



UCHINANCHU

THE VOICE OF THE HAWAII UNITED OKINAWA ASSOCIATION

www.huoa.org

September/October 2026 | Issue #224 | Circulation: 8,000



President's Message

Mahalo From the Bottom of My Heart



AS WE CELEBRATE HUOA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY, I've been reminded once again that our organization is built not only on our traditions and history, but most importantly, on people, our Uchinanchu and Uchinanchu at heart who give their time, energy, and heart to keep our culture and community strong.

From the bottom of my heart, *Ippee Niffee Deebiru* to the many volunteers who stepped forward and gave so much of themselves to this year's Okinawan Festival. There were challenges along the way, but time and again, you stepped up, pivoted, helped one another, and found a way to make things happen.

That spirit of *Yuimaaru* and *Chimugukuru* is what makes our HUOA 'ohana so special. Whether you were working behind the scenes, helping a club, preparing food, supporting our cultural programs, assisting guests, or simply lending a hand wherever you were needed, you made a difference. We could not do this without you!

I also want to recognize Jeannene Oshiro, Chair of the 44th Okinawan Festival, and her Leadership Team for guiding this year's Festival. Jeannene will share more about this year's Festival in her upcoming article, so I'll leave the Festival story to her. For me, I simply want to say mahalo to Jeannene, her Festival Operations Team, and especially the thousands of volunteers who came together to make it happen.

LOOKING AHEAD

On November 8 at the Sheraton Waikiki, we will celebrate the HUOA 75th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee and 2026 Legacy Award, honoring three very deserving members of our community:

- Dr. Ryokichi "Rik" Higashionna
- Barbara and Kenji Maeshiro
- Ryan Shimabukuro

These individuals have each made meaningful contributions to our community, and this celebration gives us an opportunity to recognize and thank them for their years of service, leadership, and commitment.

I hope you'll all come out and join us as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary and honor these deserving members of our HUOA 'ohana. *Chibariyo!*

WARMEST ALOHA,

Bob Shiroma

BOB SHIROMA

UCHINANCHU

Ippee Niffee 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 Niffee Deebiru* to our donors for supporting *Uchinanchu*.

Uchinanchu newsletter donors from July 1 to August 31, 2026

Anonymous	Ryan Tohara
Ellen C. Higa	Sunny S. Tominaga
Frederick Higa	Amy E. Tsuru
William & Loreen Leong	Mr. & Mrs. George Uchima
James T. Miyashiro	Lisa H. Uyesato
Jenny Omokawa	Walter W. Wauke
Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Tamashiro	Carol Yasuda 🇺🇸



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 Okinawan Festival Recap
- 8 FEASTival
- 10 Preserving Our Legacy
- 12 Mensore: Kiyama Shoten Brings Ishigaki Sounds to Hawai'i; Yaese Town Students; Nago City Junior High Students
- 13 Club News: Department of Commerce, Industry and Labor Visit HOC; HUOA Welcomes Vice Governor Tsuguyoshi Miyagi
- 14 Club News: Hui O Laulima, HOL Cultural Grant Awards; 2026 Hui Makaaka Scholarship Recipients
- 16 Club News: Hui Makaaka's 55th Annual Scholarship and Fashion Show
- 18 Club News: Ginowan Shijinkai Hawaii,
- 19 Club News: Chatan Kadena Chojin Kai, Two Incredible Aquariums Come Together
- 20 Club News: Yaese Town's Historic Youth Exchange
- 21 HUOA Softball
- 22 Wahine Volleyball UH Night
- 24 Kodomo Konkuru Yūshūshō
- 26 Uchinaa Junior Study
- 28 The Sound of the Kutu Continues to Echo In Hawaii
- 29 Children's Cultural Day Camp; Autumn Matsuri
- 30 Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Hawaii Celebrates a Milestone Landmark!
- 31 HOC Calendar; HOT Schedule

2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Year at a Glance!

