

# Agency on Elderly Affairs Staff



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## OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



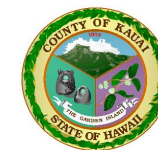
### AGE MY WAY: MAY 2022



Recognition Ceremony

County Rotunda

Friday May 6, 2022





OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

# PROCLAMATION

## Older Americans Month 2022

WHEREAS, every year, more and more older Americans are making a positive impact in and around our island, contributing their strength, wisdom, and experience to our community; and

WHEREAS, communities benefit when people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds are welcomed, included, and supported; and

WHEREAS, the County of Kauai recognizes our need to create a community that provides the services and supports older Americans' need to thrive and live independently for as long as possible; and

WHEREAS, the Agency on Elderly Affairs encourages us all to work together to build an even better community for our older residents by planning programs that encourage independence, ensuring activities are responsive to individual needs and preferences, and increasing access to services that support aging in place; and

WHEREAS, this year's Older Americans Month theme, "Age My Way," shows that just as every person is unique, so is how they age and how they choose to do it because there is no "right" way; and

WHEREAS, older adults play vital, positive roles in our communities— as family members, friends, mentors, volunteers, civic leaders, members of the workforce, and much more; and

WHEREAS, diverse communities are strong communities, and ensuring that older adults remain involved and included in our communities for as long as possible benefits everyone— from keiki to kupuna.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR, COUNTY OF KAUA'I, do hereby proclaim May 2022 as Older Americans Month, and I urge every resident to recognize the contributions of our older citizens, help create an inclusive society, and join efforts to support older Americans' choices about how they age in their communities.

Derek S. K. Kawakami  
Mayor, County of Kauai  
State of Hawaii

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

#### MUSIC

Paul Togioka

#### EMCEE

Julie Souza

#### PUBLICITY/PUBLIC RELATIONS

Mayor's Office

#### AWARDS SELECTION COMMITTEE

Anne Miyamoto  
Dennis Pezzato, PhD  
Julie Souza

#### PHOTOS

Dennis Fujimoto

#### AEA ADVISORY COUNCIL

Julie Souza, Chair  
Janice Bond, Vice Chair  
Gloria Acain  
Lola Cruz  
Pualei Kaohelaulii  
KipuKai Kualii  
Anne Miyamoto  
Elodie Moniz  
Dennis Pezzato, PhD

#### AGENCY ON ELDERLY AFFAIRS STAFF

*Mahalo...*

The Agency on Elderly Affairs, a designated Area Agency on Aging and recently functioning as an Aging and Disability Resource Center has been providing critical and essential eldercare services to Kauai's kupuna so they can continue to live a dignified life in the community or environment of their choice.

Through a service provider contract or AEA staff, the agency provides the following eldercare services:

- Information, Assistance, Referral
- Outreach
- Senior ID
- Transportation
- Legal Assistance
- Home Delivered Meals
- Congregate Meals
- Case Management/Coordination
- Personal Care
- Homemaker
- Adult Day Care
- Caregiver Respite
- Caregiver Counseling
- Group Support & Information
- Civic Engagement
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Health Promotion
- Disease Prevention
- EnhanceFitness Program
- Better Health, Better Choices
- Options Counseling
- Long Term Support Svcs Planning

For more information,  
call (808) 241-4770  
or visit [www.kauaiadrc.org](http://www.kauaiadrc.org)



## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Sandy Takaezu



#### Sandy Takaezu

Sandy Takaezu truly enjoys everything flower related. She loves planting, replanting and growing beautiful flowers and foliage in her yard. Not only is she amazing at growing tropicals and flowers, she also loves sharing them. Sandy started doing Ikebana arrangements in 2000 and since 2005 she has been sharing them with the staff and public of the Kapule building lobby and the Mayor's Office.

Sandy also adorns Kapaa Missionary Church with her floral creations every Sunday and she teaches Ikebana classes. In addition to this, she makes the most beautiful greeting cards with pictures of her flowers and tropicals.

Sandy graduated from college in 1966 with a degree in teaching. She taught at various schools with the majority of her years spent at Kapaa Elementary School and her last 4 years at King Kaumualii Elementary School.

**Nominated by: Michelle Lizama, County of Kauai, Finance Department**



#### MESSAGE

Aloha,

Older adults play vital, positive roles in our communities – as family members, friends, mentors, volunteers, civic leaders, members of the workforce, and more. Just as every person is unique, so too is how they age and how they choose to do it – and there is no “right” way or “wrong” way, they are doing it “their” way. That’s why the theme for this year’s Older Americans Month is **Age My Way**.

