and tried just about everything — homeopathic treatments, special diets, exercise programs, herbs, vitamin supplements, massage gadgets, pain medications, biologics, etc. Then came the suggestion of titanium replacements.

I was fortunate to be under the care of highly skilled medical professionals who helped me reclaim my mobility and my quality of life.

Treatment Begins With a Proper Diagnosis

Arthritis is not a single disease. It is an umbrella term encompassing over 100 conditions. For example, osteoarthritis wears joints down over time. Rheumatoid arthritis makes the immune system attack healthy tissue. Psoriatic arthritis affects the joints and skin simultaneously.

People have studied and recorded arthritis for over 2,000 years, with formal scientific and clinical testing beginning in the early 20th century. Unwavering dedication from scientific and medical professionals are aimed at finding a cure and increased support for people living with this crippling disease. The scientific community has launched an unprecedented, multibillion-dollar

effort to better understand and treat the arthritis that millions endure. Once viewed as an unstoppable consequence of aging or simple wear and tear, arthritis is now understood as a complex disease with multiple biological pathways that can be targeted through modern medical research.

Some people swear by remedies passed down from relatives, friends and neighbors. Traditional beliefs have always had their place. But when arthritis begins calling the shots, science requires serious attention and adherence. Getting properly diagnosed is the starting point to fighting the disease. Proper diagnosis may require x-rays, MRIs, bloodwork and consultations with specialists. It may take months.

Once physicians understand what they're dealing with, treatment options become clearer. And sometimes benefits from treatments take a while to become effective. This requires patience and discipline to follow what the doctors recommend.

Too many people still dismiss persistent joint pain as an inescapable consequence of aging. They put off seeing a physician, assuming nothing can be done. Yet early diagnosis and treatment can make an enormous difference, particularly with inflammatory forms of arthritis, where untreated disease can cause permanent joint damage.

Today, arthritis management includes disease-modifying medications, biologics, physical therapy, injections, joint replacement surgery, lifestyle changes and pain management strategies.

Hope: The Arthritis Foundation Hawai'i

The Arthritis Foundation Hawai'i (AFH) connects, educates, advocates for and supports individuals and families living with arthritis, while maintaining a strong local presence that has been part of our island community for decades.

In 2025, approximately 25,000 patients in Hawai'i attended educational events, logged on to virtual webinars or accessed digital resources.



At 76, Teri Pinney leads an active life guiding student teachers at Western Governors University and writing articles for Generations Magazine.

Hundreds of people also participated in AFH's annual walks and social gatherings. Now, the organization is looking ahead and avidly recruiting volunteers for its annual Walk to Cure Arthritis on April 17, 2027.

Volunteers help to plan, promote and create a memorable gathering, while raising critical funds and awareness for people living with arthritis. For someone newly diagnosed, simply meeting another person who understands what it is like to live with chronic joint pain can be powerful.

AFH has served Hawai'i residents since 1966, focusing its efforts on education, advocacy, support, fund-raising and connecting patients and families with helpful resources (see page 28 for details and contact information). Over the years, AFH has hosted juvenile arthritis programs and family activities, educational workshops and support groups in addition to Walk to Cure Arthritis and the Taste of the Town gala events. AFH has also been involved in legislative advocacy efforts at both state and federal levels.

Leading those efforts today is Executive Director Jennifer Schack, who works as the local representative of AFH. She shares that since COVID, AFH experienced a dip in engagement with the public. "People may have forgotten that AFH is still here to help them," she says.

"Our message is that there is hope!" says Schack. "Together, we can create stronger communities and a better quality of life for everyone affected by arthritis." Hope, however, requires helping hands and financial support.

AFH is actively seeking sponsors and community partners to help continue and expand its work throughout Hawai'i. Businesses, organizations and individuals support educational programs, community activities and events that bring together people affected by arthritis.

Sponsorship does more than help pay the bills.



Executive director Jennifer Schack poses with Lydia as the Walk to Cure Arthritis youth honoree.

It allows AFH to reach more people, increase awareness and connect patients and families with information and resources they might not otherwise know are available. For local businesses looking for a meaningful way to give back to the community, becoming an AFH partner offers an opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of Hawai'i residents (see page 28).

There are multiple sponsorship opportunities available at a wide range of contribution levels, allowing businesses and individuals to participate at a level that best suits them.

Where does the money go? The AFH Board Chairman Marty Welch offers some historical perspective. "When the national foundation began in 1948, arthritis was often dismissed as an inescapable part of aging. Nearly 80 years later, organizations like the AFH continue to challenge that misconception and emphasize that arthritis is a serious medical condition. Yet, thanks to advances in medicine, research and determination, many people are proving that an arthritis diagnosis does not have to define the rest of their lives," he says.

Arthritis at Work

Marty, who is also CEO of the Hawaii Employers' Mutual Insurance Company (HEMIC), sees another side of arthritis—its impact in the workplace. Arthritis does not disappear at work. Employees may continue showing up every day while coping with pain, stiffness, fatigue and limitations that coworkers never see. Workplace understanding, reasonable accommodations and early treatment can help people remain productive and independent.

