



UCHINANCHU

THE VOICE OF THE HAWAII UNITED OKINAWA ASSOCIATION

www.huoa.org

March/April 2026 | Issue #221 | Circulation: 8,000

Strengthening the Bridges of Friendship





President's Message

AS WE WELCOME THE NEW YEAR, we also celebrate the Year of the Horse, symbolizing strength, endurance, and forward movement. *Chibariyo!*

2026 marks the kickoff of HUOA's 75th Anniversary Celebration—75 years of promoting, preserving, and perpetuating Okinawan culture here in Hawai'i. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Jodie Ching for serving as Chairperson. This milestone is a testament to the vision, dedication, and countless contributions of those who came before us, and it is now our kuleana to carry that legacy forward for future generations. Gambate, Jodie and team!

My theme for this year is *Chimugukuru*—a word that embodies the Okinawan spirit of compassion, sincerity, and wholeheartedness.

The first quarter of the year has already been filled with meaningful engagement. I had the honor of attending quite a few Shinnen Enkai gatherings, where I was warmly welcomed and reminded of the deep bonds that unite our community. In February, we attended an Okinawa High School Students Program featuring elite student performers (mahalo Phil Uyehara), and hosted professors from the Okinawa Prefecture University of Performing Arts, who shared the history and future of Shurijō (mahalo Frances Kuba Sensei).

I would also like to extend my heartfelt mahalo to Tom Yamamoto and the HOSEP Phase I team for their continued hard work and commitment, and to Natalie Teruya, this year's UJSH Young Achiever of the Year, for stepping forward as Chairperson of the 2026 Legacy Awards Banquet.

Looking ahead, we hope you will join us at our upcoming events, including the Leadership and Heritage Tour to Okinawa in October 2026. Planning is also underway for the 2026 Okinawan Festival, and we look forward to sharing more details soon.

As we embark on this milestone year, let us move forward together with *Chimugukuru*—polishing what we do well, protecting what matters most, and standing proud in who we are as Uchinanchu and Uchinanchu at heart. *Ippee nifee deebiru, and mahalo nui loa.*

WARMEST ALOHA,

Bob Shiroma

BOB SHIROMA

UCHINANCHU

Ippee Nifee Deebiru... Mahalo!

Uchinanchu is our voice – the voice of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, its members, and our “home”: the Hawaii Okinawa Center. By sharing information and experiences, *Uchinanchu* connects us as a family, dedicated to preserving our Okinawan cultural heritage. Donations and advertising help offset publishing costs—Mahalo and *Ippee Nifee Deebiru* to our donors for supporting *Uchinanchu*.

Uchinanchu newsletter donors from January 1 to February 28, 2026

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lisa Anne Arakaki | Thomas & Jean Nishimura |
| Stephen Chinen | Mark Perkins |
| Diane Fong | Sheryl Shigemoto |
| Sueko Gushiken | Dona Takamori |
| Frederick Higa | Thomas Takara |
| Frederick Higa | Darrick Tokuda |
| Nancy Kimura | Adele Tsukamoto |
| Walter Y. Kuwasaki | Urasoe Shijin Kai |
| Edward M. Miyasato | Wes & Geri Wakuzawa |
| Doris Nagamine | Walter W. Wauke |
| Raymond Nakamura | Janis Yamamoto |
| James & Norma Nakasone | Jane Yoshida 🍷 |

Uchinanchu is the newsletter of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association. Although subject to change, issues will be published bi-monthly. Volunteer writers are welcome. Send your name, address, and telephone number to Uchinanchu Newsletter, Hawaii United Okinawa Association, 94-587 Ukee St., Waipahu, Hawaii 96797. E-mail articles to info@huoa.org. *Uchinanchu* reserves the right to edit all material for clarity and accuracy.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| HUOA President | Bob Shiroma |
| Editor | Caro Higa |
| Designer | Erika Kim Yamane |

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Uchinanchu reaches over 8,000 households. For advertising rates and more information visit www.huoa.org, contact us at info@huoa.org, or 808.676.5400.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 President's Message
- 3 Calendar of Events
- 4 HOSEP Phase 1
- 6 Preserving Our Legacy
- 8 Mensore: Ryudai Legal Observation Tour
- 10 Mensore: Naha High School SAP, Kaori Mori Want
- 11 Club News: 2026 Shinnen Enkai Listing
- 12 Club News: Hui O Laulima, Hui Makaala
- 14 Club News: 2026 Shinnen Enkai photos
- 16 Club News: Okinawa City - Goeku Son, Kin Chojin Kai, Ginowan Shijinkai Hawaii
- 18 Club News: Oroku Azajin Club, Yonashiro Chojin Kai, Uesato Ohana Return to Their Roots
- 20 Okinawan Festival Update; Kanoelani Elementary School Culture Night; Tourism Day
- 21 Ehime Maru Memorial Clean Up
- 22 Children's Okinawan Cultural Day Camp 2026
- 23 Honolulu Festival 2026
- 24 Loochoo Identity Summit
- 26 Community Sunday at HoMA
- 27 HUOA 75th Anniversary
- 28 A Homecoming to *Toshiko Takaezu: Worlds Within*
- 30 Memory Beads by Diane Aoki
- 31 HOC Calendar; HOT Schedule

2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Year at a Glance!

TBD	Kauai Okinawan Festival
May 23	HUOA Goodwill Golf Tournament, Ala Wai Municipal Golf Course
June 2-5	Children's Cultural Day Camp, Oahu
June 12-14	Pan Pacific Festival
June 14	Pan Pacific Festival Parade
June 22	Irei no Hi Remembrance event, Legacy I/II
July 26	Hui Makaala Fashion Show, Hilton Hawaiian Village
Sept 5-6	Okinawan Festival, Hawaii Convention Center
Sept 7	Okinawan Festival Aloha Party, Legacy I/II
Sept 19	Autumn Okinawa Dance Matsuri, Legacy I/II
Sept 26	Maui Okinawa Festival, Maui Mall
Mid-Oct	HUOA Heritage Tour, Okinawa
Mid-Oct	HUOA Leadership Tour, Okinawa
Oct 29	Uchinanchu no Hi, Legacy I/II
Nov 1	Kugani Warabi, Legacy I/II
Nov 8	Legacy Award, Sheraton Waikiki
Nov 28-29	Winter Craft Fair, Legacy I/II

Events are subject to change.
Visit www.huoa.org/events for more information

Find Us Online

Find the full-color newsletter online here:
HUOA.ORG/NEWSLETTERS



www.huoa.org



[Facebook/HUOA.org](https://Facebook.com/HUOA.org)



[@hawaiiunitedokinawaassociation](https://www.instagram.com/@hawaiiunitedokinawaassociation)



YouTube.com/c/HawaiiUnitedOkinawaAssociation

ON THE COVER

HOSEP students and chaperones visited the Hawaiian Railway Society, the only operating historic railway in Hawaii. The train rides along a historic stretch of track west of old Ewa.

WE BUY LAND in Okinawa



Need to sell your land quickly for cash? We make the process simple and hassle-free. Contact us today to get a fair cash offer for your property!



Erika Nakanishi (English and Japanese)

TEL: +81-98-943-5656 / FAX: +81-98-943-5646

***EMAIL: e.nakanishi@es-esperanza.jp**

I am available to respond 24/7 via email!

Please Kokua

Production costs for Uchinanchu have escalated due to increases in circulation, labeling expenses and postage. Your contribution to help defray some of the expenses is greatly appreciated.

Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss _____
First Name Last Name

Address _____

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____ Home Tel: _____

Please include this form with your donation and send to:

HUOA Newsletter Fund, 94-587 Ukee Street, Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

HOSEP Phase I – 2026: Strengthening the Bridges of Friendship

BY TOM YAMAMOTO

ON FEBRUARY 7, 2026, a new chapter of international friendship began as twenty eager students arrived in Honolulu for Phase 1 of the Hawaii Okinawa Student Exchange Program (HOSEP). Leading the delegation was Mr. Koya Sakima, Deputy Superintendent of the Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education, supported by English Teacher Consultant Naoki Oshiro, Mutsuko Ikema of Kitanakagusuku High School, and Sho Kyan of Nishihara High School. From the moment they touched down, anticipation filled the air as the students prepared to meet their Hawaii host families and experience the unique culture and traditions of Hawaii.

The Hawaii United Okinawa Association and the Okinawa Board of Education worked together to design an itinerary for students to explore Hawaii's government, culture, history, and tourism. The students didn't just

observe; they participated. They tested their skill in traditional Hawaiian Makahiki games and explored the diverse heritage of the Pacific at the Polynesian Cultural Center. A significant highlight of the trip was a formal visit with State Superintendent Keith Hayashi, who graciously welcomed the group into his conference room for an inspiring discussion on education, leadership, and global citizenship.

Beyond the field trips, the most meaningful part of the exchange happened in the quiet, everyday moments. Whether in the classroom, at home, or hanging out with new friends, everlasting bonds formed

between the Hawaii and Okinawa students. They bonded over the "flavors of Hawaii," enjoying iconic local staples such as poke, loco moco, and shave ice.