Every May, Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami and the Agency on Elderly Affairs leads the celebration of Older Americans Month. This year’s theme focuses on how older adults can age in their communities, living independently for as long as possible and participating in ways they choose.

While **Age My Way** will look different for each person, here are common things everyone can consider:

Plan what you will need and want in the future, from home and community-based services to community activities that interest you.

Engage and contribute to your community through work, volunteer, and/or civic participation opportunities.

Make home accessible with improvements and modifications, use assistive technologies, and customize supports to help you better age in place.

Connect with others, maintain social activities and relationships to combat social isolation and stay connected to your community.

The Agency on Elderly Affairs is excited to celebrate Older Americans Month and committed to ensure that older adults remain involved, connected and included in planning for their future doing it **Their Way**.



Malama pono,  
Kealoha Takahashi  
Executive on Aging



## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans

### Award Ceremony

Music provided by: Paul Togioka

#### Welcome

Julie Souza  
AEA Advisory Committee Chair

#### Ho'onani Ka Makua Mau

#### Acknowledgment of Special Guests

##### Opening Remarks

Kealoha Takahashi, Executive on Aging

##### Mayor's Message

Honorable Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami

##### Governor's Message

Beverly Gotelli  
State Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs

#### Introduction of 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominees

Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami & Kealoha Takahashi

#### Announcement of Kauai's 2022 Older American Awardees

Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami

#### Special Presentations

Kaua'i State Legislators  
Kaua'i County Council

#### Closing Remarks

Hawaii Aloha

## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Jan Sueoka



Jan Sueoka is a master at creating beautiful flower arrangements and truly enjoys sharing her arrangements with others. She has been creating beautiful arrangements to adorn the Kapule building lobby since 2005. Her creations receive many compliments from staff and the public. Jan grows all her own floral materials at her home. In addition to providing floral arrangements, she also helps tend to the other live plants in the building.

Jan was an educator for 26 years with the majority of her career being spent at Eleele Elementary School. Jan still enjoys teaching, but instead of reading and writing she now teaches flower arranging.

Jan has also volunteered, along with fellow nominee, Sandy Takaazu, to lead flower arranging demonstrations and activities at the Lawai International Center and for members of the Kauai Retired Teachers Association. She has also provided arrangements for the Kauai County Farm Bureau Fair. Jan fondly remembers learning about flower arranging through a class founded by the Mokichi Okada Association.

In addition to flower arranging, Jan also enjoys Senior Hula. Through many hours of practice, she has learned a new appreciation for the Hawaiian language and culture and enjoys spending time with her hula sisters.

**Nominated by: Michelle Lizama of County of Kauai Finance Department**

## *2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee*

### *Sonia Song*



Sonia Song is a very empathetic and caring individual, as witnessed by her volunteer activities.

Since 2014 she has been a Volunteer Mediator with Kauai Economic Opportunity and through Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, the Volunteer Manager for the Self-Help Center at the Courthouse. Sonia has the intelligence, patience and informed presence for this type of volunteer work. She also became a contracted Landlord/Tenant Mediator for KEO in 2021.

Sonia began attending the University of California, Berkeley Law School in 1987 and after graduating she worked with several law firms in the San Francisco Bay Area. She then returned to her native, Beijing, China and managed the China office for the United Nations Volunteers. Professionally she also worked as Program Officer for the American Public Interest Law Institute, was the Founder and Mediator for the Human Harmony Mediation Service and has authored several books. Being fluent in Mandarin and English, Sonia acted as an interpreter for Chinese delegations in meetings with George HW Bush, Ronald Regan and Pope John Paul II. After retirement, Sonia decided to make Kauai her home.

Sonia is also an AmeriCorps advocate and volunteers for All Ears Hawaii, a community, free listening service that provides non-judgmental and empathetic listening support for anyone in need.

In her spare time, Sonia enjoys ballroom dancing, knitting and tai chi.

**Nominated by: Charlene Johnston, Kauai Economic Opportunity**

## *2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee*

### *Timothy Albao*



Timothy Albao has a great philosophy about volunteering, "It's the best work of life."

Timothy has served on several different Boards, in varying positions. He has been with the RSVP Advisory Council since 2012 and is currently the Chair. He has served with the Kauai Chapter of the Hawaii Association of Public Accountants since 2012 and is currently the State Director. In addition to this, Timothy has also been involved with HGEA on the Kauai Retiree Chapter and the State Retirees Board of Directors. He currently holds the positions of Treasurer for the HGEA State Retirees Board of Directors and President of the Kauai Retiree Chapter.

While serving on these Boards, Timothy has organized groups of public sector retirees to lobby the State Legislators to preserve and enhance retiree benefits. He also continues to organize accounting and tax seminars that provide continuing professional education credits for those who require IRS approved credits.