Arthritis@Work (arthritis.org/partnership/atwork) is a free AFH program that offers turnkey tools and resources as part of an existing corporate wellness program to support arthritic employees while reducing missed workdays, increasing productivity and lowering healthcare costs. That sense of understanding is central to AFH's mission.

"Those living with arthritis often feel isolated," Jennifer says. "When they discover there are others experiencing the same challenges, it can be incredibly empowering."

The foundation's work extends well beyond support groups. AFH advocates on behalf of patients at the local and national levels, helping promote access to medications, affordable healthcare and public policies that can improve quality of life. It provides educational resources, encourages physical activity, supports research and continues to challenge the stubborn misconception that arthritis is simply something people must accept as they grow older.

The Many Faces of Arthritis

Over 100 forms of arthritis have been identified. Osteoarthritis is the most common and is often associated with aging and wear and tear. Rheumatoid and psoriatic arthritis are autoimmune diseases in which the body attacks itself. Gout can strike without warning. Lupus can involve the joints. Fibromyalgia frequently accompanies chronic pain.

Arthritis doesn't care about your age, occupation, income or ZIP code. While conducting research for this article, I made an interesting discovery. Many people besides myself had stories to tell about their battle with arthritis, including nearly everyone at *Generations Magazine* (GM). In fact, in any group of people, you will find someone who has a story. This is no surprise: Arthritis affects millions of Americans and hundreds of thousands here in Hawai'i.

Perhaps that is why arthritis feels so universal. It doesn't care whether you're an artist or an accountant. It doesn't care if you spent your younger years running marathons or sitting behind a desk. It can settle into our joints and refuse to leave.



AN UNWELCOME TRIO: In my case, it took years to diagnose. Yes, it was arthritis—but what kind? Mine arrived in the form of psoriatic arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. So which treatments had a proven track record of helping people like me? Those answers would make all the difference in the world.

My arthritic condition affected my spine. The medical experts treating me took over a year to determine that I was a perfect candidate for titanium vertebrae replacements. I wasn't sure

I wanted to choose this option, but I also knew I didn't want to spend the rest of my life watching from the sidelines. So, I finally relented and agreed to spinal surgery, not once but twice! One surgery addressed my upper spine and neck, while the other focused on my lower spine near the tailbone. Recovery was rough going at first. There were difficult, frustrating days. But eventually, I came to appreciate the value of science.

I was placed on a carefully tailored regimen of biologic medications, supplemented by the occasional extra-strength acetaminophen, as needed for the occasional flare-ups. But, little by little, in a couple of months, something remarkable happened. I not only walked that hilly school campus and climbed up three levels of stairs where I taught, I also pulled a trolley full of books up each flight of steps. I had begun to feel resilient—like a modern-day bionic woman! Today, at 76, I'm happy to report that my golf game is in far worse shape than my arthritis.

GENETICS: There is something sobering about realizing that our bodies carry histories of their own. We inherit our mother's eyes, our father's smile and sometimes, our grandmother's troublesome knees.

GM publisher Cynthia Arnold, doesn't have arthritis, yet, but she expects to. "Arthritis is in my genes." At 47, Cynthia focuses on prevention.

AFH article: *The Emotion-Pain Connection*
tinyurl.com/AFH-TheEmotionPainConnection

Like many Generation Xers, she wonders what symptoms to watch for and what steps she can now take to preserve her mobility. She asks the questions many readers probably ask themselves: *Should I exercise more? Should I lose weight? Should I alter my diet? Are my stiff fingers in the morning something to worry about?*

Haley Burford, *GM* staff writer, shares similar concerns. Arthritis runs in her family as well. “All I can do is live in the here and now and take care of my health,”

Haley says. At 25, Haley represents the other end of the spectrum. Arthritis is not yet a daily reality, but rather a question mark lingering on the horizon. Chronic illness doesn’t just affect those who have it; it affects the people who love them and sometimes the generations that follow.

For many families, arthritis becomes part of the family narrative. We remember grandparents rubbing their hands. We remember parents declining invitations to go for a walk or lingering behind. We remember hearing “It’s going to rain tomorrow—I can feel it in my knees.” As children, we chuckled. As adults, we can now check the weather ourselves.

INJURY: Arthritis caused by an injury, known as post-traumatic arthritis, happens when physical trauma damages the cartilage or bone inside a joint. There is a certain wisdom that comes with aging. By our 70s, most of us understand that our bodies have been keeping score all along—every injury, every slip.

GM Webmaster Mahlon Moore, 75, discovered that orthopedic surgeons can be annoyingly accurate on occasion. Fifteen years after shattering his hip in a fall, his physician predicted arthritis would eventually arrive.

“Well, ‘older’ is here,” Mahlon says. “He was right.” Long walks he used to enjoy are now a thing of the past.



“If a parent or close relative has rheumatoid arthritis (RA)—a potentially disabling autoimmune disease—you may wonder if you will develop it, too. The answer is probably not. You can inherit a susceptibility to RA, but not the disease itself.”