As the exchange reached its conclusion, the group gathered for an unforgettable Aloha Party. To honor their growth and participation, the HUOA presented both Okinawan and Hawaii students with certificates of accomplishment. The evening included various performances, as the Okinawan students took the stage to showcase traditional and contemporary dances, sharing their own vibrant heritage with their hosts.





While tears were shed during the final "goodbyes" and "mahalos," the sadness was enlightened by the fact that although they parted ways, they would reunite this coming June in Okinawa, continuing the journey they began in the islands.

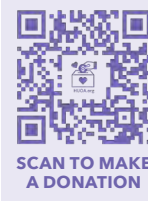
The HUOA extends its deepest gratitude to the host families whose open hearts and warm hospitality made these students feel truly at home. The HOSEP remains a success thanks to the enduring partnership between the Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education and the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, along with the tireless work of our many volunteers and staff. To the entire HUOA community, we thank you for your support in keeping these cultural bridges strong.

Ippee Nifee Deebiru! 🇺🇸





WE ARE IN OUR FIFTH MONTH of our Annual Giving Campaign. Members embracing the theme “Chimugukuru – Polish, Protect and Be Proud” have generously come forth and contributed towards the success of our organization. Events such as Children’s Day Camp, Senior Fair, and Hawaii Okinawa Student Exchange are supported by your donations. Since our last report, we received 751 donations, representing \$158,577.4 We truly appreciate your early support and the confidence you have shown in us. *Ippee Niffee Deebiru!*



**Contributions from the Annual Giving Campaign and other
non-specified monetary donations from January 1 to February 28, 2026**

DIAMOND \$5,000 +

Ken T. Oshiro

PLATINUM \$4,999 – \$ 2,500

Colbert & Gail Matsumoto

GOLD \$2,499 – \$1,000

Sun Noodle Ohana

Nomura Ryu Dento Ongaku Kyokai
Hawaii Shibu & Azama Honryu
Allison Yanagi Ryukyu Dance Studio

SILVER \$999 – \$500

Anonymous	In Memory of Kamado & Tsuyako	In Memory of Teruo, Emily Emiko,
Dinah Gallagher	Oshiro, Robert Yoshiharu Oshiro &	Sakae, Kame & Kame Oshiro
Aaron Ihori	David Nobuharu Oshiro by Henry S. &	by Stephen M. Oshiro
Lincoln & Inez Kaneshiro, Jr	Theresa Y. Oshiro	In Memory of Nobuo & Kimiko
Gilbert S. Nakama	In Memory of Edward Takeo & Gladys	Uyehara by Karen, Gwen & Gayle
George & Lola Uehara	Shizue Uehara, Michael “Sumo” Uehara	In Memory of Yomei &
Jackie Yamada	& Stacey-Ann Yano by Theresa Y. &	Shizuko Yamauchi by Gordon
In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. Masao	Henry S. Oshiro	& Beverly Yamashiro
Nakasone, Curtis B. Tamon & Barbara I.	In Memory of Shigeru, Richard Kiyoshi,	In Memory of Shoyei “Andy”
Nomura by Mr. & Mrs. James T. Kubo	Juliet Mitsuko, Kosuke & Kame Nakasato	& Chiyoko Yamashiro
	by Stephen M. Oshiro	by Gordon & Beverly Yamashiro

BRONZE \$499 – \$250


Anonymous	Shorin-Ryu Hawaii Seibukan	In Memory of Michael Vierra
Kirk Caldwell	Craig & Sandy Watanabe	by Lynn Vierra
Glenn Hasegawa	Bob Yonahara	In Memory of Tsuneo & Aiko Yamashita
Claire Kamimura	In Memory of Roy & Betty Kaneshiro	by Don M. Yamashita
Patrick & Nona Miyashiro	by Joelle Franco	In Memory of Bokuzen & Haruko T.
Ken Nakamatsu	In Memory of Fay Tamashiro Hickerson	Kaneshiro by Sandra S. & Carl Yanagi
Grace Nakamura	by James Hickerson	



CONTRIBUTOR \$249 – \$100

Anonymous	Robert K. Sumida	In Memory of James & Carol Inafuku by Anne Inafuku
Neal Bunshin Arakawa	Kurt & Corinne Takara	In Memory of Saburo Isa Family by Gwen Isa
Sueko Gushiken	Morris T. Takushi	In Memory of Horace & Ethel Awa by Sandra Kekina
Stanley & Christine Higa	Janel Toguchi	In Memory Roy Nobuo Higa by Kita Nakagusuku Sonjin Kai
Bernie Imada	Brian & Faith Tokeshi	In Memory of Masako Uyehara Shimabuku by Melvin & Arlene Miyamoto
Karen Irie	Kenneth Tokuda	In Memory of Masao, Kamey, Miyo Ginoza & Charlotte (Ginoza) Provino by George & Yukie Miyashiro
Rodney & Sharon Isa	Amy E. Tsuru	In Memory of Jimmy & Tsuruko Senaga by Jerry & Lydia Morikawa
Kenji Kawauchi	Kwynn Uyehara	In Memory of Louise Tamashiro by Nago Club
Amy Kishaba	Roy T. Uyehara	In Memory of Amy S. Nakagawa by Wayne F. Nakagawa
Esther & Earl Kita	Sandra Watanabe	In Memory of Minoru & Yoshiko Nakasato by Elmer Nakasato
June Konno & Darren Konno	Michael & Jo Ann Yamasaki	In Memory of Rylan Kunimitsu by Wayne K. Toyama
Ann Kubota	Thomas & Joanne Yamauchi	In Memory of Kamada & Kama Isa, Kiyome Eva Isa and Robert Takeo Isa by Barbara Trupin
S. Kevin & Jane H. Kuniyoshi	George K. Zakahi	In Memory of Yasue Hamamura by Janis K. Yamamoto
Won Kuk & Jane Lee	In Honor of Allison T. Yanagi & Adele Gushiken by Sandra S. Yanagi	
Sue Ann Militante	In Memory of Randall W. Miyashiro by Carla Miyashiro Chang	
Lynn Miyahira	In Memory of Isamu & Doris Chinen by Stephen Chinen	
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Miyashiro	In Memory of Janice Okudara by Patricia Goya	
David & Diane Nakasone	In Memory of Amy Matano by Hawaii Shuri-Naha Club	
Jeffrey Nakata	In Memory of Dennis Ikehara & Fusako Ikehara by Rodney Ikehara	
Michael S. & Kathleen K. Nohara		
Paul & Mary Nuha		
Tom & Wilma Ogimi		
Dianne N. Pitman		

FRIEND \$99 AND UNDER

Anonymous	Neal & Gerri Kabei	Tomeo Yoshizawa
CVS Health	Ruth Kane	In Memory of Isamu & Doris Chinen by Stephen Chinen
Clayton & Karen Awa	Lisa Maumalanga	In Memory of Stephanie Saito by Roberta Ono
Mae Chung	Dathan Nicholson	In Memory of Charles K. Honma by Karen K. Yorimoto 
Jennifer Clarke	Roy & Thelma Okino	
Stella Hieda	Jon Tonouchi & Nancy Sugikawa	
Andrew & Kristi Ige	Janet Toyama	
Lisa Inouye	Lynn Yamauchi	

A Dream Realized: HUOA Community Leadership Inspires the Inaugural Ryudai Legal Observation Tour in Hawai'i

BY DR. BRANDON MARC HIGA

FOR DEAN EMI YANO, dean and professor of law at the University of the Ryūkyūs Graduate School of Law, the inaugural Legal Observation Tour in Hawai'i represents a long-held dream realized. For years, Dean Yano fostered relationships with Uchinanchu community leaders, judges, and other influential figures to create a program that would allow law students from the University of the Ryūkyūs to experience Hawai'i's legal system firsthand while connecting with the Uchinanchu community that has preserved deep ties to Okinawa for generations. In March 2026, that vision became reality through a new partnership with Kapi'olani Community College, bringing Ryudai law students to Hawai'i for an immersive legal observation tour exploring comparative legal systems and the role of law in society.



Sabrina Shizue McKenna, Acting Chief Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court, and Associate Justice Lisa M. Ginoza hosted a kickoff event for the University of the Ryukyus law students and faculty at Ali'iōlani Hale.

At the heart of the program's success is the enduring support of the Hawai'i United Okinawa Association and its community leaders. Their guidance helped ensure that the visiting students not only learned about the American legal system, but also experienced the cultural foundations that sustain the Hawai'i–Okinawa relationship. The inaugural Legal Observation Tour in Hawai'i welcomed eleven law students from the University of the Ryūkyūs to engage with Hawai'i's legal community while exploring the shared history and cultural connections between Hawai'i and Okinawa. The program, hosted in partnership with Kapi'olani Community College, reflects decades of relationship-building supported by leaders within the Hawai'i United Okinawa Association and the broader Uchinanchu community.



Ed Kuba, John Tasato, and Bob Nakasone give a tour of the Issei Garden and Kyuzo Toyama's statue for the Okinawan law students and faculty at the Hawai'i Okinawa Center.



The University of the Ryukyus students and faculty show off their best shisa pose with Shari Tamashiro and David Arakawa.

DEEP UCHINANCHU ROOTS BIND HAWAII AND OKINAWA.

