



KAUAI RSVP KONNECTION

Summer 2021

Kauai RSVP
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Photo above: Gerald Ako & Bill Arakaki assemble bags to honor frontline workers

Photo below: Shirley Akita, Tere & Robert Inouye & Kay Matsuwaki at Lihue Salvation Army



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AmeriCorps
Seniors

From the Director's Desk

Aloha Kauai RSVP ohana!

What a whirlwind of a year. The last fifteen months has literally taken us on a rollercoaster ride but, Kauai RSVP (KRSVP) remains steadfast. From our island home being at a complete standstill last March, to bustling activity as keiki enjoy summer break and visitors return to the island; whatever the case, KRSVP keeps our community, especially our volunteers, at heart.

KRSVP volunteers engaged in service activities positively impacting our community in countless ways, from handwriting holiday cards for long term care residents to delivering fresh produce and food to seniors in need. Thank you for sharing your aloha spirit and being pillars of strength through challenges.

Though some of you remain out of sight due to COVID-19, you are never out of our minds. Let us re-connect through our newsletter. Enjoy browsing through the first issue of "Kauai RSVP Konnection", highlighting some activities that took place in the last year, as well as a sprinkling of photos from the past.

With gratitude,

Donna Lynn Loo



Active Volunteer Stations

AARP Tax Aides

CTY OF KAUAI -Agency On Elderly Affairs

CTY OF KAUAI- Dept. of Motor Vehicles

EXEC OFFICE ON AGING - SR Medicare Patrol

EXEC OFFICE ON AGING - SHIP

HANAPEPE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

HAWAII FOOD BANK – KAUAI BRANCH

SALVATION ARMY - LIHUE & HANAPEPE

KAPAA MISSIONARY CHURCH

KAPAA PUBLIC LIBRARY

KAUAI ADULT DAY HEALTH CENTER

KAUAI COMMUNITY COLLEGE

KAUAI HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

KAUAI INDEPENDENT FOOD BANK

KAUAI MUSEUM

LIHUE LUTHERN CHURCH

LOAVES & FISHES/ St. Michael and All Angels
Episcopal Church

MAKAUWAHI CAVE

MALAMA KAUAI

NATIONAL TROPICAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

NOURISH KAUAI

PROJECT VISION HAWAII

***some stations have remote volunteers or
offer contactless volunteer activities***

**More NEW volunteer
opportunities! To volunteer or
enlist volunteers at your
organization
CALL 241-4479**

**We are not
aging, we are
ripening to
perfection.**

Kauai RSVP Members Enjoy the Benefits of Volunteering

Submitted by Alan Momohara



Marjorie &
Lucy Works—
Bell Ringing

Kauai RSVP volunteers see the positive effects of volunteering on their mental health and well-being. These are the findings of a recent survey conducted by the Kauai RSVP where 268 volunteers responded for a response rate of 73.6 percent.

Volunteering can provide the senior a sense of purpose and accomplishment. 94.4 % of the Kauai RSVP volunteers responding to the survey agreed that volunteering allowed them to share their experiences and talents. 88.1 % agreed that

they were learning new skills and developing their talents. And 93.7 % of the Kauai RSVP respondents agreed that volunteering enabled them to help other people and/or the community.

On their survey, one volunteer commented that “I have a sense of accomplishment and feel I am giving back to my community by volunteering. Volunteering gives me a sense of pride.” Another said “(v)olunteer(ing) makes me feel useful. I get a great deal of satisfaction out of volunteering.” “I volunteer because I want to serve the community” was a comment by another volunteer reflecting that volunteering with Kauai RSVP gave him/her a sense of purpose. Another said, “I find that volunteering helps keep the brain active, which can positively affect the volunteer’s mental health. 89.4 % of the survey responses agreed that volunteering made them feel good by keeping them active and their brain healthy. 95.3 % agreed that volunteering with the Kauai RSVP helped them have a more positive attitude.