AFH article: 11 Risk Factors for Rheumatoid Arthritis and What You Can Do about Them
tinyurl.com/AFH-FactorsRheumatoidArthritis

INEVITABILITY: Leigh Dicks, 71, *GM* content coordinator and book-keeper, never saw it coming. She had no family history of arthritis—no warning signs. But years of tennis and pickleball eventually resulted in osteoarthritis, cartilage loss, bone spurs and ultimately, a total hip replacement.

Ironically, many people with arthritis have spent their lives doing exactly what doctors have said to do—stay active! They ran, swam, played tennis and more. Yet, arthritis reminds us

that life is not always a meritocracy. Sometimes, despite our best efforts, things simply wear out.

As my own physician once implied, if we’re fortunate to live long enough, many of us will eventually experience some degree of arthritis.

SUPPLEMENTS: Mention joint pain in a room full of seniors and prepare yourself for an avalanche of recommendations. You’ll hear about supplements, turmeric, anti-inflammatory diets, creams, injections, compression socks, water aerobics, tai chi, acupuncture, yoga and more. Some approaches are backed by decades of scientific research. Others fall under the category of “Well, it worked for my cousin Kimo.”

Sherry Goya, *GM*’s community relations director, found unexpected relief. Following a meniscus tear and arthritis diagnosis, 73-year-old Sherry began taking an astaxanthin supplement. “I’ve had no pain for a few years when walking downstairs or playing tennis,” she says.

MANAGEMENT: And then there’s *GM* Art Director Wilson Angel, 66, who perhaps summarized concerns about arthritis best. “How do we keep it at bay as long as possible?” he asks. “And if we’ve already reached that stage of constant pain, how do we live with it?” That is the question. Perhaps, that’s the real story of arthritis. Not whether we can avoid it entirely, but how we manage and mitigate its effects when it arrives.

There is no single experience when it comes to arthritis. It can be inherited or acquired. It can arrive suddenly or gradually. It can be mild or debilitating. It’s both a 25-year-old worried about the future and a 76-year-old grateful to be able to walk.

If the staff of *Generations Magazine* is any indication, arthritis doesn’t get the final word. We may bend. We may creak. We may groan. But we’re still here.

New Reasons for Hope

Evidence of arthritis has been found in human remains dating back thousands of years, including Egyptian mummies and prehistoric skeletons. It seems arthritis has been walking beside humanity for a very long time. The difference today is that we have options—and hope.

Billions of dollars have been invested worldwide in arthritis research, treatments, medications and surgical advances. Today’s patients benefit from biologic medications, minimally invasive procedures and joint replacements.

Every year, scientists uncover new information about the causes of arthritis. New medications continue to emerge. Surgical techniques improve. Researchers move closer to understanding and perhaps one day curing many of these conditions. Until then, organizations like AFH continue helping people live fuller and healthier lives.

AFH is also a leading voice for patient rights, working to break down barriers in healthcare while advancing a bold scientific agenda designed to improve quality of life today and moving us closer to tomorrow’s breakthroughs.

In many ways, AFH represents the best of our island values: Neighbors helping neighbors, communities supporting one another and people refusing to let adversity have the last word.



“Regular physical activity keeps your joints lubricated, which makes movement easier. It also produces endorphins, which help control pain and improves your overall well-being and health.”

AFH article: Exercise: How Much Is Enough?
tinyurl.com/AFH-ExerciseHowMuchIsEnough

Pain & Perseverance: the Battle Continues

The room was filled with people eager to support AFH’s mission at a recent meeting. Many also shared their own experiences with arthritis. Their stories served as a reminder that behind the statistics are individuals facing very real concerns about mobility, independence and the future.

Noe Tupou, a professor at a local community college, spoke candidly about her own journey.

“I’m trying to learn every-

thing that I can about this disease. I’ve had it for years and worry that my condition will worsen.” But her willingness to become involved with AFH reflects an important part of its mission—bringing together people who can learn from, encourage and support one another.

Like Noe, many seniors living with arthritis made the decision early on to wage a personal war against the disease. For some, it has been a decades-long campaign. Their first line of defense was *knowledge*. They asked questions and stayed informed about the latest research and treatments. The second line of defense was *determination*. They refused to let arthritis dictate the terms of their lives. And the third was *perseverance*. They kept moving forward—sometimes slowly, sometimes painfully—but they never gave up, ensuring arthritis will not get the last word. ■



TERI PINNEY is a seasoned educator, grant consultant and professional writer with decades of experience in education and nonprofit leadership. She has been a teacher, assistant principal, college instructor, small business owner and grant administrator. A retired kupuna, she currently works as a clinical experience facilitator for Western Governors University, guiding future teachers in student teaching programs. Born and raised in Hawai‘i, Teri’s writing is rooted in professional insight and personal reflection.

HELP, HOPE & CONNECTION

Living with arthritis can sometimes feel isolating, but no one has to navigate the disease alone. The Arthritis Foundation Hawai'i (AFH), connects people living with arthritis and their families with education, support, resources and opportunities to become involved. Whether you were recently diagnosed or have lived with arthritis for decades, help is available.

ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION HELPLINE:
1-800-283-7800 | arthritis.org/helpline
Web chat: helpline@arthritis.org
(Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm ET)

The helpline offers one-on-one support and information from trained staff. It can help answer questions and point callers toward educational resources, online information and other tools for living with arthritis.

RESOURCES & EDUCATION:
arthritis.org/local-offices/hi

The Arthritis Foundation provides information and practical tools for people at every stage of the arthritis journey. Resources include educational materials, webinars, exercise information, pain-management resources and guidance for newly diagnosed individuals. AFH wants Hawai'i residents to know that these resources remain available, even when programs are offered virtually rather than locally.

EVENTS:
arthritis.org/local-offices/hi

♦ ***The Walk to Cure Arthritis*** (Honolulu) is held at Kapiolani Park. Registration for the April 17 event opens later in the year via the Arthritis Foundation Hawaii local office. AFH's major annual Hawai'i activities include the Walk to Cure Arthritis and its annual gala. AFH is recruiting volunteers for its Walk to Cure Arthritis on April 17, 2027. With limited local staffing and programs largely supported by volunteers, many additional educational and support opportunities are available virtually. AFH is currently seeking volunteers to assist with upcoming activities and events.



VOLUNTEER:
arthritis.org/volunteer

AFH needs volunteers. Volunteers can assist with community outreach, programs, fundraising and special events while helping support people throughout Hawai'i who live with arthritis. AFH offers opportunities ranging from local events and community outreach to Connect Group facilitation and leadership roles.

DONATE:
arthritis.org/ways-to-give

Donations and sponsorships help support research, education, advocacy, community programs and resources for people affected by arthritis. Individuals, businesses and organizations can make a meaningful difference by contributing locally and helping strengthen Hawai'i's arthritis community.

SPONSORSHIP/COMMUNITY PARTNERS

For local businesses looking for a meaningful way to give back to the community, becoming an AFH partner offers an opportunity to make a tangible difference in the lives of Hawai'i residents. You can become a corporate or individual sponsor for the Arthritis Foundation events by contacting Executive Director Jennifer Schack.

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Jennifer Schack, Executive Director,
Arthritis Foundation Hawai'i

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Rice, Poi & Diabetes: Find a Healthy Balance

by Ka'ahukane Leite-Ah Yo, MD – Internal Medicine, Kaiser Permanente Mapunapuna Medical Office

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

Living well with diabetes is not about being perfect. It's about doing the little things consistently and in partnership with a trusted health-care professional.

I have diabetes. Do I need to give up rice and the local foods I've eaten my whole life?

Managing diabetes is usually less about avoiding one particular food and more about understanding portions, carbohydrates and how you put meals together.

Think of carbohydrates as “tricklers” or “gushers.” Foods that release glucose into the bloodstream more gradually are the tricklers. They have more fiber or are carbohydrates eaten with protein and healthy fats that tend to be digested more slowly. Gusher foods send glucose into the bloodstream more quickly — especially highly refined carbohydrates, and sugary foods and drinks.

Both white and brown rice contain carbohydrates that can raise blood sugar. Brown rice has more fiber, so it acts more like a trickler. But that doesn't mean white rice is automatically off the table. Portion size matters and so does what you eat with it. Fatty meats and highly processed foods — especially those high in saturated fat — can also worsen insulin resistance, making it harder for the body to respond to insulin and manage blood sugar. A smaller serving of rice paired with fish, chicken or tofu and plenty of vegetables can produce a steadier rise in blood sugar than a large bowl of rice eaten on its own.

Poi, 'ulu and sweet potato also contain carbohydrates, so portions still matter, but they can be part of a balanced eating plan. For many people, the most sustainable approach isn't giving up local food. It's learning how to turn more meals from gushers into tricklers.



If I'm eating better and exercising, what else should I be doing to manage my diabetes?

Food and physical activity are essential, but they're only part of good diabetes care. Diabetes can affect the heart, kidneys, eyes, nerves and feet — sometimes before you notice any symptoms. Regular monitoring helps your care team identify concerns early and adjust your treatment before complications become more serious.

Start by knowing your A1C through a simple blood test that shows your average blood sugar level over the past three months. Testing helps you and your care team understand whether your treatment plan is working. It's also important to:

- **Take your medications as prescribed** and refill them before they run out. If you have side effects, concerns about cost or difficulty remembering doses, talk with your care team rather than stopping a medicine on your own.
- **Keep up with labs and screenings.** Blood and urine tests can identify early signs of kidney problems. Regular screenings can detect problems early, allowing treatment to begin sooner and help protect your health.
- **Know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers.** Managing them is an important part of protecting your heart, brain, kidneys and eyes.

Your individual goals and screening schedule may vary, so ask your care team what else you should be doing to protect your health. ■



Ka'ahukane Leite-Ah Yo, MD, is a board-certified internal medicine physician. He practices at the Kaiser Permanente Mapunapuna Medical Office and is a graduate of the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine. Dr. Leite-Ah Yo completed his internal medicine residency at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine and additional fellowship training at Oregon Health & Science University.