- Nov 8 The Diamond Jubilee, Sheraton Waikiki
- Nov 28-29 Winter Craft and Gift Fair, Legacy I/II
- Jan 16 Uchinanchu of the Year and Installation Banquet, HOC

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

NOTE TO READERS Political campaign advertisements are paid for by the candidate, candidate committee, and/or supporters. Campaign ads provided herein do not represent or reflect the views or opinions of HUOA and HUOA does not endorse, support, or provide any actual or in-kind contributions to any issue, candidate, candidate campaign committee, or political action committee.

Find Us Online

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



www.huoa.org



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



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



[YouTube.com/c/Hawaii UnitedOkinawaAssociation](https://www.youtube.com/c/HawaiiUnitedOkinawaAssociation)

WE BUY LAND in Okinawa



Esperanza
REAL ESTATE

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!

ON THE COVER

44th Annual Okinawan Festival. Photo courtesy of Milton Hee.

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

Okinawan Festival



Okinawan Festival Recap

BY JEANNENE OSHIRO

IT IS WITH A GRATEFUL HEART that I reflect on our 44th Okinawan Festival. Our “new look” highly anticipated 2026 Okinawan Festival finally arrived after many months of planning. Faced with logistical, operational, and weather challenges, we needed to think outside the box. Our collaboration with Chef Brooke Tadena and the Hawaii Prince team offered a new twist to our Festival, but we weren’t sure how well that might be received. There was excitement and a bit of nerves, as we really didn’t know what to expect regarding attendance and our logistical changes.

We did our best to make sure our Festival remained a way to share our Uchinanchu food, cultural experiences, arts & crafts and more. As we await true numbers, I can only share my personal observations.

On day 1, as the rope dropped to allow attendees in, it was great to see a good number of attendees rushing in. Moments later, we assembled to officially kick off the start



PHOTOS ON SPREAD COURTESY OF CLIFF KIMURA, MILTON HEE, BRANDON MIYAGI, AND ERICK TSUKIYAMA

Okinawan Festival



of the Festival. Looking at all those smiling faces, some familiar and some new, it gave me a sense of pride to know that all our hard work was about to be put to the test and experienced by all attendees.

Day 2 usually has less attendees but I was pleasantly surprised that it seemed we had more attendees than Saturday. The seats were filled and the traffic on the concourse was pleasantly crowded.

As Bob and I made our rounds on both days it truly was a moving experience for me to see all our volunteers working their hardest to assure a successful Festival. I know it's been said time and time again, that it is because of all of our volunteers and that special *yumaru* spirit that we are able to come together with the same goal of succeeding in whatever we do.

As Festival chair, I gained a deeper understanding and insight to the behind the scenes workings of our annual Festival, thanks to a dedicated team who eat, sleep and breathe Okifest. I am forever indebted to them.

My deepest heartfelt *ippe niffee deebiru* to our Executive Council, Board of Directors and all our volunteers for the support and hard work. Let us take a well deserved rest and recoup as we look forward to next year's Festival.

Chibariyo!