Many elderly individuals can feel isolated and depressed. Volunteering can reduce loneliness and rates of depression and can give the volunteer a greater sense of well-being. 92.2 % of the responding volunteers agreed that volunteering helped them to not feel lonely. In addition, 94.8 % agreed that volunteering helped them meet new people and make more friends.

Kauai RSVP gratefully acknowledges the role of workstation managers, supervisors, and staff in creating positive work environments and experiences for Kauai RSVP volunteers. The benefits received by our volunteers could not have happened without them.

How Many of These Do you Remember?





Kauai RSVP in the News & On the Move!

MAHALO Dennis Fujimoto of the Garden Island Newspaper for capturing these special moments of our AmeriCorps Senior RSVP members in action!

Kauai RSVP honors frontline workers

By Dennis Fujimoto The Garden Island | Saturday, September 5, 2020, 12:05 a.m.

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Kauai RSVP continues island-wide recognition of volunteerism

By Dennis Fujimoto The Garden Island | Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 12:05 a.m.

Share this story [f](#) [t](#) [e](#)



A drive-thru mahalo for RSVP volunteers

By Dennis Fujimoto The Garden Island | Sunday, December 13, 2020, 12:05 a.m.

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RSVP volunteers delivery kupuna produce

By Dennis Fujimoto The Garden Island | Friday, June 26, 2020, 12:05 a.m.

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RSVP Advisory Council delivers gifts to frontline workers

By Dennis Fujimoto The Garden Island | Thursday, September 17, 2020, 12:05 a.m.

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Meet Our Volunteer - Guy Ambrose: Who's that Guy?

Submitted by Alan Momohara

Guy Ambrose volunteers at the Kauai Habitat for Humanity's ReStore in Hanapepe on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. He starts up the ReStore's medium size box truck and by 8 am, he and one or two ReStore employees are ready to go. Their job is to pick-up unwanted furniture and household items including sofas, loveseats, sleeper sofas, dining room sets, all sizes of beds, armoires, patio furniture, kitchen appliances and much more. In some cases, donated items can weigh hundreds of pounds and must be moved from the second or third floor of a residence using only hand trucks, dollies, pads, straps, and shear muscle power.

Sounds like a job for a young person in good physical condition.

Guy, an RSVP volunteer, is 80 years old and has been performing these duties for eight years. One of Guy's co-workers at the ReStore told him that he was the strongest 80-year-old he knows. Guy's physical strength is not the only thing people who work with him notice. Guy is a thinker and can figure out a way to get anything out of a residence and into the truck without causing damage to the item moved or the residence. He studies the situation and comes up with a plan given what equipment he has and the number of people working with him. Guy said he has never been unable to move an item from a residence to the truck. When asked what he liked about his volunteer job, Guy said it's the people. "They are super nice."

Nine years ago, Guy and his wife Sandy moved to Kauai from Scottsdale Arizona. They visited Kauai prior to his retirement, and knew that Kauai was their retirement home. He worked for Trans World Airlines (TWA) in Chicago and Phoenix. When TWA filed for bankruptcy for the third and final time in 2001, Guy went to work for United Blood Services.

Guy's boss Jeff Iida, ReStore Manager said, "Guy is one of a kind" and he is "always willing to do more when asked, a great asset to the ReStore." Chelsea Crapser, Kauai Habitat for Humanity's Volunteer Program Manager said Guy "fills a very important role within our organization and he does his job without complaint." She added that Guy "is a great asset to our team and him and his wife Sandy have become like family."

Guy is an example of the amazing people who are RSVP volunteers.

Did you know

Physical activity is an immune system booster. The more you move, the more your body is able to fight inflammation and infections.

The activity doesn't have to be strenuous. It's important for you not to overdo it. Low impact activities are effective too.

It is recommended that seniors exercise 150 minutes a week, or 20—30 minutes a day.

Volunteers Wanted

The Kauai Habitat For Humanity's ReStore is looking for a variety of volunteers to help with store operations. Volunteers are needed to sort, label, and stock previously worn clothing and other items sold in their store, and/or can serve as cashiers. Also needed are volunteers who can assist in picking up donations from residents and businesses, and who can repair and refinish furniture. Ideally, volunteers would be available for 12-15 hours a week with flexible schedules. If interested, please contact Chelsea Crapser at Chelsea@kauaihabitat.org or visit their website at www.kauaihabitat.org.