The students also learned about the deep cultural infrastructure that sustains the Uchinanchu community in Hawai'i. Itoman Shijin Kai Shari Tamashiro shared the history and significance of the HUOA and the sonjin kai network—prefectural and village associations that maintain connections to ancestral hometowns in Okinawa. Her presentation illustrated how these organizations preserve cultural heritage and maintain living ties between Hawai'i and Okinawa across generations.



The University of the Ryūkyūs students throw a shaka at Kapi'olani Community College's Lama Library where they met with Uchinanchu attorneys. The students represented Okinawan towns and villages, including Uehara, Yomitan, Urasoe, Kadena, Oroku, Ameku, and Ginowan, where the University of the Ryūkyūs is located.

The Ryudai students themselves represented many different communities across Okinawa, reflecting the diverse regional roots that continue to shape the Uchinanchu diaspora. By learning about the sonjin kai system and Hawai'i's Okinawan community organizations, the students gained a deeper understanding of how these ancestral connections remain vibrant far from Okinawa's shores.

COME RAIN OR SHINE. HUOA President Bob Shiroma and Assistant Executive Director Caro Higa were putting the finishing touches on an exciting tour of the Hawai'i Okinawa Center when Governor Josh Green issued a statewide emergency proclamation in response to severe weather. President Shiroma and Executive Director Higa had graciously planned to welcome the Ryudai faculty with a guided tour of the Hawai'i Okinawa Center, offering an introduction to the history and cultural significance of the Uchinanchu community in Hawai'i. Out of an abundance of caution, the tour was canceled to keep participants safely off the road during the severe weather watch. Although severe weather conditions required adjustments to the original schedule, the spirit of collaboration and hospitality that defines the Uchinanchu community ensured the program continued safely.



Uchinanchu attorneys David Z. Arakawa and Marcus Oshiro shared leadership reflections and hopes for the future to keep the deep bonds between Okinawa and Hawai'i strong.

UCHINANCHU VALUES FOUNDATIONAL TO SUCCESSFUL LEGAL PRACTICE. HUOA members also played a direct role in mentoring the visiting students. During a special program featuring Uchinanchu attorneys, **David Arakawa** shared reflections from his distinguished career in law, government, and public service. His conversation with the students explored how Uchinanchu values (i.e., perseverance, humility, and a strong sense of community responsibility) have shaped his approach to leadership in the legal profession. The discussion highlighted how cultural identity can guide ethical decision-making and service in public life. The students also benefited from the perspective of **Marcus Oshiro**, whose career reflects the many ways legal training can lead to public leadership. An attorney, political strategist, and former member of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, Oshiro shared insights from his work

across the legislative, executive, and legal sectors. His experience serving in the Hawai'i Legislature and later as an appointee to the Hawai'i Labor Relations Board illustrated how lawyers often play critical roles in shaping public policy and labor relations. His reflections highlighted how legal education can equip attorneys with the skills needed to bridge law, governance, and public service while remaining grounded in the values of the Uchinanchu community.

POWER OF LANGUAGE. Another key element of the program was the power of language and interpretation in bridging cultures and legal systems. Professional interpreter **Naoki Namihira** served as an essential member of the program team, ensuring that complex legal concepts, cultural nuances, and personal stories could be shared clearly between Hawai'i and Okinawa. Namihira is a highly respected freelance interpreter who has supported international exchanges for foreign dignitaries, the U.S. Consul General in Okinawa, and other prominent clients. Namihira honed his English language proficiency while studying and living in Northern California, before traveling through South America for an extended period. Beyond his professional work, he is also a cultural practitioner of *shishimai* (lion dance) from Terama Island. His presence in the program reflected the profound role language plays not only in law, but also in sustaining cultural identity and mutual understanding across borders. 🇺🇸



Professional interpreter Naoki Namihira enjoys a pau hana drink at Zigu with Shari Tamashiro, a long-time friend and supporter. Namihira's dream is to bring his daughter to Hawai'i to perform *shishimai* alongside local performers.



Uchinanchu attorney and former HUOA President David Z. Arakawa shares how Uchinanchu values provide a solid foundation for successful legal practice.

With Gratitude from Okinawa: Reflections on the Naha High School Study Abroad Program (SAP)

HAITAI AND ALOHA! To all the members of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association, I hope this message finds you in good health and spirits.

I am a member of the Jogaku Alumni Association, an organization of Naha High School graduates. Through our dedicated scholarship program, we provide students with the opportunity to experience life in Hawaii—a place that holds a deep and special connection to Okinawa.

This year, from February 21st, two of our first-year students, Koharu and Kotomi, spent three weeks in Hawaii. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the host families: Shaun and Laura Shimizu and their daughter Kayli for hosting Kotomi, and Brandon and Ai Sherri Ogata and their daughters Reina and Serene for hosting Koharu. Thank you so much for welcoming them into your warm homes and supporting their school life.

My sincere thanks also go to Mr. Chris Shimabukuro at Iolani School for his continued support every year, and to Brandi Abe and her mother at Kailua High School for accompanying the students in class. Furthermore, we are deeply grateful to Bill and Stella Speed, who strongly support this program every year by serving as hosts and coordinating various activities.

Before returning home, the students had the opportunity



to visit the Hawaii Okinawa Center. President Robert Shiroma kindly guided them through the facilities, where they learned about the hardships and history of the Okinawan immigrants. This was a profoundly moving and educational experience for them. Now, carrying their wonderful memories of Hawaii in their hearts, Koharu and Kotomi have moved up to their second year of high school and are doing their very best.

Currently, Japan is in the midst of April—the busiest and most vibrant time of the year. In Japan, April is the season of “New Beginnings.” It marks the time for school entrance ceremonies, grade promotions, and job transfers. A friend of mine at the Okinawa Prefectural Government just started in a new department, and in my own family, my grandchildren are beginning their journeys in nursery school and elementary school. Our days are filled with the joyful bustle of these milestones.

As the cherry blossoms bloom across the Japanese archipelago, it is a time of fresh starts for both children and adults. We are deeply grateful that our enduring bond with the people of Hawaii continues to support the “new beginnings” of our next generation.

To everyone in Hawaii, “Ganju shimisoori yoo” (Please stay healthy and well). I look forward to the day we meet again.

—RIE SUEYOSHI

Kaori Mori Want

BY DR. KAORI

HAITAI! I’M KAORI MORI WANT, a researcher from Konan Women’s University, Japan. I visited the Hawaii Okinawa Center with my colleagues, Dr. Manami Tanaka (Tokyo Mirai University) and Dr. Miki Iida (Ritsumeikan University) on February 26, 2026. We launched a research team, whose one of the research purposes is to examine Uchinanchu diaspora, and we have met many Uchinanchu in places such as Okinawa and Palau. As a part of the research project, we

visited the center to learn about Uchinanchu experiences in Hawaii.

Our visit was very productive thanks to Mr. President Robert Shiroma, Ms. Carolina Higa, and Ms. Charlene Nekomoto. We are so grateful for their warm welcome. They gave a tour of the center and told us the historical background of the place. We were impressed by all the facilities elaborately maintained by volunteers. We can tell people have committed to the center a lot. Then, they took us to the center’s library and showed us lots of valuable books on Uchinanchu in Hawaii, which made



us very excited. We found that our visit was too short to understand the long and rich history of Uchinanchu in Hawaii. We hope to come back to the center in the near future. Mahalo!

2026 SHINNEN ENKAI LISTING

Date	Time	Club Name	Location	Contact
7/11/2026	....9:30am	Aza Yogi Doshi Kai and Bito Doshi Kai	Ala Moana Beach Park, Area 9	Shea Gutierrez (Aza Yogi): 808.499.9812, kiku568@msn.com Kylie Sato (Bito): 808.772.9618, bitoclubhawaii@gmail.com
8/2/2026	....9am	Chatan-Kadena Chojin Kai	Ala Moana Beach Park, Ewa Side	Eric Nitta: ChatanKadena@gmail.com
7/12/2026	....9am	Club Motobu and Itoman Shijin Kai	Ala Moana Beach Park, High Rise Area #28A & 28B	Mavis Gushiken (Club Motobu): 808.222.5183, mavisg808@gmail.com Shari Tamashiro (Itoman): pigsfromthesea@gmail.com
7/11/2026	....9am	Gaza Yonagusuku Doshi Kai and Nishihara Chojin Kai	Ala Moana Beach Park	Cynthia Arnold (Nishihara): 808.221.8345, ctgoya@gmail.com
7/12/2026	....9am	Gushichan Sonjin Kai	Magic Island, Picnic Area 31	Derek Uesato: 808.780.8427
7/5/2026	....10am	Hawaii Sashiki-Chinen Doshi Kai	Ala Moana Park	Lynn Nakamura: nakamura1017 @hawaii.rr.com, 808.352.1615
7/19/2026	....9am	Hawaii Shuri-Naha Club	Ala Moana Regional Park, The Risers	Greg Kuwazaki: gmkuwazaki@gmail.com
7/26/2026	....9am	Kin Chojin Kai	Ala Moana Park, Picnic Site 14	Brian Ikehara: 808.384.4791
7/25/2026	....10am	Kohala Okinawa Kenjin Kai	Kamehameha Park, Hisaoka Gym	Ted Matsuda: 808.756.5894
7/19/2026	....9am	Okinawa City-Goeku Son	Kapiolani Park, Area 12	Stephanie Higa: 808.255.9686, stephiga@gmail.com
7/19/2026	....8am	Oroku Azajin Club	Magic Island	Darren Chun: andorah@hawaiiintel.net
8/2/2026	....9:30am	Tomigusuku Sonjin Kai	Ala Moana Beach Park, Section 9 & 11	Eugene Kaneshiro: ek4fisherman@hawaiiintel.net
7/26/2026	....9am	Yomitan Club	Ala Moana Beach Park, Park Area #8	Lea Ann Kakimoto: 808.384.7248
7/19/2026	....9am	Yonashiro Chojin Kai	Ala Moana Beach Park, Area 9	Gainor Miyahiro: gmiyahiro777@yahoo.com



Kahuushi, Heartfelt appreciation

TAMAGUSUKU RYU SENJUKAI FRANCES NAKACHI RYUBU DOJO



Culture of Joy!
Learn
Okinawan
Dance!