Jeannene

Let us know how we did. Complete the 2026 Okinawan Festival Survey

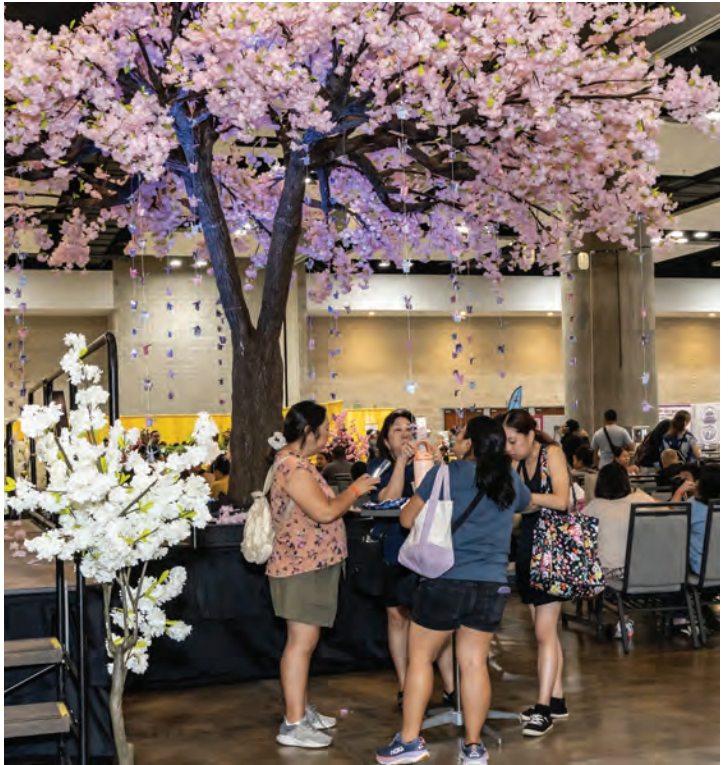


Okinawan Festival



PHOTOS ON SPREAD COURTESY OF CLIFF KIMURA, MILTON HEE, BRANDON MIYAGI, AND ERICK TSUKIYAMA

Okinawan Festival



Mahalo for FEASTing!

BY SHARI TAMASHIRO

THE 7TH OKINAWAN FESTIVAL (Sept 7–21) had 20 restaurants and food related businesses creating Okinawan and Okinawan-inspired specials. What started out as a way to help our Okinawan and Okinawan-at-Heart local businesses survive the pandemic shutdown has evolved into a fun celebration of Okinawan ingredients and cuisine.

The biggest *mahalo nui loa* and *ippei nifee deebiru* to everyone who feasted to support participating businesses!

THERE NEEDS TO BE A DEMAND

When Hidemitsu Tamayose opened Hide-Chan Restaurant in 2001, there were no Okinawan dishes on his regular menu because he did not think they would sell. It was only at the urging of regular customers that he later added in Okinawan dishes. If there is no demand for Okinawan (or Okinawan-inspired) dishes, then restaurants will not feature them on their menus. It's that simple. And you know what? When Hide-Chan Restaurant closed in 2022, half of the menu was Okinawan dishes (and wildly popular).

There are a handful of restaurants that feature Okinawan dishes on their regular menus that need our continued support. And they need to know that it's still worth it to keep these dishes on their menus. Utage Restaurant has 11 Okinawan dishes like Nabera Champuru and Kandabajushi. Sunrise Restaurant has 11 dishes like Okinawan Yakisoba and Mama's Champuru. Masa & Joyce has 9 dishes like Abura Miso and Jyu Shi Me. Sakana Grill has 9 dishes like Moyashi Champuru and 5 other Champuru. Izakaya Naru has 8 dishes like Okinawan Taco Rice in a hot stone bowl and Jimami Tofu.

We need to let Aloha Tofu Factory know there is a demand for Jimami (peanut) Tofu and that we will buy it when Sunrise Restaurant makes Nakami Soup. Izumi of Izu's Mochi also needs to know there is a demand for her to make Okinawan Sweet Potato Kasa Muuchi. Is it worth it for her to add it to her regular rotation of mochi she sells at

the Saturday Kakaako Farmers Market? Only if we create a demand for it!

OKINAWAN INGREDIENTS AND DISHES RE-IMAGINED

What I love is seeing chefs start to think about how they can utilize Okinawan ingredients like kokuto, bittermelon, and Okinawan sweet potato in really creative ways. Chef Dean & Deluca's Afternoon Tea features Okinawan Sweet Potato Vichyssoise which was created by Chef Junichi, Beer Lab HI created an Okinawan Sweet Potato beer, Garrett of Chibi Confectionery with his Okinawan Sweet Potato Crunch, and Chef Gary of SKY Waikiki whipped up Okinawan Sweet Potato Hummus.