RSVP Volunteers Recognized as Outstanding Older Americans

Submitted by Alan Momohara

May is Older Americans Month, each year, the Agency on Elderly Affairs recognizes adults 65 years and older who have made exceptional contributions to their communities. Seven individuals were recognized including Shirley Akita, Brian Kasperek, Anita Aquino, and Leonora Lizama who are RSVP volunteers. Due to Covid-19, a drive-thru ceremony was held at the Līhu‘e Civic Center’s Pi‘ikoi Building Porte Cochere where nominees were presented with certificates, lei, and custom-made awards.

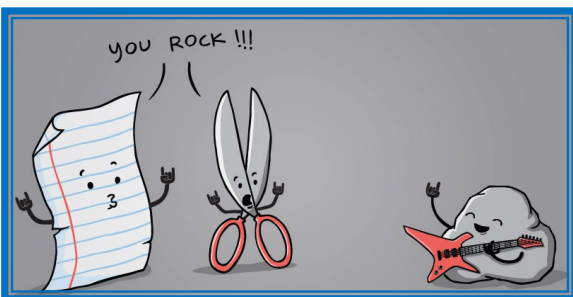
Shirley Akita has been involved in community activities, both professionally and personally, for much of her life. She has also been a Board Member and volunteer for the Kauai RSVP since 1996. Shirley has been a Hospitality volunteer with Immaculate Conception Church since 2017, is a bell ringer with the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Christmas Campaign, and has been volunteering with the Wilcox Hospital Gift Shop since 2012. In 2016, Shirley was named a Living Legend by Kauai Museum. Nominated by Wilma Chandler, Kauai RSVP Advisory Board.

Brian Kasperek has volunteered with the AARP Tax Aide Program, providing tax preparation services to the elderly and low-income residents of Kauai for 18 years, and is now the Local Program Coordinator. He has been a Red Cross volunteer since 2014 and has acted as shelter manager during times when emergency shelters were opened in Kalaheo and Koloa for events such as fires, floods, and preparing for hurricanes. In 2016 Brian was recognized by the American Red Cross of Hawaii as Kauai Volunteer of the Year. Nominated by Coleen Kasperek, AARP Tax Aide.

Anita Aquino is extremely busy with her volunteer activities. For 17 years she volunteered with the Kauai Government Employees Federal Credit Union while simultaneously serving as a Board Member. She also volunteers with Kauai Economic Opportunity, Inc., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and is an active member of the Lihue Senior Center for several years, holding office and participating in the Kokua Craft group. Nominated by Aida Shen, Kauai Economic Opportunity

Leonora Lizama’s volunteer activities have primarily focused on youth. She has volunteered as a Foster Grandparent at King Kaumuali’i Elementary School for the past ten years. She provides one on one assistance to the children, enhancing their educational and social skills. This past year Leonora began volunteering with students in special education classes as well. She has also volunteered with the Kauai Discovery Center for the past few years, conducting one on one youth activities. Nominated by Anne Miyamoto, Foster Grandparents.

Kauai RSVP congratulates Shirley, Brian, Anita, and Leonora for being recognized as Outstanding Older Americans in 2021. We are excited about working with these dedicated and talented individuals in the future.



OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH: MAY 2021



Kauai's Outstanding Older Americans



Russell Maeda



Crescencia Labuguen



Dimples Kano



Leonora Lizama



Anita Aquino



Shirley Akita



Brian Kasperek



Sponsored by the County of Kauai
Office of the Mayor
Agency on Elderly Affairs





Meet Our Volunteer Station - AARP Tax-Aide Program: “Covid Didn’t Stop Us”

Submitted by Alan Momohara



The 2020 tax season began as it had for the previous 16 years for the Kauai American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Tax-Aide Program under the direction of Brian and Coleen Kasperek. A team which included over a dozen RSVP volunteers were steadfastly preparing Federal and State tax returns for Kauai residents in Lihue, Koloa, Hanapepe, Kaunakani, Kekaha and Kilauea. Then in mid-March, Federal and State tax return preparation efforts by AARP volunteers abruptly ended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As the 2021 tax season approached, Coleen, District (Kauai) Coordinator for the AARP Tax-Aide Program in Hawaii, and Brian, Local Program Coordinator, put together a proposal for preparing tax returns on Kauai given anticipated Covid restrictions. They did not want to let down the hundreds of Kauai residents who depended on them for financial advice and to do their tax returns. The approved proposal included limited contact with clients, who would remain in their vehicles or outside of the facility where returns were being prepared. Also, masks were always worn by clients and volunteers.

The Kaspereks have managed the Tax-Aide Program on Kauai for 18 years with a large contingent of volunteers, most of whom are RSVP volunteers. Both Brian and Coleen, RSVP volunteers and other volunteers serve as client facilitators and counselors. Because of Covid-19, RSVP volunteers working the 2021 tax season was 9, down 5 from the previous year. Despite the reduced number of volunteers, the Program managed to complete approximately 450 returns during 25 sessions, saving their clients thousands of dollars in potential tax preparation fees. While the program will do returns for almost anyone coming to them, most clients are low-income seniors. Coleen said while other local free tax preparation programs opted not to do returns this year, “Covid didn’t stop us.”

Coleen and Brian manage the Tax-Aide Program as a service to the community. While preparing tax returns are their primary focus, volunteers also find themselves assisting clients deal with the complications of finances in general. Coleen finds that so many people, particularly seniors, are not knowledgeable about finances. For example, some seniors with IRAs, are not aware of required minimum distributions when they reach a certain age. Also, many seniors who receive only Social Security don’t file tax returns. Consequently, they don’t receive the \$110 Hawaii refundable food/excise tax credit which can mean a lot to someone whose income is only Social Security.

Coleen and Brian agree that what motivates them to keep the Tax-Aide Program in operation is the gratitude received from their clients. Brian said “I wouldn’t do this if I got paid. Our pay is the thankfulness of the people we prepare tax returns for.” Coleen remarked that “we see the results of what we do almost immediately.” Other volunteers would agree. While they see new clients every year, many are regulars. They “trust” the Kaspereks or other volunteers to take care of their taxes. At times, clients recognize them in public. Coleen recalled that, as she was boarding a plane at the Honolulu Airport, one of her clients shouting, “there’s my tax lady.”

The Kauai RSVP is privileged to be able to help the AARP Tax-Aide Program provide such a valuable service to the residents of Kauai in general, and more specifically low and moderate income kupuna.

Don’t Miss Out

If your only source of income is social security and you don’t file Federal or State income tax returns, you may be missing out on a \$110 Hawaii refundable food/excise tax credit. Hawaii imposes a general excise tax on nearly everything including food. This tax imposes a greater burden on low- and middle-income residents because food is so expensive to begin with. Hawaii provides some relief to these residents in the form of a tax credit. However, you must file a State income tax return in order to receive it. The AARP Tax-Aide program on Kauai may be able to help you get this tax credit. Usually from early February to early April each year, the program assists individuals prepare their tax returns. Look for announcements beginning in January with dates, times, and locations where assistance is available.

Why be a Kauai RSVP Volunteer?

People ask why they should be a Kauai RSVP (KRSVP) when most KRSVP volunteer opportunities are placed in other organizations/volunteer stations. KRSVP offers several benefits that most volunteer stations don’t. KRSVP volunteers can receive placement services matching her/his skills with the needs of a volunteer station. Volunteers receive accident and personal liability insurance and supplemental auto liability insurance when driving his/her car for volunteer activities, at no cost to the volunteer and may qualify for mileage reimbursement. KRSVP volunteers also receive our quarterly newsletter, Kauai RSVP Konnection containing information about program happenings and senior issues. Volunteers are invited to an annual recognition ceremony to recognize their contributions to their communities. These KRSVP benefits help enhance the overall benefits of volunteer service.