Students of all
ages, beginners,
and newcomers
are invited.

Okinawan Dance Academy

at Manoa Japanese Language School
Address: 2804 E. Manoa Rd. #8, Honolulu, HI 96822
Tel: (808) 754-2243
Email: senjukaihawaii@gmail.com

Come for a free trial class!

www.senjukaihawaii.com



Are you BUYING or SELLING A HOME? MOVING or DOWNSIZING?
INVESTMENT or 1031 EXCHANGE?

CALL FRANCES & RANDY KUBA!

"YOUR REAL ESTATE TEAM"



RANDY KUBA | ランディー 久場

REALTOR ASSOCIATE, CRS-63096

☎ (808) 780-3440

✉ Randy@kubahawaiihomes.com

FRANCES KUBA | フランセス 久場

REALTOR, ABR, E-PRO, CRS RB-16619

☎ (808) 780-4334

✉ Frances@kubahawaiihomes.com

IPPEE NIFEE DEEBIRU!

不動産売買お手伝いします。日本語でどうぞ~!

CONTACT US FOR A FREE MARKET ANALYSIS!

eXp Realty, RB-21841
6600 Kalaniana'ole Hwy Suite #114
Honolulu, HI 96825
www.kubahawaiihomes.com



Hui O Laulima Cultural Grant Application

HUI O LAULIMA is pleased to announce that applications for the 2027 Cultural Grants are now being accepted. Hui O Laulima is seeking Requests for Proposals (RFP) from interested, qualified individuals and organizations to support impactful projects/programs aligned with our mission to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the Okinawan culture. Hui O Laulima is a women's organization that serves to "give a helping hand" to those whose goal is to achieve the same mission. We are offering grant funding to support Okinawan performing arts, language acquisition, and history education for communities in the state of Hawai'i.

A grant will be awarded based on its projected success to fulfill a community need, enhance life experiences, and increase awareness and appreciation of Okinawan culture.

Please direct inquiries and/or requests for application to Caro Higa, committee chairperson at huiolaulima.funding@gmail.com



2026 Cultural Grants Awarded

HUI O LAULIMA (HOL) is pleased to announce the Cultural Grant recipients of 2026. HOL, a non-profit women's organization, funds grants for promising projects/programs that align with their mission to preserve, promote and perpetuate the Okinawan culture.

Impressed by the diversity of applicants, the awardees selected by the Grant Committee reflect the expanded reach of HOL to offer opportunities to interested individuals and groups involved in increasing awareness and appreciation of all aspects of traditional Okinawan culture. It is hoped that these awards will bring wider recognition to the important work that these individuals and organizations are undertaking to secure our ancestral knowledge for future generations.

A total of \$17,220 has been awarded to the following for the expected impact by their proposal to fill a community need and enhance life experiences. We congratulate and extend our best wishes to each of the following recipients for a successful year.

Ryukyu Koten Afuso Ryu Ongaku Choichi Kai USA
Sanshin Passion: A documentary of the Women of Afuso Ryu

Dane Hi'ipoi Nakama
Reclaiming Uchinanchu Traditions through Clay

Hawai'i Okinawa Alliance (HOA)
Expanding community outreach (culture in the arts activities workshops)

Hui Okinawa (Hilo)
Fichi Unii - to be Responsible (Sponsoring free in-person and online Loochoo Studies workshops on Okinawan culture)

Janice Kimie Toma Shiira
Shimakutuba - Information and display center - *Bunka nu Shima*, Okinawan Festival

Maui Ryukyu Culture Group (MRCG)
Providing instruction in Okinawan music and dance for Maui Residents

Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Kohala
Community Performances by young taiko students

Ryūkyū Reads
Free public access to repository of educational materials; lending library of rare, out-of-print materials; translating Japanese-only editions to English for wider circulation; hosting community discussion meetings and workshops

Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai Frances Nakachi Ryubu Dojo
Perpetuation of Okinawan culture through performing arts

Please direct any inquiries regarding the Cultural Grants to Caro Higa, committee chairperson at huiolaulima.funding@gmail.com

CLUB NEWS



Hui Makaala Fashion Show 2026 Yuratiku

CHUUGANABIRA-HOW ARE YOU?

Time flies so quickly that it is now the 55th Hui Makaala Scholarship Fashion Show.

The committee is hard at work to make it as successful as last year. The theme of this year's show is YURATIKU (Come by, Let's get together).

We are featuring three local designers, Angels By the Sea Hawaii (Nina Thai), Mu'umu'u Library (Andrew Shon), and SoHo (Annie Park).

Save the date and don't miss out on this special, exciting event at the Hilton Hawaiian Village, Coral Ballroom, on Sunday, July 26 (see advertisement).

Hui Makaala also encourages high school seniors and college students to submit their scholarship applications by May 31, 2026. The application is available on our website www.huimakaala.com

A celebration of fashion and Okinawan culture

Join us at the

HUI MAKAAALA

55th Annual Scholarship Fund Luncheon & Fashion Show

Sunday, July 26, 2026
Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral Ballroom



SoHo
Fashions

featured designers



The Mu'umu'u Library



ANGELS
BY THE SEA
HAWAII

RESERVATION FORM

**Reservation
Deadline:
July 8**

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please Reserve (10 seats per table):

____ Ticket(s) at \$100 each = \$ _____

____ Bronze Table(s) at \$1,000 = \$ _____

____ Silver Table(s)

____ Preferred seating & special favor at \$1,500 = \$ _____

____ Gold Table(s)

____ Enhanced Silver & premium seating at \$2,500 = \$ _____

____ Platinum Table(s)

____ Enhanced Gold, best seating & valet parking at \$5,000 = \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:
HUI MAKAAALA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Mail this form & payment to:
**HUI MAKAAALA, 94-1004 AKAKU STREET
Mililani, HI 96789**

Clubs Shinnen Enkai



Ginowan Shinnen Enkai (2/22/2026)



Haneji



Ginoza



Haneji

CLUB NEWS



Okinawa City – Goeku Son

ON MARCH 21ST, OKINAWA CITY - GOEKU SON celebrated its 98th Shinnen Enkai. Though not the oldest of local Okinawan clubs Goeku is very proud of their history and contributions to the Okinawan community. Founded by issei members living in Honolulu, they include the families of Seisen Higa, Seiyei Inamine, Kamasuke Nakasone, Yamakichi Shimabuku, Kamakame Shimabukuro, Jitsomo Teruya, Shuki Asato, Shoso Fukuhara, and Matsusuke Higa.

Our congratulations went out to four members who turned/or will turn 80 this year. They are Carole Arakaki, Lani Gohier, Donna Nakamura and Gladys Ozaki. Our 88 year old honorees included Grace Carmichael, Kenneth Hokama and Barbara Maeshiro. In addition, congratulations were given to Academic Grant Awardees Marshall Bataluna and Melanie Simmons. Our final recognition was to introduce to the membership our Uchinanchu of the Year – Zoey Simmons. Zoey is the daughter of Kermit and Pat Simmons and traces her Goeku roots from her maternal great grandparents Ushi and Shoho Kamida. She

is a student of sanshin and volunteers at the Okinawan Festival and our Shinnen Enkai.

Shinnen Enkai is normally a happy event for our members – it's a time to reconnect with old friends and family members, see all the young family members, witness the talented members of our club, and of course win door prizes (this year everyone won something – and – we also gave away three grandprizes). But. It is also a time to say goodbye to members we lost during the past year: George Fusato, Judith Morikami, Frances Ikehara, William Penhart, Harry Kochi and Stanley Yagi.

Goeku would like to thank our Officers: Presidents Stephanie Higa and Aja-Lynn Higa; V-President Janise Oshiro; Secretary Michele Costales, Treasurer Craig Fukuhara and Advisors Mae Chung, Rae Fukuda, George Kamimura, Karen Kuba-Hori and Karen Wright and the many generous members who contributed to the success of our Shinnen Enkai.



Honorees over 80 years. Unable to attend, 80 yr old Donna Nakamura, 88 yr old Kenneth Hokama and Barbara Maeshiro.



Kuba ohana, eisa drumming.



Capacity crowd at Natsunoya Teahouse.



Sanshin stylings from Zoey Simmons and Tom Talkington, students from Afuso Ryu Gensei Kai.