If you have a medical question for the doctor, email cynthia@generations808.com.

'Tis the Season for Healthy Smiles

by Dr. Vinh Tran, Dental Director, Hawaii Dental Service

With a few simple habits, you can enjoy the season while keeping your smile healthy.

Holiday sweets and snacks can be hard to resist. Eating them in moderation and as part of a meal when your mouth produces more saliva to help wash away food particles can help protect your teeth. Choose options such as fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese and nuts and drink plenty of water throughout the day.

During the busy holiday season, it can be very tempting to skip exercise. But staying active can help reduce stress and support your overall health. So take a brisk walk after a meal, try an online workout or do a few simple strength exercises at home. Even 10 minutes of movement can make a big difference.



Don't let the holidays disrupt your daily dental care. Continue brushing twice a day and flossing daily. If you have remaining funds in a flexible spending account, consider using them for eligible dental services before the end of the year.

If you had to cancel or reschedule a dental appointment, get back on track now. Regular dental visits help keep your smile healthy throughout the year. By making your oral health a priority, you can enjoy the holidays and give yourself a gift that lasts all year long. ■

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The Future Feels Different When You're Prepared!

There's a certain relief that comes from knowing you've thought ahead.

None of us knows exactly what growing older will look like. Our health needs may change, or we may require more help than expected. And some of the things we want, or need may not be covered by insurance.

Amazing Care Network helps members prepare before those questions become urgent — with education, care resources, professional connections, and a dedicated savings plan that can help build financial reserves for future needs.



Planning ahead isn't about expecting the worst. It's about protecting your independence and giving yourself more choices for whatever comes next.

How Will You Get Your Shave Ice?

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



A longevity expert from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology recently shared three simple questions with podcaster Mel Robbins that can help us think differently about aging and planning a fulfilling "care journey."

How will you get your shave ice?

This is really a question about independence and staying connected to the things you enjoy. For many older adults, giving up driving can make everyday activities more difficult. In-home care can provide transportation and support that helps maintain independence, connection and freedom.

What will you do on Tuesday at 10:30am?

Retirement can mean fewer routines and social interactions. Staying active, connected and engaged is important for emotional, physical and cognitive well-being. A caregiver can provide companionship, conversation and encouragement.

Who do you trust to change your light bulb?

Everyday tasks can become more challenging with age. Having someone you trust to help with household needs, personal care and unexpected situations can provide reassurance for seniors and their families while preserving dignity and independence.

Together, these questions remind us that planning for the future is about more than care. Planning for the future is about maintaining the routines, relationships, choices and simple pleasures that make life meaningful. ■

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Peer Exclusion at Assisted Living Facilities

by Todd Pang, Founder/President, Kupuna Care Pair

Unfortunately, peer exclusion at care facilities can happen to some lower-functioning seniors. It often stems from stigma, fear and misconceptions by higher-functioning residents. As a result, some lower-functioning residents will forego even meals in public if they feel unwelcome or that they can't keep up.

Generally, it's better for seniors to feel like a big fish in a small pond rather than a small fish in a big pond. So, to help prevent peer exclusion, first choose an appropriately-sized care setting that matches physical and cognitive abilities.

Larger facilities generally cater to residents who can still ambulate, socialize, converse, feed themselves and conduct their own activities of daily living (ADLs). Smaller facilities with more caregivers per resident can accommodate lower-ability residents who need assistance with ADLs and/or those who may get confused at times.

Next, caregiver support and group activities are the best opportunities to bridge a gap between seniors with differing abilities and cognitive conditions.

Caregivers and activity aides can facilitate inclusive interactions and provide well-designed group activities that level the playing field, so residents can still enjoy each other's company without focusing on that ability gap. ■



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Personality Shifts Can Be a Medical Matter

by Vicki Boswell, BA in Psychology, MSW, former mobile crisis worker & hospice respite care volunteer

In Hawai'i, caring for our kūpuna is often an 'ohana responsibility. We know their stories, habits, humor and, yes, sometimes their stubborn ways. We know who likes to talk story and who would rather sit quietly and listen. After years—or a lifetime—of knowing someone, we know exactly who they are. And that knowledge can be more important than we realize.

Although we continue to grow and change throughout life, research shows that our basic personality tends to become quite stable in adulthood. A large 2022 review published in the American Psychological Association's Psychological Bulletin examined 189 long-term studies involving more than 178,000 people and found substantial stability in adult personality traits. So when someone you have known for years suddenly seems like a different person, it is worth paying attention.

Maybe your easygoing uncle suddenly becomes angry over little things. A normally social aunty stops wanting visitors. Mom becomes unusually suspicious or fearful. Dad begins saying or doing things completely out of character. Our first reaction might be, "Well, they're getting old." But don't be too quick to accept that explanation.