**Edwin & Georgene Yamada—
National Tropical Botanical Gardens**



**Wanda Evans -
Produce delivery**



**Art & Carol Hernandez
produce delivery**



Caregiving and Volunteerism - A Springboard for Self-Fulfillment

Written by Winifred Tamura-Lis, PhD, MSN, CQT, BA, RN-BC



Caregiving of a parent may be one of the greatest challenges for our generation. Baby boomers, such as myself and my cohorts, are faced with more challenges and choices not encountered by previous generations when roles and tasks may have been more clearly defined. An important factor to consider in today's society is that women have different opportunities open to them regarding roles related to personal success and self-satisfaction. Nevertheless, the reality of caring for family members, including elders, frequently

falls on the shoulders of the woman of the house, regardless of her other responsibilities.

Our family was no different when we asked, "What can we do for Dad?" My siblings had active careers as physicians, so after a career in science research, teaching and nursing, I returned to Kauai in 2013 to help with the care of my father who was then 96 years old. Fortunately, he was of sound mind and still physically independent. I was very lucky. As a certified gerontological nurse, caring for an older adult should have been straightforward. However, nothing really prepares you for the unique role reversal of caring for someone who previously "took care" of you. Nor is one prepared for the unique personality of the "caregivee," when it's your parent!

First, we want to provide the best physical care for our elder - Is he eating a balanced diet, moving well and walking okay? Bathing and dressing himself and grooming with good oral care? Is she sleeping well at night, and using the toilet without problems? We can help with shopping, cooking, preparing meals, housework, laundry, chauffeuring, and managing finances. Getting regular doctor visits and social interactions are essential for optimal health. Additionally, the caregiver should take good care of him/herself.

Upon my return, I realized Dad had a routine which included traveling with the Kauai Bus to Lihue to visit friends. He helped with the KEO meal service for the Kilauea senior group. He made bracelets of Hawaiian woods that he sold and donated for fundraising. A vegetable garden, yard work, and fruit trees also kept him busy. Once I entered into his daily life, he discontinued his handcraft hobbies and did less volunteering but came along when I started to do volunteering of my own.

We were fortunate to engage with volunteer organizations that were welcoming when Dad "tagged along". We are eternally grateful to the Retired Senior and Volunteer Program (RSVP), Kauai County Parks and Recreation, Kauai Medical Reserve Corps, Community Emergency Response Team, and Tai Chi for Arthritis pro-



grams for enabling us both to join in their activities as well as make new friends. Additionally, these organizations have resources and services which can help with everyday caregiving and communication.

Volunteering kept Dad busy, engaged, and actively interacting with others. He was an RSVP Volunteer for many years, was honored with being a "Living Treasure" in 2016 and 2017, and celebrated 30 years of RSVP volunteer service in 2018. It all kept him interested in life at least until March of 2019, when he passed away two weeks shy of his 102nd birthday. He has left a legacy of volunteerism and caring with his children, his friends, and his community.

Mahalo nui to organizations such as RSVP for providing opportunities where older adults can use life experiences, skills and energy to assist in the workings of our community. It is such a blessing for older adults to maintain the dignity and self-respect each deserves with the chance for the best Quality of Life.

5 Ways to Care For Yourself If You Are A Caregiver

Excerpt from Harvard Health Blog—Self-care for the caregiver October 17, 2018

1. Self-compassion is essential to self-care.
2. Practice simple breath awareness for 10 minutes a day.
3. Try a mind-body practice like yoga, tai chi, meditation, and deep relaxation techniques.
4. Make eating well & getting quality sleep priorities.
5. Remain socially connected. Find support through local caregiver support groups.