UOY Zoey Simmons with President's Stephanie Higa and Aja-Lynn Higa.

CLUB NEWS

Kin Chojin Kai

Kin Chojin Kai recognized their centenarians at the 2026 shinnen enkai. Lynnette Ching and Jane Ige were present to celebrate their 100th birthday. Sally Nakata (103) and Keiko Nakata (102) also joined the party! Congratulations to these young ladies!!!



Lynnette Agena Ching,
100



Jane Ige, 101



Keiko Nakata, 102



Betsy Nakada, 103



Sally Nakata, 103



Nora Ige, 100



Misayo Nishimura, 102

Ginowan Shijinkai Hawaii

BY JOY SCHOONOVER

GINOWAN SHIJINKAI HAWAII welcomed "The Year of the Horse" with a rousing Shinnen Enkai on February 22, 2026 at the Legacy 1 Ballroom. The program began with an energetic performance by HOCA Shisa Lions and ended with an exciting performance by Chinagu Eisa Hawaii. The program included recognition of our Uchinanchu of the Year (Charlene Tamanaha) and speeches by Ginowan President, Garrett Iha, and HUOA President, Bob Shiroma. We also recognized more than 30 of our "super senior" members who are in their 80's and 90's. This group of Kupuna seems to be growing each and



Ginowan Shinnen Enkai (2/22/2026)

every year, which is a testament to Okinawan longevity! Megumi Johnson and Dr. Jinichi Tokeshi (Ginowan members who were both born and raised in Okinawa), delivered the "Karii" to toast in the new year. Numerous door prizes were awarded. The winner of the "Jan Ken Po" contest also won a prize. Wilma Ogimi entertained our keiki by manning the Children's Corner. Charlene Tamanaha performed a lovely hula; and Gail Kohagura

and Natalie Watanabe entertained us with Okinawan Dance. Last but not least, emcees Kanoë Yama and Lani Kubo kept us all on schedule. Thank you to the Shinnen Enkai Committee: Joy Schoonover, Sandy Nishimoto, Ellen Higa, Robbie & Morris Umeno, Megumi Johnson, Lani Kubo and Alan Kunihisa. Reminder: Ginowan picnic is scheduled for June 28, 2026 and next year's Shinnen Enkai is planned for February 21, 2027. Save the dates!



Oroku Azajin Club

BY NATALIE TERUYA

THANK YOU TO THE Oroku Azajin Club for coming out for our Annual General Membership Meeting and Shinnen Enkai on March 1st. Even though I wasn't able to attend this year, I hear that it was a great time as always. We congratulated our Uchinanchu of the Year, Gene and Roberta Kaneshiro, and recognized our 80-year-old Keirokai Seniors. Oroku Aza is so lucky to have continued guidance and support from all of you!

We also installed our Club Officers for another 2 years of service. I would like to thank and welcome our new Oroku Azajin President, Darren Chun, and congratulate our newest Board Member, Celine Taira, a one of our Vice Presidents. And Oroku Aza is appreciative of the other Board Members who continue to serve, helping to organize our Oroku Aza events, and helping to keep our traditions strong.

Thanks again to all our members for your dedication and enthusiasm. Here's to another wonderful year together!



Yonashiro Chojin Kai 2026 Shinnen Enkai

HAWAII OKINAWA CREATIVE ARTS helped Yonashiro Chojin Kai celebrate the Year of the Horse Shinnen Enkai with a Shishimai performance on February 21 at Masa's Cafeteria. Muriel (Toma) Donnan was installed as the club's new President and Marisa Maemori as Vice President. Longtime President Gainor Miyashiro assumed the role of Treasurer. All Officers and Advisors were installed by HUOA President Robert Shiroma. The evening was filled with country store items for sale, bingo games, entertainment, lucky number drawings, games for kids, honoring our seniors and a delicious buffet offering by Masa's. The evening was topped off with a Kachashi.



Everett (5) and Elliot (8) Manabe showing their Year of the Horse masks!



Honoring Yonashiro Chojin Kai Seniors (80+): gifted with Year of the Horse goody bags.



Yonashiro Chojin Kai installing new officers and returning advisors.

CLUB NEWS

From Hawaii to Yaese: Uesato Ohana Return to Their Roots

BY THE UESATO FAMILY (GUSHICHAN SONJIN KAI)

IN HAWAII, WE often speak of the “Uchinanchu Spirit,” but for 27 members of the Uesato ohana, that spirit became a physical reality this year. Spanning three generations—from our *kupuna* to our youngest *keiki*—our family trip to Okinawa was far more than a vacation. For the majority of our group, it was the very first time we set foot in Okinawa, on the soil of our ancestors, completing a journey that began generations ago.

A WARM WELCOME HOME TO YAESE. The heart of our pilgrimage was Yaese Town, specifically the Gushichan village where the Uesato story began. We were deeply honored to be officially hosted by the Yaese Town government. This formal reception by local officials served as a bridge between our lives in Hawaii and our grandfather’s beginnings. It was a powerful reminder that while oceans may separate us, the bond of *Chochu-mui* (community spirit) remains unbroken.



Commemorative photo at Yaese Town Hall with Mayor Yasuhiro Arakaki and government officials

Walking in Grandfather’s Footsteps. A truly special highlight was sharing lunch together at **Cafe Poem**, which now stands on the very site where our grandfather was born and raised. Having curry rice within the walls of his childhood home was a surreal and moving experience for all of us. We also visited our family tomb up in the mountainside to pay our respects—a sacred moment of connection that reminded us our roots remain firmly planted in Gushichan soil. Watching the youngest generation—the great-grandchildren—bow in respect at the tomb was a vivid testament to the strength of our identity.

We concluded our visit with a heart-warming welcome party hosted by the **Yaese Town government**. We met our Auntie Kiku, who never left Okinawa, for the first time. We were entertained with traditional performances by the local students, showing us that the spirit of our heritage



Auntie Thelma Akagi at Uesato house with Cafe Poem staff



Paying respects at Uesato Family tomb site



is vibrant and thriving in the next generation. We gave our own family performances to share some Aloha from Hawaii. In all, we enjoyed a great time with our newfound family and friends. *Karii!*



Welcome Party with performances by Yaese students, dancing with Yaese mascot Shii-chan, a Hula performance by Gushichan member Haruko Yonamine, and meeting Auntie Kiku for the first time.

ICHARIBA CHOODEE. Throughout our time in Yaese, we were moved by the local hospitality and the shared history between Gushichan and Hawaii. We were constantly reminded of the Okinawan saying, *Ichariba Choodee*—“Once we meet, we are brothers and sisters.” Whether we were sharing a meal or navigating the town, we didn’t feel like tourists; we felt like family returning after a long absence.

As we return home to Hawaii and share this story with our Gushichan Sonjin Kai brothers and sisters, we carry more than just *omiyage*. We return with a renewed pride in our Uchinanchu identity and a strengthened bond to our heritage. Our roots in Gushichan are deep, and after this trip, the Uesato family bonds are stronger than ever. To the people of Yaese, we say *Ippee Nifee Deebiru*—our hearts remain with you.



Okinawan Festival Update

BY JEANNENE OSHIRO,
2026 OKINAWAN FESTIVAL CHAIR

THIS YEAR, WE FACE UNIQUE CHALLENGES

as the Hawaii Convention Center undergoes significant construction. These developments have introduced considerable uncertainties, particularly concerning the availability and usability of event space.

In preparing for the festival, we are adopting a cautious approach by planning for the worst-case scenario. This may involve downsizing the event and potentially placing some booths on hiatus. Unfortunately, the construction project takes precedence, and we must adapt to its evolving impact on our festival layout and operations.

Given these circumstances, we kindly ask all our vendors and volunteers to exercise patience and flexibility during this period of transition. We understand the value of your participation and hope to provide a clearer picture of the festival's scope and booth availability in the coming months.

We deeply appreciate your understanding and continued support! Together, we aim to navigate these challenges and preserve the spirit and success of the Okinawan Festival despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing construction.

Kanoelani Elementary School Culture Night

EVERY YEAR,

Kanoelani Elementary School organizes

the Culture Night, where families showcase their unique heritage through demonstrations such as games, crafts, dance, music, and informative displays. This year, on March 6, HUOA participated by sharing a little bit of Okinawan culture. Volunteers Charlene Higa, June Tamashiro, Kinuko Yamazato and Caro Higa joined teacher Midori Baker and brought two crafts: *shiisaa* mask coloring and card-board *paarankuu*. Children and adults alike enjoyed both activities. Thank you to Elsa Ichiki, coordinator of the event, for the invitation!



HUOA Brings Uchinanchu Aloha to Tourism Day

BY COLIN Y. SEWAKE

ON APRIL 10, HUOA LEADERS Bob Shiroma, Frances Kuba, and HUOA volunteers joined the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) and fellow organizations at Tourism Day at the Hawai'i State Capitol, to share the Uchinanchu Aloha of Hawai'i's largest all-volunteer 2-day ethnic event - our Okinawan Festival (OkiFest)! The HUOA booth also provided information about the Hawai'i-Okinawa Student Exchange Program, and other HUOA activities.