A noticeable change in personality or behavior can sometimes signal a health problem. Medication changes, infection, dehydration, pain, poor sleep, depression, cognitive changes and other medical conditions can affect how a person behaves. Some causes may be temporary or treatable.



The National Institute on Aging advises that sudden or rapidly changing behavior—especially following an infection or medication change—should be brought to a doctor's attention. It also encourages caregivers to keep track of changes because those observations can help health-care providers recognize patterns and possible causes.

You don't need to figure out what is wrong. That's the job of the healthcare provider. Your job is to notice, remember and speak up. And this is where 'ohana and caregivers have a special strength. A doctor may know medicine, but you know your kupuna. You may have 30, 40 or 60 years of history with that person. Don't underestimate the importance of what you know.

When you have a concern, be specific. Instead of saying, "Mom isn't herself," explain what has changed and when you first noticed it. Mention recent illnesses, falls or medication changes. Write things down before an appointment so you don't forget. Most importantly, don't be afraid to respectfully advocate. If something truly isn't right, keep asking questions.

Mālama isn't only cooking a meal, providing transportation or helping with medications. Sometimes caring for our kūpuna means being their eyes, ears and voice when they need us most.

You know them. Trust what you know. Sometimes the most important information we can give a doctor is simply "This isn't like them." ■

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Hawai'i Circle of Care for Dementia

by Diane Terada, Division Administrator, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), a private, nonprofit social service organization, has been helping people in need, regardless of their faith, since 1947. CCH provides an array of in-home and community-based services for seniors, including transportation, senior center programming, case management and benefits assistance.

Our Hawai'i Circle of Care for Dementia provides dementia caregiver presentations (virtual and in-person), one-to-one caregiver support (REACH Community) and some case management services for persons living alone with dementia.

CCH also provides the following:

• **IDEA!**: a free presentation for caregiver groups, churches and other organizations that teaches the basics about working with persons with dementia.



• **SHARE**: an evidence-based intervention that matches a dyad (a person at an early stage of dementia plus a care partner/caregiver) with a certified counselor to plan for the future.

• **EARLY STAGE SUPPORT GROUP**: for those who have received a recent dementia diagnosis or are experiencing early dementia symptoms.

• **WEBINARS**: for caregivers needing help to understand and cope with behavioral issues.

For more information, visit catholiccharitieshawaii.org/hawaii-circle-of-care-for-dementia. ■

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Understanding Hospice

by Dan Haire, President & CEO, Navian Hawaii

The word “hospice” can feel intimidating. Family members may worry it means giving up hope or that it is only appropriate during the final days of life. In reality, hospice is about helping people live as comfortably and meaningfully as possible when facing a life-limiting illness.



Hospice focuses on comfort, dignity and quality of life. It provides specialized care to manage pain and symptoms while offering emotional, spiritual and practical support for both patients and their loved ones. The goal is not to hasten or delay the natural course of an illness, but rather to help individuals make the most of the time they have.

Hospice care is often provided in the comfort of home. Whether a person lives in a private residence, senior living community or care facility,

hospice teams work alongside families to provide guidance, support and peace of mind. In addition to helping patients remain comfortable, care teams offer education, counseling and bereavement support to loved ones before and after a loss.

Early access to hospice can provide additional support, reduce stress and allow more time to focus on what matters most.

Understanding what hospice truly offers can help families make informed decisions and approach the future with greater confidence. ■

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The holidays bring everyone together. Before the year ends, have conversations with your family about the future of your home and legacy.

Most family problems don’t start with bad intentions. They start with “later.”

“We’ll talk about the house later.” “We’ll figure out Mom and Dad’s plans later.” “We’ll decide when the time comes.” But sometimes the time comes sooner than expected—a health change, an unexpected move, or a loss in the family. Suddenly, decisions about the home have to be made when emotions are high and time is short. The holidays give families something they may not get often: time together. You don’t need to solve everything around the dinner table. Starting the conversation now can help everyone understand what matters most, what Mom and Dad want, and what options are available—before a difficult situation makes those decisions for you.

Planning early allows you to:

- Share your wishes so your family does not have to guess
- Talk through what should happen to the family home
- Understand your options before a decision becomes urgent
- Give everyone more time to prepare and plan together

Here’s how we can help: Every family’s situation is different. We help families understand their real estate options and create a plan around what matters most. Whether that means staying, downsizing, selling, or transferring property, our role is to help you ask the right questions, understand your choices, and move forward with confidence.

Bonus Tool: Our book, *Property Decisions*, was created as a practical guide to help families start planning with confidence. It provides a simple structure for important conversations before urgency arises, helping families move toward clarity and peace of mind.

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by Maui Food Bank

Food security is about more than having enough to eat. It is about having consistent access to fresh, nutritious food that supports the health and well-being of our community—from keiki to kūpuna—and helps families thrive. Through its Fresh 4 All and Go Fresh initiatives, the Maui Food Bank connects local agriculture with community needs while making healthy food more accessible.