Click [HERE](#) to read the entire article

MORE SELF CARE with Dr. P's Pods - Facets of Life . Dr. Dennis Pezzato, Behavioral Specialist, has donated his time and talent to share his "Dr. P's Pods - Facets of Life" series of recordings with the intention of enhancing everyone's coping skills and learning a deeper Attitude of Gratitude. Affectionately known as Dr. P., he is an RSVP volunteer dedicated to helping others learn to celebrate life, living and the opportunity for giving. Dr. P.'s Pods can be found on You Tube, and by clicking [HERE](#)



VOLUNTEERS ON THE MOVE ...



Rogerlyn Kanealii & Wanda Evans—Bell Ringing

Chad Pharis—Mail outs



Shirley Tripoli—Greeter



Wilma Chandler—Ti Leaf lei making



Alex Barry & Tamara Anderson
Produce delivery



Kathy Carpenter & Jerry Gilbert -
Mobile Munchies



Grace Ishida & Tomoko Ouchi—
Wilcox Gift Shop



Natsuko Daida & Grace
Delos Reyes—Info Table



Ora Tashiro—card making

Musings: Technology & the Kupuna

Written by Juno Ann Apalla, EMBA, HCM



Recently, my father asked for help to apply for a PPP Loan Forgiveness program. The application was only through their website. This was one of numerous consultations, regarding the use of technology, but it was not just about technology. It oscillated around thoughts and feelings of distrust, skepticism, frustration, overwhelm, that hindered my father, and consequently my mother, over the years, as business owners.

My hard-working parents' aversion to the use of and dependency on technology vacillated between their need to adapt to technology and the need to preserve comfortable habits. Simply, a love and hate of technology because in business it made things move quicker, yet, learning to use technology was a steep learning curve for both of them, a frustrating process, personally and professionally.

My family's personal struggle with technology is relatable to many, and points to the growing demand in the elderly population to learn a new and important skill set with technology and smart devices. I'd like to challenge the widely known sentiment "you cannot teach an old dog new tricks" because it simply is not true for folks learning how to use technology today.

In a World Economic Forum article on July 26, 2019, "No longer just for the young: 70% of seniors are now online," the authors made the point that "middle-aged and older adults are embracing technology to [...] connect to friends and family, shop, make travel plans, and make reservations for travel and transportation." They also noted that, "apps such as Medisafe, Google Maps with parking spot reminders, HomeAway and Lumosity are also becoming popular among the older population." ([online link](#))

The greatest barrier to learning a new skill is not incompetence, but fear. Once one gets through the initial stress and anxiety of technology, families can discover the convenience, relief, and a better quality of life using smart devices and technology. I am an advocate for an optimistic perspective of using and benefitting from technology, especially in the lives of retirees and kupuna.

One benefit is the social use of smart devices through platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Zoom, and FaceTime, to connect our kupuna to combat isolation and depression. Recent data reflects "senior citizens in the US are the fastest growing group of Facebook users, nearly doubling in numbers between 2012 and 2019." Furthermore, "new data from the Pew Research Centers shows that 37% of the "silent" generations, those born before 1945, are now on Facebook, compared to 21% in 2012. Baby boomers are also increasingly on Facebook: 43% of the generation were on in 2012, whereas 60% have accounts in 2019." (Kozlowska, Hanna. "US Facebook users are getting older." 9/11/2019. [Oz.com](#))

Another important benefit to encourage kupuna to learn the use of technology and smart devices is arguably because of *safety*. Working adults have parents who need home care because of dementia, Alzheimer's, and end-of-life care. Many are raising children or supporting grown adults who have not left home; or have parents requiring more attention due to a decline in physical and mental capacities. Smart devices are equipped with Artificial Intelligence (AI) addressing the need for companionship for the sake of a kupuna's mental health and wellness. Smart phones and smart watches track vitals and motion so if a kupuna falls, agencies and family members are alerted, and help can be administered right away.

Learn about technology and how it can be helpful to you and your family. For example, the Agency on Elderly Affairs partnered with the Kaua'i Community College Office of Continuing Education and Training to offer basic technology courses to learn how to use a smart device or a computer. To learn more about resources offered to kupuna through Kaua'i Community College Office of Continuing Education and Training, call (808) 245-8208.