HUOA's participation in Tourism Day has generated meaningful results, including **\$25,000–\$50,000 in annual HTA grants** for OkiFest; and new partnerships, including the **2025 HUOA-Iolani Palace Family Day** and, recently, 25 legislators and business leaders traveling to Okinawa to join HUOA's 125th Anniversary of Okinawan Immigration!

Tourism Day's sweetest highlight? 500 Okinawan andagi that stole the show! *Ippei nifee debiru* to HUOA volunteers, and Senator Glenn Wakai and staff! Join us next year at Tourism Day!



Ehime Maru Memorial Clean Up

IT WAS A COOL AND WINDY SATURDAY morning on February 7, when HUOA leaders went to Kakaako Waterfront Park to clean the Ehime Maru Monument. Kenneth Saiki, director of the Ehime Maru Memorial Association, shared the story behind the tragic sinking of the Ehime Maru on February 9, 2001. We extend our gratitude to everyone who came together to honor the memories of those lost and to show support for the community.

PAN PACIFIC FESTIVAL PARADE

LOOKING FOR BANNER HOLDERS & PARADE MARCHERS

WHAT TO WEAR: BLACK PANTS OR SHORTS, ANY HUOA OR CLUB SHIRT & COMFORTABLE WALKING SHOES. UCHIKAKE (VEST) & PURPLE SASH WILL BE DISTRIBUTED ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE BASIS.

Fort DeRussey
(SARATOGA & KALAKAUA)

sunday
June 14

ASSEMBLE
AT 3:30 PM
MARCH
TIME TBA

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please email:
kim.yamamoto9@gmail.com or
tarynh@huoa.org by Saturday, June 6

EMS
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
 General Contractor, BC-23003

Earl Shimabukuro
 Owner/Designer
 Member of Aza Yogi Doshi Kai

FREE ESTIMATES

- > New Homes
- > Additions
- > Consultation
- > Maintenance
- > Renovations

- > Kitchens
- > Baths
- > Miscellaneous Repairs
- > Commercial Projects
- > Drafting

BOOK NOW

Phone: (808) 487-5959
 Email: emsdesign1@yahoo.com

Children's Okinawan Cultural Day Camp 2026

"WARABI ASHIBI" IS AN OKINAWAN TERM meaning "children at play," and is the name for the anticipated cultural summer program of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association.

First established in 1996 on Oahu, this program was designed to provide a fun and educational experience for children while learning about our Okinawan culture in a day camp atmosphere.

Children aged 8 to 13 will be able to enjoy the beauty and uniqueness of our culture. They are introduced to Okinawan history, language and songs, dance, drumming, martial arts, crafts, cooking, and plantation games. Projects are designed to provide a hands-on, fun and educational experience for the participants, varying from camp to camp. Each location selects the curriculum that best suits its participants and community. We hope you will join us!



Listing of camps and general information:

MAUI

Location: Maui Okinawa Cultural Center, 688 Nukuwai Place, Wailuku

Dates: June 2-5, 2026

Hours: 9am-3pm

Coordinating Club: Maui Okinawa Kenjin Kai

Director: Christine Hondo, Ruth Murata, Donna Tamashiro, Janet Miyahira, Elaine Fujita

Registration: \$125 for member, \$155 for first child, MOKK membership included, \$100 for second child

Number of campers: 30

Ages: Entering grades 1-8

Contact: Christine Hondo, christine.sue525@gmail.com; Maui Okinawa Kenjin Kai, 808.242.1560

OAHU

Location: Hawaii Okinawa Center

Dates: June 2-June 5, 2026

Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 8:30am-2:30pm; Friday, 8:30am-Noon

Director: Caro Higa

Registration: \$125.00, discount for multi-child households available

Application Deadline: We've reached the maximum of applicants, and we are no longer accepting submissions.

Number of campers: 60

Ages: 8-13 (Child must be 8 years old by December 2026); Junior Leaders, Ages 14-18 (must be 14 years old by December 31, 2026)

Contact: Caro Higa, caro.h@huoa.org, 808.621.1223

HAWAII - HILO



Information TBD: Check huoa.org/events/warabi-ashibi-children-at-play-childrens-day-camp for updates

HAWAII - KOHALA

Location: Kohala Village Barn

Dates: June 1, 2, 3, 2026

Hours: 9am-3pm

Coordinating Club: Kohala Okinawa Kenjin Kai

Director: Kathy Matsuda & Kimi Vakauta

Registration: \$40

Number of campers: 24

Ages: 7-12

Contact: Kathy Matsuda, kathymaloha@gmail.com, text 808.895.2025

Notice: If the printing of the newsletter occurs after the enrollment deadline for the Oahu camp, please contact **Caro Higa** at caro.h@huoa.org to check for availability. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

Note: Kauai and Kailua-Kona camps have been facing challenges as their long-time volunteers can no longer help.

Honolulu Festival 2026

BY KAREN KUBA-HORI

IT WAS A RAINY FRIDAY MORNING on March 13th, when the Hawaii United Okinawa Association received word that the Honolulu Festival Parade was cancelled for this year. However, the Festival remained open for their Saturday and Sunday festivities at the Hawaii Convention Center. So, our brave volunteers from Hui O Laulima ventured from their wonderfully dry homes and drove through the rain and wind to set-up the Okinawa Exhibit at the Convention Hall.

Rain and wind didn't stop the many crafters, organizations, and entertainers committed to the Festival. Okinawa (us) was joined by several other kenjin kai displaying information and wares from their respective prefectures. Our booth was created and manned by members and friends from Hui O Laulima. This year the booth emphasized the growth of Okinawans in Hawaii, from our first issei arrival in 1900 to today. A timeline and three floor length posters visually informed our guests of Okinawans 126 years of history living in Hawaii. Artifacts such as a bamboo suitcase, a coal fueled iron, a wood burner rice pot and a kankaran sashin were displayed for visitors to visualize what it was like during the early plantation years.

Guests that frequented the booth were treated to a taste of Okinawan sweets and a 125th Anniversary pin. In addition, if you visited us during our Saturday morning and lunch shift – we featured live sashin music, by Dexter Teruya from Nidaime Teishin Kai. For the few members of our community that have not ventured to visit the Honolulu Festival – it is an experience you would enjoy. The Festival is the 2nd largest Japanese Festival in Hawaii (our Okinawan Festival - of course is first). It features entertainment from Japan, Hawaii and the Pacific rim. Their Sake and Food section featured many vendors from Japan. Free samples were offered in many of the booths, especially those specializing in snacks, beer and sake. For those not wishing to increase their caloric intake or spend additional monies, the Festival featured for free – four outstanding Japanese films (subtitles provided).

HUOA would like to thank Hui O Laulima and their volunteers: Friday set-up: Karen Kuba-Hori, Patti Sakihara, Megumi Tsuchiya-Quinn, and Dylan Tsuchiya; Saturday: Val Teruya, Dexter Teruya, Sharon Miyashiro, Mari Fujio, Marci Moribe and Kacie Moribe; Sunday: Bertha Arakawa, Celeste Yamaguchi, Caroline Okazaki Sonnette Muramoto, and Karen Kuba-Hori. Thank you all who assisted in providing a wonderful memory for our Festival guests – until next year.





Students from Okinawa sang and played sanshin to joyfully entertain their receptive audience. Ukwanshin Kabudan provided financial assistance for 25 college students (local, out-of-state, international) to attend this year's Summit.

“Against all Odds” The 2026 Loochoo Identity Summit

BY D. YAMAGUSIKU

IN WHAT SEEMED TO BE an insurmountable task against unforgiving weather conditions, the 12th annual Loochoo Identity Summit was held on March 14–15 at the Pagoda Hotel banquet room with a 100-plus attendees. After having to cancel the Friday night opening Summit session at Windward Community College, the dedicated staff of Ukwanshin Kabudan and their team of “never die” friends and supporters ventured into the darkened building at the Kaneohe campus to retrieve truckloads of supplies and equipment to set up a meeting space at Pagoda Hotel. Incredible!

In the words of Eric Wada, co-director of Ukwanshin Kabudan, “Wattā chimutīchi sataru kutu ya tin nu kagan. Our unity is the mirror of our fate. The weather was



A very interesting and informative mini-lesson on playing Okinawan music by Norman-shinshii and Brandon-shinshii on their sanshin.

actually a blessing to grow our Indigenous strength in moving forward while looking back, and in the end, at least for us, the *Mūtuyā* that we were trying to provide for our community became real and internalized for us. It shows in our relationships to others that we have nurtured through our purpose to keep connected to the *Mūtuyā*...our Indigenous roots, our origins, that we were provided with such awesome support, which gave us the tools and spaces we needed to “feed” our people. Lessons are not always easy, and Indigenous knowledge comes with lots of ups and downs. However, in the end, we remain resilient. Our connection to *nadayashiku*, a conciliatory action, is why we (ancestors inclusive) are still here. Our colonizers have tried to erase us, but we have survived; we are our ancestors.”

Keynote speakers Genae and Tahau Thompson, Māori cultural practitioners from Aotearoa, shared the efforts to revitalize their indigenous language, which mirrored similar strategies employed to normalize spoken Hawaiian in our local community. Their sharing of the attempts to preserve and protect their native language was an invitation to do the same for *shimakutuba*, the indigenous languages of the Ryūkyū Islands.