Fresh 4 All addresses a major barrier to healthy eating: affordable access to fresh produce. Maui Food Bank purchases and collects donated fruits and vegetables from 30 local farmers, plus wholesalers and farmers markets, then distributes them to neighbors in need. These direct connections support Maui's agricultural economy while helping families obtain high-quality, locally sourced food.

Fresh 4 All also reflects a broader commitment to building a stronger local food system. When Maui farmers have additional opportunities to share their harvests, the community benefits twice—farmers gain support and families gain access to nutritious options that might otherwise remain out of reach. The initiative helps ensure that fresh produce becomes a regular part of food assistance rather than a rare resource.

The Go Fresh initiative expands this mission by delivering fresh food directly to families and seniors through convenient community distribution points. Through Go Fresh 'Ohana Drops, Maui



Food Bank provides nutritious food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, to over 1,300 residents monthly experiencing food insecurity. The program also supports our kūpuna through the Senior Mobile Pantry, which delivers supplemental food resources and fresh produce to over 1,600 older adults throughout Maui County.

These programs allow Maui Food Bank to address hunger while promoting health and dignity. Instead of focusing only on emergency food supplies, Fresh 4 All and Go Fresh help families access foods that support long-term wellness. The initiatives recognize that ending hunger requires more than providing calories—it requires providing nourishing choices that help people thrive.

Maui Food Bank continues to rely on partnerships with farmers, volunteers, donors and community organizations to expand its impact. Through programs like Fresh 4 All and Go Fresh, the organization creates a stronger connection between Maui's agricultural resources and the people who need them most. Together, these efforts are building a more resilient Maui Nui where every resident can access safe, healthy and nutritious food. ■

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Aging in Place Doesn't Mean Aging Alone

by Skye Morrison, LSW, President, Mālama Village Hawai'i

Many kūpuna find that aging at home can become increasingly difficult. Transportation becomes a challenge. Technology feels overwhelming. Friends move away or pass on. Sometimes the greatest challenge isn't a lack of help—it's a lack of connection.

Mālama Village was created to address exactly these concerns. Members connect through a robust calendar of social gatherings and events. Both members and community volunteers offer assistance with transportation, technology support and practical help at home. Some members receive help. Others offer help. Most do both.

Aging brings challenges, but rather than focus on what we lose as we age, Mālama Village focuses on what we have to offer one another. Each



member brings a lifetime of experience, wisdom, talents and gifts to the community. Come discover how a village works—and how it might enhance your life, because aging in place doesn't have to mean aging alone.

Learn more at one of Mālama Village's upcoming orientation sessions. Sessions take place every third Tuesday of each month from 3:30 to 4:15pm. ■

MĀLAMA VILLAGE HAWAII (nonprofit)
Mālama Village is a nonprofit charitable organization that operates as a volunteer-powered, intergenerational community network.
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SSA Benefits Toolkits Explained

by Jane Burigsay, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist, Hawai'i

Losing a spouse is difficult emotionally and financially. The Social Security Administration (SSA) can help during this time. When your spouse passes away, you may be able to get benefits as a surviving spouse — even if you're divorced.

You may be eligible for survivor benefits if:

- You are age 60 or older (or 50-plus, if disabled).
- You are caring for your deceased spouse's child under 16 or with a disability.
- Children and some divorced spouses may also qualify.
- Working and benefits: You can work and receive survivor benefits, but earnings limits apply if you're under full retirement age.

How much can you get as a surviving spouse?

Survivor benefits range from 71.5% to 100% of your spouse's benefit, depending on your age when you apply. When your spouse dies, we recommend you call SSA right away at **1-800-772-1213** about our \$255 lump sum death payment. You'll also want to discuss monthly benefits for you and your family.

Call us to apply for benefits:

You can apply for both the lump sum death payment and monthly benefits at the same time by calling **1-800-772-1213**. You cannot apply for survivor benefits online. If you already receive spouse benefits, you'll be automatically converted



to survivor benefits, but you should still call us for the lump sum payment.

If your former spouse dies...

You may qualify as a surviving divorced spouse if:

- You were married at least 10 years, even if your spouse remarried.
- You are at least age 60 (or 50, if disabled).
- You are single, unless your remarriage occurred after age 60.

You must also keep in mind:

- You may be able to work and get survivor benefits. It depends on your age and how much you're earning. If you're younger than full retirement age, you're subject to an earnings limit.
- If you already receive retirement or disability benefits on your own work record, you may be due survivor benefits if they're greater than your own. You won't receive both — you'll get the higher amount.

Check out our Survivors Benefits publication and page at ssa.gov/survivor.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10084.pdf. Call SSA if you have questions or to schedule an appointment for yourself or a child. Share this information with your family, friends and on social media. ■

For more information on SSA benefits, including who is eligible and how to apply, visit ssa.gov/benefits. To make an appointment, call between 7am and 5pm, Mon–Fri: **1-800-772-1213** | socialsecurity.gov

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Did you take care of your parents and wonder who will take care of you?
Caregiving will be the biggest financial and social crisis we will face this century.
Come Learn the options to pay for your own Long-Term Care.