Timothy has definitely risen to the occasion during the Covid pandemic. He has been instrumental in continuing the RSVP annual recognition of their many volunteers by pivoting from a sit-down luncheon to a drive through event. He has also diligently done all he can to hold the HGEA Retiree groups together and has assisted in educating the membership and encouraging them on the Zoom computer platform.

Timothy retired from the County of Kauai, Department of Finance as the Accounting System Administrator after many years as a dedicated public servant. While in this position he was responsible for overseeing the entire County of Kauai budget, expenses and revenues.

Timothy continues to encourage other seniors to find meaning and self-worth in their retired years by encouraging them to volunteer.

**Nominated by: Carol Saiki and Gerald Ako, RSVP Advisory Council**

## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Sofia Castro



Sofia Castro has been involved with the Catholic Church, especially St. Theresa, for many years. Her generous spirit lends perfectly to her Eucharistic ministry. She brings Communion to those homebound parishioners and leads the rosary for special needs, such as, a death in the family. Sofia also helps with cleaning the church, rectory and parish hall.

Sofia has been on the scholarship fundraising committee for the Kauai Filipino Women's club since 1988 and is a member of the Filipino Catholic Club and Pangasinan Association. She also sings with the choir and weekly holds Pro-Life signs by the roadside for a cause she is very passionate about.

Sofia has also volunteered with the Salvation Army and to clean St. Theresa's school as well as being a member of the Kekaha Senior Center.

Sofia has a servant's heart and weekly assists a friend, 20 years her senior, with cleaning and personal care. She says she likes to be busy and has a hard time staying still.

In addition to all the above Sofia also loves to cook, grow plants and travel. She has traveled extensively to places like Italy, France, Portugal, Egypt and Jerusalem to name a few.

Sofia worked at PMRF from 1971 to 2010 in the Mess Hall helping the chef with prep work.

**Nominated by: Maura Sabado, Kekaha Senior Center**

## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Lydia Rebugio



Lydia Rebugio is very committed to her Catholic beliefs and lives that out in her daily life. She has been a member of St. Raphael Catholic Church for many years. Lydia has and continues to serve in many different capacities with the church. She volunteers in several different ways: as a counter, with the bereavement ministry, as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, as a member of the Worship Commission Committee, as the Chairperson of the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, as church decorator and cleaner and in the church gift shop. As Eucharistic Minister she brings communion to the homebound and sick parishioners. In addition to these she sponsors fundraising activities, like bake sales, to help both the parish and the club.

Being a retired RN, certified in medical and surgical nursing, Lydia is the Chairperson for the Health Ministry at the church and often conducts blood pressure screenings for church members.

Lydia is currently the President of the St. Raphael Filipino Catholic Club and the Publicity and Catholic Press Chair for the Diocesan Congress of Filipino Catholic Clubs. She also keeps church members up to date on state level happenings as a member of the Kauai Council of Filipino Catholic Clubs.

Outside of the church, Lydia is a RSVP volunteer and donates her time to helping with the Blood Bank of Hawaii. She calls donors to let them know about the upcoming donation dates and also assist in scheduling appointments.

**Nominated by: Soledad Negrillo of St. Raphael Filipino Catholic Club**

## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Aida Padilla-Cruz



Aida Padilla-Cruz has been volunteering with Veterans associations on Kauai since 2009. Her dedication is to be commended. She has been an Honorary Trustee for the Kauai Veterans Museum on the fundraising committee since 2009. During her 13 years with this committee, she has helped raised over \$100,000 to help with renovations and sprucing up of the Kauai Veterans Center and the Kauai Veterans Museum. This was accomplished by fundraising events such as golf tournaments, line dancing, movie nights and a food truck challenge.

Pre-Covid era, Aida was also instrumental in very successful Veterans Christmas Luncheons by helping arrange musical entertainment, food, beverage and door prize donations for nearly 300 attendees.

Since 2012 Aida has been on the Kauai Veterans Council as an Events Volunteer and on the Kauai Vet Center Management Committee as Resource Manager. During this time Aida has helped with grant applications, overseeing individuals who are court mandated to perform community service at the Vet Center and brought in student Veterans enrolled in Kauai Community College to attend and be part of the Kauai Veterans Council meetings. During this time, she has also been a volunteer organizer for the Veterans Day Parade, soliciting donations to defray costs, contacting rental companies to provide free transportation for honorees and overseeing registrations of parade entries.