Theme for the 2026 LIS.

After stimulating small group discussions and large group sharing to explore “Who is Uchinānchu,” many attendees had much to ponder after such a thought-provoking question. Taking a ‘hard look’ at the different issues affecting our Okinawan identity is a hallmark of the Loochoo Identity Summit. It can be quite unsettling but also invigorating at the same time.

The Summit closed with delightful dance performances by Yukie Shiroma and the Shōshin Dance Company, whose quirky dance movements enraptured the attentive audience. Musical talents were on display as Norman Kaneshiro, Derek Fujio, Brandon Ufugusuku Ing, and Jesse Shiroma created innovative stylings on various musical instruments that piqued the interest of the engrossed audience.

Joyce Hamada, who is a frequent participant at the Summit, remarked that, “For sure, our ancestors were at our side all weekend. From the opening ceremonies/protocol to the last kariyushi circle, I enjoyed every moment and left with a warm heart. Additionally, I was pleased to see so many of the younger Gen Xs and Zs in attendance. There is hope in the future.” 🌍



Some of the many volunteers who helped to ensure that the Loochoo Identity Summit could “go on” under the most dire weather conditions. They did it!!



Panel discussion on Diversity of Shimanchu Perspective.

Your voice matters.
 Be **heard**.
 Be **involved**.
 Be in **research**.
Enroll in CARE!




“
 By participating in research,
 you will help give a voice to
 the need for culturally tailored
 programs and treatments
 that you would want.

Dr. Van Park

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE IF YOU:

- Identify as Asian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and/or Pacific Islander
- Are 18 years or older
- Can **read** and **speak** one of the following languages: English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hawaiian, Hindi, Ilocano, Japanese, Korean, Samoan, Tagalog or Vietnamese

For more information, visit
<https://go.hawaii.edu/MWb>



Or contact us at:
UHCOA@hawaii.edu
 Funded by NIH/NIA R01AG083926
 UCSF IRB Protocol Number: 23-59121

The Center on Aging at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa wants to help **improve research participation and reduce health disparities** in Alzheimer’s disease, aging, caregiving, and other health issues in Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities. **Okinawan communities are underrepresented** in this effort which makes current research less representative of our local populations.

Can you help? Registration is easy and can be done online. For more information, please visit: <https://go.hawaii.edu/MWb>



UNIVERSITY of HAWAI‘I* at MĀNOA
**THOMPSON SCHOOL OF
 SOCIAL WORK & PUBLIC HEALTH**



Community Sunday at HoMA

A S PART OF “Worlds Within”: Toshiko Takaezu’s exhibition, on February 15, 2026, HUOA partnered with the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) to help bring Okinawan culture to life through HoMA’s Community Sunday—a special day to share culture with families.

The program began at the Central Courtyard stage with a performance by Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai Hawaii Frances Nakachi Ryubu Dojo, featuring vibrant Okinawan dance. Visitors gathered from the start to enjoy the energy and grace of each performance.

Next, Hawaii Okinawa Creative Arts presented a contemporary interpretation of shishimai, a favorite among many guests. During intermission,

attendees were invited to explore the museum and join hands-on activities throughout the space. In the Chinese Courtyard, Emily Takara showcased her Hajichi display, offering temporary tattoos and sharing her family history with both adults and children. In another corner, a long-time HoMA volunteer read the book “The Okinawan Princess.”

In the Kinau and Mediterranean Courtyards, visitors could color their own shiisaa masks, as well as coloring pages featuring numbers and Okinawan words—an engaging way to learn language while having fun.

Throughout the morning, inside Toshiko Takaezu’s exhibit room, Dexter Teruya played and sang songs

on his sanshin. The quiet atmosphere of the room—filled with Takaezu’s artwork—helped make the musical experience feel even more meaningful for visitors. In addition, brothers Keahi and Keanu Ingram shared their music in the same space.

After intermission, Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Hawaii took the stage, presenting drumming and rhythm in true festival spirit. They also distributed small cardboard paranku for the public to play, and invited them to join in for a mini lesson.

By early afternoon, rain began to fall steadily. With that shift, Nomura Ryu Dento Ongaku Kyokai Hawaii Shibu & Azama Honryu, and Allison Yanagi Ryukyu Dance Studio moved



HUOA at 75: Built by Our Clubs, Strengthened by Our Community

THIS YEAR MARKS the 75th Anniversary of the Hawaii United Okinawa Association (HUOA)—a time to honor our beginnings and look ahead to the future we continue to shape together.

Founded by just ten member clubs, HUOA remains grounded in its mission to promote, perpetuate, and preserve Okinawan culture in Hawai'i. At the heart of this mission is *chimugukuru*—a spirit of compassion, connection, and care passed down from our ancestors.

For 75 years, this spirit has lived through our music and dance, our gatherings and celebrations, and the relationships that bind our community. It is what defines us and continues to guide us forward.

As we reflect on this milestone, we invite each member club to share its stories, honor those who carry our values, and help bring our mission to life throughout this anniversary year. Because HUOA is more than an organization—it is all of us.


Mahalo for being part of this journey.

CALL TO ACTION FOR MEMBER CLUBS

We encourage clubs to share their stories through newsletters, social media, or at gatherings. Submissions may also be shared with Jodie Ching, 75th Anniversary Chair and HUOA Media Team member, for possible feature on HUOA platforms (text 808.721.5229 or email oneluckylocal@gmail.com).

their performances to the theater, where they continued to delight us with dance and music. Allison sensei thoughtfully explained the meanings behind each dance and song, and encouraged the audience to feel like part of the performance.

Thank you to HoMA and their team for the opportunity to share Okinawan culture with the community, to the volunteers who offered their time and expertise, and to all attendees who showed such sincere interest. We look forward to more opportunities like this! 🌸




HUOA STORE

Miree Ya Kugani

Our Bright Hopeful Future

Commemorative Booklet
Celebrating 125 Years of
Uchinanchu in Hawaii

Make this keepsake a part of collection- sharing the legacies of our past, our vibrant present day, and the dreams and hopes of our future. Learn about the journey of Uchinanchu in Hawaii as well as reflections on the wonderful celebrations of 2025!



\$25

\$20 each for orders of 10 copies or more

GET YOUR COPY!

www.shopHUOA.com

A Homecoming to Toshiko Takaezu: Worlds Within

NESTLED AMONGST THE hustle and bustle of Urban Honolulu, the Honolulu Museum of Art (HoMA) stands as a serene, cherished oasis—a deliberate contrast to the vibrant energy of busy Beretania Street. Beyond its tranquil courtyards and airy galleries, the museum is preparing to host a profoundly significant exhibition, *Toshiko Takaezu: Worlds Within*.

Marking its final destination on a two-year national tour, this retrospective celebrates the life and monumental work of the late 20th-century Hawai'i-born artist, Toshiko Takaezu. Beginning February 14 and running until July 26, 2026, the exhibition showcases the celebrated artist's ceramics—for which she is most renowned—alongside her textiles, paintings, and other media.

This engagement is no mere stop on a tour; it is a true homecoming. Takaezu's journey as an artist began here in the islands. Born in Pepe'ekeo on Hawai'i Island, she spent her formative years across Hawai'i Island and Maui, growing up as one of eleven children to Shinsa and Kama Takaezu. Her parents arrived in Hawaii in the early 1900s from Gushikawa, Okinawa, taking on the demanding work of farm laborers in the sugar plantations.

In the 1940s, Takaezu moved to Honolulu, starting her professional life at the Hawaii Potter's Guild. She would go on to study at the Honolulu Academy of Arts (now HoMA) and the University of Hawai'i under ceramics master Claude Horan. This "homecoming" exhibition, which originally debuted at the Isamu

Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum in New York City in 2024, is described as a full-circle moment—a deeply intimate encounter with an artist whose roots and earliest inspirations were shaped by the very soil, culture, and beauty of the Hawaiian Islands. She held her first solo museum



TOSHIKO TAKAEZU WORLDS WITHIN

ON VIEW THROUGH JULY 26

Experience 70 years of work by this groundbreaking Hawai'i artist.

HoMA Honolulu
Museum
of Art

Open Wednesday to Sunday
honoluluuseum.org

ORGANIZED BY
noguchi

MADE POSSIBLE BY
**HENRY
LUCE
FOUNDATION**

terra Foundation for
American Art

exhibition at the Honolulu Academy of Arts in 1959, and her return now to the institution that nurtured her is a powerful commemoration.

Takaezu's career eventually took her to the continental US, where she taught at institutions like the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Princeton University before settling in Quakertown, New Jersey, to create her home and studio. Yet, the influence of her upbringing is indelible in her work, particularly in her signature "closed form" ceramic sculptures. These pieces—ranging from palm-sized to immersive, completely sealed save for a tiny pinhole—often include internal "rattles," adding a hidden, playful element of sound to the static art form.

To further deepen the connection, *Toshiko Takaezu: Worlds Within*



also features works commissioned by HoMA from contemporary Hawai'i ceramics artist Dane Hi'ipoi Nakama. Inspired by Takaezu's closed forms, Nakama's pieces invite visitors to engage directly by holding and gently

shaking them, experiencing the distinct sounds each vessel creates. HoMA has scheduled a calendar of programs to accompany this monumental homecoming. *For more information, visit honoluluuseum.org.*

Celebrate the New Year!