CONNECTING CULTURES

Hawaii's plantation history resulted in a unique local food identity, forged by diverse immigrant groups sharing the foods and cooking

methods of their motherland in the plantation camps. One of the joys of Okinawan FEASTival is the connection of cultures like with Chef RJ of Ilaya Eatery. Chef RJ has delighted in learning about Okinawan ingredients and discovering how much they have in common with Filipino ingredients and dishes. I took Chef RJ some kasa muuchi from Izu's Mochi and he immediately saw similarities with tupig (Filipino grilled rice cake). He grilled the muuchi in the style of tupig and made it even tastier!

Chef Keaka of Kapa Hale has been re-imagining Andagi in wildly creative ways with Pandandagi (pandan flavored andagi), ANDA da Sea (Crispy Crab, Shrimp & Corn Hush Puppy Andagi), and AndaGHEE (andagi fried in GHEE, Indian style). I find it a joy to taste the wonderful creations these local Okinawan-at-Heart chefs are whipping up!

Mahalo nui loa and *ippei nifee deebiru* for supporting Okinawan FEASTival! I will continue to run it as long as it can help our Okinawan and Okinawan-at-Heart restaurants and as long as you all keep FEASTing.



Executive Chef Blake, Splash Bar with his Okinawan Taco Rice



Shari Tamashiro and Chef RJ of Ilaya Eatery

ANDREWS

ADVISORY ASSOCIATES, LLC

Wealth Managers

Retirement | Investments | Tax Planning

- Create a retirement income strategy
 - Make smarter tax decisions
 - Protect what you've built

Our Wealth Management Team



Christina June Brown
CFP®, AIF®



Travis T. Tsukayama
CFP®, CFA



Scott H. Tonai
CFP®, AIF®



Owen Lahr
CFP®

Visit www.AndrewsLLC.com:



Our Location:

Pauahi Tower | Bishop Square
1003 Bishop St. # 1808
Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone 808-521-4015

- Get started with a **FREE One-Page Financial Plan**
- Original articles and videos posted every week
- Join our mailing list to receive invitations to webinars, seminars and other educational events!

Preserving Our Legacy

2025 TO 2026 ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM



THANK YOU TO the many members, friends, and businesses that have responded to our Annual Giving Campaign. Since November 2025, we have received 828 donations, representing \$186,065.49. We are deeply grateful for the confidence you have shown us. Let's continue embracing the theme "Chimugukuru – Polish, Protect and Be Proud" and look forward to new promises and challenges. Through your continued contributions, we can have successful cultural programs and upkeep our home, the Hawaii Okinawa Center. Thank you again for your support. *Ippee Niffee Deebiru!*



SCAN TO MAKE A DONATION

Contributions from the Annual Giving Campaign and other non-specified monetary donations from July 1 to August 31, 2026

DIAMOND \$5,000 +

Island Insurance Foundation
Oigin Furusato Promotion Fund
Dexter T. & Valerie S. Teruya
In Memory of Aaron Yoshinobu Uyema
by Kevin Y. Uyema

PLATINUM \$4,999 – \$ 2,500

JTB USA, Inc.
Kyo-ya Hotels & Resorts

GOLD \$2,499 – \$1,000

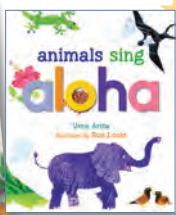
In Memory of Frank & Tomoko Kuba
by Caroline Okazaki & Louise Kuba
In Memory of Thomas, Alice & Daniel Kuba
by Caroline Okazaki & Louise Kuba
In Memory of Masao Shiroma
by Leslie Shiroma
In Memory of Hiroshi & Tsuru Shiroma
by H. Shiroma, Inc.