Aida is also very dedicated to the Catholic Church. She was the President of the Kauai Board for Catholic Charity from 2016 to 2018, engaging in youth ministries at Holy Cross, St. Theresa, St. Raphael and Sacred Heart Catholic churches. She taught catechism to pre-school children, using arts and crafts to teach Bible stories, Confirmation to intermediate age groups and created a mentoring class for students who had been confirmed. Aida also bridged the gap between the youth and kupuna by bringing them together to practice manners and table etiquette, as well as planning and chaperoning social events for them.

In addition to her involvement with Veterans and the Catholic Church, Aida has also volunteered with Relay for Life since 2007. Being a cancer survivor herself and having lost her husband to this terrible disease, this is a personal mission for her. She not only solicits monetary donations but has also manned the information table.

**Nominated by: Mary Kay Hertog**

## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Martin Costales



To say Martin Costales is dedicated to his duties at Sacred Hearts and St. Theresa's churches in Waimea and Kekaha would be a dire understatement. Martin has given over 70 years of his life to various duties within the Catholic Church.

At over 80 years of age, Martin makes himself available, on a daily basis, to assist with the needs of the church. Martin is an Altar Server and has assisted bishops, priests and deacons in different capacities. Martin has given thousands of hours to assisting with baptisms, confirmations and funerals.

Martin has a military background serving in the US Army from 1960 to 1963 in an all Kauai Platoon in the Fifth All Hawaii Company. Then in 1964 he started a 44 year career with ITT at PMRF working in Communications.

Martin was also involved in community league baseball for many years starting with T-ball going all the way through Pony League. He volunteered in a variety of ways from score keeper through coaching.

In his spare time now, Martin enjoys doing word puzzles to help keep his brain active and alert.

**Nominated by: Ray Domingo**

## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Greg Iten



Greg Iten, a Seattle native, has truly fit into his chosen community of Kauai and finds happiness in giving back to that community. Greg is a retired architect but has found great enjoyment in volunteering for the National Tropical Botanical Gardens.

Greg has volunteered for NTBG for over 10 years and is classified as a Horticulture Assistant.

His main duty is maintaining the plant collections located at NTBG's headquarters in Kalaheo, but he consistently goes above and beyond his normal duties.

Greg spent years with NTBG, plant mounting and digitizing specimens and now the care and attention he gives to the living collections at the headquarters has undoubtedly saved specimens that would have otherwise been lost. This collection of plants includes rare and common plants, most being native to Hawaii.

Greg goes beyond his volunteer duties by also helping the NTBG staff with their own personal plants, giving them advice on how to care for and maintain their plants and in some cases save them.

Greg has been quoted as saying about the NTBG staff, "Whatever the gardeners need done, I'm willing to help them out." "And they are so gracious. They just are so appreciative of the help that we give them. You want to come back and continue working."

Greg also volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for many years.

In his free time, Greg enjoys tending to his own yardwork and going to the beach.

**Nominated by: Amanda Beisch, National Tropical Botanical Gardens**

## 2022 Outstanding Older Americans Nominee

### Coleen Kasperek



The impact Coleen Kasperek has had on countless Kauai residents through her work with the AARP Tax-Aide Program is immeasurable. Since 2007 she has been the District Coordinator and an Instructor for this program. She is responsible for overseeing and coordinating the annual schedule for preparing returns which includes, securing locations, scheduling volunteers, establishing times of operation and finalizing site operations procedures. She also must be up to date on any tax law changes, AARP Tax-Aide policies and procedures, IRS Certification requirements and deadline requirements for training and certification. On the technology side, she must ensure the routers are secure and the computers and printers are all working and meet AARP and IRS standards and requirements. During tax season she oversees all the workings of tax preparation provided by the volunteers and at the end of each session she is responsible to make sure all equipment, supplies, activity logs and other required documentation is accounted for. The work is seemingly endless.

Since 2014, Coleen has been a Disaster Action Team Member for the American Red Cross. These members are among the first people at a disaster site to provide comfort and assistance to those in need. She has opened and managed temporary shelters and assisted people in securing shelter, food and other necessities when they are displaced by a disaster.

Coleen is also an active member of Holy Cross Church and has served on the Parish Pastoral Council for many years. The Council works closely with the parish priest, plans, organizes, coordinates, implements, monitors, and evaluates the pastoral programs and activities of the parish.

The same dedication Coleen has in her volunteer work was also evident in her professional career as an industrial engineer. Three companies she collaborated with won prestigious awards as a direct result of her work. Two in Arizona won the Arizona Quality Award and one in California won the California Quality Award.

Coleen and her husband, Brian, moved to Kauai in 2003 and have been contributing community members ever since.

**Nominated by: Alan Momohara, Kauai RSVP**