Lunch/Dinner Menu A
Mochiko Chicken, Teriyaki Beef, Fried Noodles, White Rice, Tossed Salad with Chef's Choice of Dressing
\$11.35 per person + tax



Lunch/Dinner Menu B
Boneless BBQ Teriyaki Chicken, Breaded Fish, Meat Jun, Tossed Salad and more!
\$13.50 per person + tax



Lunch/Dinner Menu C
Chicken Katsu, Sauteed Fish, Teriyaki Beef, Somen Salad and more!
\$15.50 per person + tax



Lunch/Dinner Menu D
Braised Boneless Hoisin Short Rib, Macadamia Nut Crusted Fish and more!
\$19.00 per person + tax

ALL MENUS INCLUDE FOOD IN DISPOSABLE PANS AND/OR PLATTERS, DISPOSABLE PLATES, EATING UTENSILS & NAPKINS. SERVING UTENSILS ARE NOT INCLUDED. MENUS AND PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.



CURRENT HUOA MEMBERS RECEIVE 10% DISCOUNT OFF FOOD ORDERS

Order online at shop.acateredexperience.com or call 808-677-7744 for more information



Diane and other playwrights for the current season

Memory Beads by Diane Aoki - a Play Exploring Okinawan Family Stories

THE FIRST TIME anything resembling the current play came to be was in 2016, an entry titled *In Denial* in the One-Minute Play Festival held in Honolulu. In 2019, my daughter, Dance, also a playwright, was teaching a playwriting class at the Aloha Theatre in Kona. I developed some scenes as exercises for class. The call for submissions to the *Mahalo Ayakari: Sharing and Celebrating Our Okinawa - Hawaii Heritage with Gratitude* anthology motivated me to develop the play, and 3 scenes were included in that 2019 publication. By 2022, as one of many COVID projects, it had become a full-length play, which I brought to be read by the Keakalehua zoom play reading hui. They encouraged me, and I continued to work on it to pursue production. In 2023, my one-minute play was included in *Malama i nā Kahu Malama* (Care for the Caregivers), a play festival presented by PlayBuilders Hawai'i at Kumu Kahua Theatre as part of their Dark Night Series. Finally, last year around this time, I was told that *Memory Beads* would be in the current season.

I was born in Kona. On my father's side, my great-grandparents came from Kumamoto in 1891 and settled in Kona. On my mother's side, my grandfather first came in 1907, and my grandmother in 1924. They are both from Ohta Village, Gushikawa, Okinawa, and settled in Hilo. My parents met and married in Kona. I was raised on Guam, went away to college in Los Angeles, went back to Guam for a while, then came to Honolulu for graduate school. I have had plays produced in Los Angeles, Guam, and Honolulu. My career was



Diane at the reception to announce the current season

as a public school teacher in Guam, Honolulu, and Kona. Writing has always been my creative outlet.

I moved back to Kona when my daughter went away to college, and my mom was a widow; I later became her caregiver. In Kona, my mom and I joined the Kona Okinawa Kenjin Kai. After she passed, I moved back to Honolulu and joined the Gushikawa Shijin Kai and the Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii. I was coordinating a trip to Okinawa with my cousins, and we had wanted to make contact with relatives. They were very helpful, though we were not able to meet any relatives on this trip.

In *Memory Beads*, the main character, Joni, fears that Alzheimer's will take hold of her mother and herself, as it did her grandmother. She collects "memory beads": her family's immigration story from Okinawa, anecdotes her mother shares about her life, histories unearthed in a family genealogy, and narratives of her own journey toward self-acceptance and empowerment.

Memory Beads opens on May 28 at the Kumu Kahua Theatre, runs for 5 weeks, and closes on June 28. Get your tickets at www.kumukahua.org/tickets

HAWAII OKINAWA CENTER CALENDAR

HOT 'ŌLELO HAWAII OKINAWA TODAY' & SPECIAL PROGRAMS SCHEDULE



Important notes for our calendar entries:

- All events may be subject to change.
- EC and BOD meetings will be held in a Zoom format until further notice

MAY 2026

- 5 Okinawan Festival Core Committee meeting, Online only at 7pm
- 7 Executive Council meeting, Online only at 7pm
- 21 Board of Directors meeting, Online only at 7pm
- 25 HOC OFFICE CLOSED- MEMORIAL DAY

JUNE 2026

- 2 Okinawan Festival Core Committee meeting, Online only at 7pm
- 11 HOC OFFICE CLOSED- KING KAMEHAMEHA DAY
- 23 Okinawan Festival General Committee meeting, HOC at 7pm

CLASSES · OTHER MEETINGS:

- Sanshin: Thursdays @ 7pm
- Shorin-ryu Seibukan Karate Class: Thursdays 6:30pm-8:30pm
- Ichi Go Ichi E: 1st and 3rd Tuesday @ 7pm
- Ikebana: 2nd Tuesday @ 7pm
- Karaoke: 3rd Thursday @ 10am
- Monday Crafters: Mondays @ 9am
- Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii Board of Directors meeting: 3rd Saturday @ 9am

For more information, please call 808-676-5400 or email info@huoa.org

'Ōlelo Community Media Channel NATV 53 broadcasts a new Hawaii Okinawa Today, half an hour episode that premieres on the 4th Friday of each month at 7:00pm and repeat Saturdays at 5:00pm. Special programs will also be scheduled with dates and times noted below.

In addition to these fixed time slots, these programs are eligible to be considered for additional airings when appropriate airtime is available.

All 'Ōlelo shows are concurrently streamed on the Internet at www.olelo.org. Our latest shows are available on-demand on the 'Ōlelo website: select Tune In, then 'ŌleloNet On Demand, then type in "Okinawa" in the Search Archives box. The HUOA website www.huoa.org also has links to the site. In addition, HUOA shows on 'Ōlelo with their air dates are published on HUOA's website huoa.org/watch-and-listen



huoa.org/watch-and-listen

You can also download the 'Ōlelo Mobile App! Share the QR code with your friends and family and they'll be able to watch your show using any mobile device using the App.

APRIL 24 AT 7PM; 25 AT 5PM, MAY 2, 9, AND 16 AT 5PM

HOT: 2025 Okinawan Festival featuring Hooqe Ryu Hana Nuuzi No Kai Nakasone Dance Academy, Yuttai Kwattai

MAY 22 AT 7PM; 23 AT 5PM, JUNE 6, 13, AND 20 AT 5PM

HOT: 2025 Okinawan Festival featuring Hawaii Okinawa Creative Arts, Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Hawaii

JUNE 26 AT 7PM; 27 AT 5PM, JULY 4, 11, AND 18 AT 5PM

HOT: 2025 Okinawan Festival featuring Ryukyu Koten Afuso Ryu Onagaku Kenkyuu Choichi Kai USA/Hawaii, Choichi Kai Akebono Sound

MAY 7 AT 6PM; 10 AT 10PM, 11 AT 10:30AM, 13 AT 3PM

SPECIAL: Hawaii Okinawa Student Exchange Program Aloha Party



Why Mana-Su?
Gut Health!

Direct to your door:
www.HealthyManaSu.com

Available at:
Marukai, Don Quijote, Times

Okinawan Super Vinegar



Fermentation is the key. By instilling natural organic fermented liquids into your digestive system daily, it:

- Flushes out Toxins
- Cleanses your Digestive Track
- Taste Great!



Okinawa is one of the five blue zones in the world, based on longevity, lifestyle and diet, according to Dan Beuttner, founder. We talked about the importance of gut health when I cooked for him.
- Chef Alan Wong

LEARN MORE: Call: (808) 780-3440, Email: sharemanasu@gmail.com
Guaranteed Satisfaction or we will make it right.

Tune in every Sunday from 4:00-5:00 pm on KZOO AM 1210 for an hour of Okinawan culture and connection. The show features Okinawan music, voices, and stories, with conversations with guests from across the Hawaii United Okinawa Association. Together, we explore Okinawan culture, lived experiences, and the events shaping our community today—celebrating tradition, legacy, and present-day involvement within Hawaii's Okinawan community.

Can't listen live? Catch clips and replays on our social media channels and new Spotify account.





Hawaii United Okinawa Association
94-587 Ukee Street
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797



54TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

When: **May 23 and 24**

Where: **Ala Wai Municipal Golf Course**

Starting times: 6:00am to 9:30am.

Two-day Entry Fee - \$160

Super Seniors (Sunday Only) - \$80

Includes green fees, cart fees, City and County
of Honolulu user fees, and awards banquet.

Additional Banquet Tickets - \$25

IMPORTANT!!
ONLY A FEW SPOTS
REMAINING. CONTACT
THE OFFICE IF YOU'RE
INTERESTED IN
GOLFING.

COMPLETE YOUR
ENTRY FORM ONLINE
FOR HARD COPY FORMS:
808-676-5400 / INFO@HUOA.ORG



Entry deadline:
First 120 players or May 8, 2026,
whichever comes first.

Hawaii Okinawan Invitational Golf Tournament
Sponsored by the Hawaii United Okinawa Association