SILVER \$999 – \$500

In Honor of Dr. Ryokichi Higashionna
by Tsugunori Toma
In Memory of Francis T. Higa and Kameko Higa
by Charles A. & Helen K. Higa
In Memory of Sharon Naoye Kaneshiro
by Charlotte Kaneshiro

Season's Readings

Two Local Children's Books to Delight All Year!



Author Vera Arita is a retired DOE teacher and a longtime member of Haneji club (third generation). Her books are great holiday gifts!



Books are available at
www.mutualpublishing.com,
amazon.com, and in retail stores in Hawai'i.

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



Preserving Our Legacy

2025 TO 2026 ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM



BRONZE \$499 – \$250

Anonymous

Kelly Higa

Jed Miyazaki

The Koaniani Fund, an advised fund of
Silicon Valley Community Foundation

In Memory of Tokushin & Kami Yara
Nakamoto by Jan Nakamoto Dilley

CONTRIBUTOR \$249 – \$100

Lynn Miyahira

Ethel Serikaku

Janel Toguchi

Amy E. Tsuru

Kwynn Uyehara

Live Long and Plant LLC

Aimee Shirota Yatsushiro

In Honor of the 100th birthday
celebration of Alice Ashitomi
by Helene Kuwaye

In Memory of Kameju

& Hatsue Akamine
by Annie Chang

In Memory of Mildred Tagami
by Chatan-Kadena Chojin Kai

In Memory of Virginia

Y. Goya by Hawaii
Shuri-Naha Club

In Memory of Pauline
Arakaki by Hawaii
Shuri-Naha Club

FRIEND \$99 AND UNDER

Anonymous

Gayle Ambrosecchio

Mae Chung

Jennifer Clarke

Tania Ginoza

Michael Higa

Stephanie Higa

Reiko Kobayashi

Dawn Mashita

Debbie Miguel

Karen Nakasone

Reid Nakasone

Dathan Nicholson

Sumner Ohye

Paypal Giving Fund

David Tokuda

Robin Uyeunten

Yaese Student
Exchange

In Memory of
Louise Tamashiro by
Okinawan Genealogical
Society of Hawaii



Weeknight Dinner Special

Get a discounted price for weeknight
(Monday-Thursday, non-holiday) events!

Now through December 2026, Monday-Thursday
(non-holiday), 4-hour dinner event, smaller minimum
guest requirement, \$3-\$10 off the regular menu price
(depending on the menu).

Contact us for more information.

CURRENT HUOA MEMBERS RECEIVE
10% DISCOUNT OFF FOOD ORDERS

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



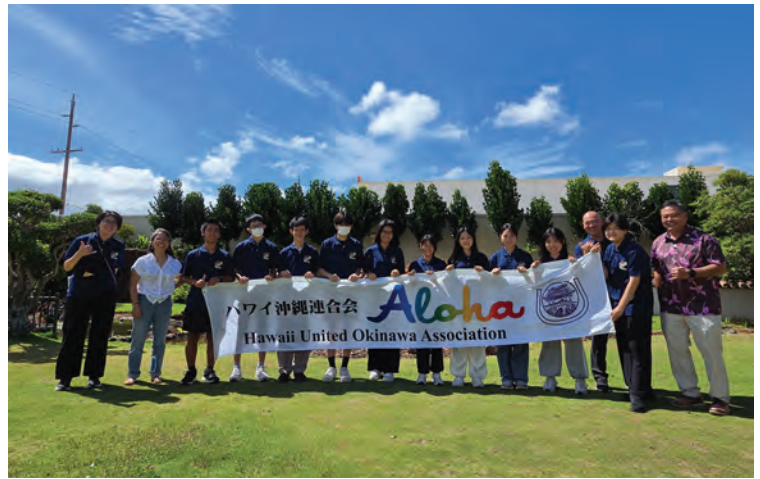
Kiyama Shoten Brings Ishigaki Sounds to Hawai'i!

KIYAMA SHOTEN, A DYNAMIC FOLK-POP TRIO from Ishigaki Island, Okinawa, brought the exciting sounds and spirit of Okinawa to Hawai'i.