Personal savings/assets

Paying out-of-pocket ("self-funding") using savings, investments, or home equity (via a reverse mortgage or home sale).

Long-term care insurance

Dedicated policies covering nursing homes, assisted living, or in-home care; premiums rise with age, so earlier purchase is cheaper.

Hybrid life/LTC policies

Life insurance with a long-term care rider, offering a payout for care or a death benefit if unused.

Medicaid

Covers long-term care for those meeting strict income/asset limits, often after "spending down" assets.

Medicare

Covers only limited, short-term skilled care, not custodial long-term care.

Veterans' benefits

Programs like Aid and Attendance for eligible veterans. I'm not a financial advisor, so it's worth discussing your specific situation with a licensed professional. Want me to go deeper on any of these?

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Include Healthcare in Your Estate Plan

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

Estate planning is often thought of as something that takes effect after you're gone, but it can also play an important role in preparing for potential healthcare needs during your lifetime. If you become unable to make decisions for yourself or require long-term care, a thoughtful plan can help ensure your wishes are honored while helping preserve your financial stability and support the people who matter most to you. A financial advisor can work alongside your estate planning team to help align financial and healthcare considerations. The following steps can help guide the process.

■ Document your healthcare wishes.

An advance healthcare directive, sometimes called a living will, outlines your preferences for medical treatment if you are unable to communicate them yourself. It can clarify the types of care you do or do not want in certain situations, helping reduce uncertainty for loved ones during difficult moments. Because requirements vary by state, it is important to work with an attorney to ensure your document is valid and complete, including a HIPAA authorization. Keeping copies accessible and sharing them with key people in your life can help ensure your wishes are followed when they matter most.

■ **Appoint trusted decision-makers.** Naming a healthcare proxy and a durable power of attorney are essential steps in preparing for the unexpected. A healthcare proxy authorizes someone you trust to make medical decisions on your behalf if needed, while a durable power of attorney allows a designated individual to manage financial matters during periods of incapacity. These roles carry significant responsibility, so it is important to choose individuals who understand your values, can navigate complex decisions and are willing to act in your best interest. Naming alternates can provide additional continuity if circumstances change.

■ Plan for potential long-term care needs.

As life expectancy increases, so does the likelihood of needing extended care later in life.

Whether care is provided at home or in a facility, costs can be substantial.

Evaluating how these expenses might be covered—through personal savings, family support or insurance solutions—can help reduce financial strain. Options such as long-term care insurance or life insurance with care-related benefits may help manage risk while preserving assets intended for future goals or legacy planning.

■ **Prepare thoughtfully for what lies ahead.** Addressing healthcare concerns is not about expecting the worst, but about creating clarity, dignity and support in uncertain moments. With a well-structured plan in place, it becomes easier to navigate health-related challenges with greater confidence, knowing that both your wishes and your financial well-being have been considered. A financial advisor can help bring these elements together into a coordinated plan that supports you and your loved ones over time. ■

MICHAEL W. K. YEE, CFP®, CFS®, CLTC, CRPC®
1585 Kapiolani Blvd., Ste. 1100, Honolulu, HI 96814
808-952-1240 | michael.w.yee@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/michael.w.yee

Michael W. K. Yee, CFP®, CFS®, CLTC®, CRPC™, is a Private Wealth Advisor/Financial Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services LLC in Honolulu, Hawai'i. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 42 years.

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Late-Life Decision-Making

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

Ideally, families should work toward a shared decision that all members can reasonably accept, even if it reflects only partial rather than unanimous agreement. Once such a decision is reached, siblings are best served by committing fully to the chosen course of care and presenting a unified front. This approach acknowledges the realities of late-life decision-making, respects the legal authority of the Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare (DPAHC) and strengthens family cohesion by shifting the focus from debating alternatives to supporting one another in implementing the plan.

Even with good faith efforts at collaboration, disagreements may arise as families confront the complex medical, ethical and practical questions surrounding an aging parent's care. If a



family reaches an impasse they cannot resolve internally, external support can be constructive. Professional mediation services — such as the Mediation Center of the Pacific in Hawai'i — provide trained, neutral facilitators who help families at an affordable cost. Mediators can assist in clarifying values, improving communication and guiding families toward mutually acceptable decisions without escalating conflict. Seeking assistance is a pragmatic and compassionate step toward managing end-of-life choices while preserving long-term sibling relationships. ■

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- Local senior centers & community associations, especially in areas with large kupuna populations
- Partnerships with elder law attorneys & financial planners, realtors and insurance agents
- Hawai'i publications — Honolulu Star-Advertiser & Generations Magazine
- Community events with AARP Hawai'i & county Area Agencies on Aging

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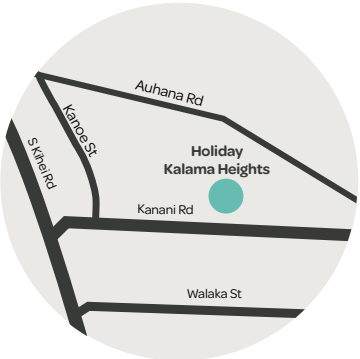
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