Made up of three cousins—Ryosa, Daichan, and Masuto—the group wowed audiences with their fresh, contemporary Okinawan sound and an energetic collaboration with Chinagu Eisa at the Hawaii Ukulele Festival!

During their first visit to the Hawai'i Okinawa Center, the trio enjoyed connecting with Hawai'i's Okinawan community and shared their hope to return and perform again.

We hope to welcome Kiyama Shoten back soon for more great music, energy, and Uchinanchu spirit!



Yaese Town Students visited HOC on August 19



Students from various Junior High Schools across Nago City visited HOC on August 20



FREE QUOTE!
aceautoglass.net

REPLACE WITH ACE!
Serving Hawaii for 3 Generations
Mobile Service • All Makes & Models

AGSC Certified Calibration Centers
ADAS • Forward Collision Avoidance

2026 BEST OF HAWAII
FIRST PLACE
ISLAND NEWS

2025 HAWAII'S BEST
FIRST PLACE
Awarded by the Star Advertiser

KAUAI - 245-8084
HILO - 935-4002
KONA - 329-5223
GUAM - 671-649-4330

KALIHI - 847-3217
MCCULLY - 593-2366
AIEA - 488-2821
KANEOHE - 235-3760
MAUI - 871-7921

- WINDSHIELD REPLACEMENT
- CERTIFIED CALIBRATION CENTER
- ROCK CHIP REPAIR
- CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS
- MOBILE SERVICE

YOU'RE WEATHER PROOF UNDER A MURAKAMI ROOF

Hawaii's Own
3 Generation Family Roofers

HAWAII'S BEST 2019
Awarded by the Star Advertiser

Murakami Services Division

- Small Equipment Rentals
- Solar Panel Cleaning
- Roof Tune Up Package for Flat Roofs and Slope Roofs

LIC# 33536 Bonded • Insured

Murakami Strong, Building Confidence Into Your Roof

murakami
ROOFING LLC

REQUEST AN ESTIMATE
Phone 808-348-8270
murakamiroofing.com
info@murakamiroofing.com



Kakazu Akira, Kasahara Soichiro, Daichi Nagata, Genya Kadekaru, Masahiko Wakayu, and Yasutomo Miyagi.

Members of the Department of Commerce, Industry and Labor of the Okinawa Prefectural Government, responsible for renewable energy initiatives, visited HOC on September 23.



Mr. Takeru Oshiro, Ms. Sakura Shimabukuro, Asami Miyagi, & Linda.

Members of the Obuchi Okinawa Education and Research Program visited HOC on September 2



HUOA Welcomes Vice Governor Tsuguyoshi Miyagi

ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, HUOA welcomed Vice Governor Tsuguyoshi Miyagi and his two aides, Secretary Yoshito Nishihara and Taishin Mekaru, who were in Hawai'i to attend the services for former Governor George Ariyoshi.

With only a few days to prepare, Caro and Jo Ige did a fantastic job pulling everything together and mobilizing their volunteer team. They prepared the Hawai'i Okinawa Center for our welcome gathering, coordinated the details, and arranged transportation for the Vice Governor and his delegation upon their arrival. Their teamwork and willingness to step up are a great example of *Chimugukuru* and *Yuimaaru* in action. Awesome job, guys!

The gathering at HOC began with Vice Governor Miyagi greeting everyone and sharing a current update from Okinawa. He discussed the recent gubernatorial election, including Governor-elect Genta Koja, and provided some background on the newly elected governor. He also graciously answered questions from those in attendance.

Much of the discussion focused on the 2027 Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival (Taikai). Vice Governor Miyagi shared updates and answered questions about the planned program, including the Opening Ceremony, Parade, Shi/Cho/Son meet-and-greets, Aloha Party, and other activities being planned for the Taikai.

It was a wonderful opportunity for HUOA members to meet with Vice Governor Miyagi and his delegation, exchange information, and continue strengthening the relationship between Hawai'i and Okinawa.

A special mahalo also goes to David Arakawa and Cyrus Tamashiro for taking such good care of Vice Governor Miyagi and his delegation during the funeral services for Governor Ariyoshi. In addition to providing transportation, they secured reserved seating for the Vice Governor and his party. Through their efforts, the delegation met Governor Green and former Governors Ige and Waihe'e. The Vice Governor and his delegation were very appreciative and impressed by the warm welcome and thoughtfulness extended to them.

And a big shout-out to Frances Kuba Sensei, who provided transportation and served as a gracious host and interpreter during our luncheon with Vice Governor Miyagi. Her presence helped make the luncheon comfortable, meaningful, and enjoyable for everyone.

These are great examples of *Chimugukuru* and *Yuimaaru* in action: many people coming together, taking care of our guests, and making them feel at home. *Ippee Niffee Deebiru* to everyone who helped make this visit a success!



Hui O Laulima's Picnic

"IT WAS SO MUCH FUN." "Didn't know grandma could catch a water balloon." "So much prizes and food."

These are a few of the comments that was heard at the conclusion of Hui O Laulima's second Okinawan Family Picnic, held at Kapiolani Park on a sunny July 12th, Sunday. Over a hundred of Laulima members and their families were treated to an authentic traditional Okinawan picnic.

The creative brainchild of chairman Sharon Fujino and her committee members: Sharon Miyashiro, Bertha Arakawa, Mari Fujio, Jane Nishihara, Carol Tanji, Terry Goya, Sherry Miyashiro and Diane Ota – they recreated a picnic Okinawan clubs were known for and an event our grandmothers would be proud.

Games included geta races, marble pick-up, holding a ball between your thighs race, water balloon toss and the iconic vegetable/fruit pick-up. They also added new exciting games called cardboard box fruit slot machines – and dice horse races. The water balloon toss paired a child with an adult – with surprising results. Lunch was pot luck with Laulima providing the main dish of champuru and shoyu chicken.

The event was reminiscent of picnics of old, providing an event where members could play and talk story with friends, receive prizes for the home and school supplies and toys for the kids, and of course, just have fun. Chair Fujino reminds us of the concept of family, yuimaaru - that this event would not have been so successful without the generous support of the many members and friends – all contributing to create a memorable afternoon in the park the old Okinawan way.





2027 Cultural Grant Awards

HUI O LAULIMA (HOL) is pleased to announce the 2027 Cultural Grant recipients. HOL, a non-profit women's organization, funds grants for promising projects/programs that align with their mission to preserve, promote, and perpetuate 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 \$13,500 has been awarded to the following for the expected impact of 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.

Nomura-Ryu Ongaku Kyo Kai Hawaii Shibu
60th Anniversary Concert

Tamagusuku Ryu Senju Kai Frances Nakachi Ryubu Dojo 30th Anniversary of School Recital

Jimpu Kai USA Kin Ryosho Ryukyu Geino Kenkyusho, Hawaii Shibu 50th Anniversary celebration---Focusing on connection between Maui and Oahu's Okinawan communities

Maui Ryukyu Culture Group (MRCG), Funding support to bring certified sanshin and odori instructors to Maui for on-site instruction

Kauai Sanshin Club. Financial support to bring sanshin sensei from Oahu to Kauai to facilitate in-person teaching

Maui Okinawa Kenjin Kai-Jimpu Kai Maui,

Funds to bring odori sensei from Oahu to Maui to give Maui students opportunity to learn hands-on

Ainoa Miyashiro of Azama Honryu Allison Tokuko Yanagi Ryukyu Dance Studio. Travel expense for 3rd certification for eligibility to train with sensei Yanagi to receive Instructor license

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; building bibliography of online sources, sharing electronic versions, digitizing items previously available only in print, and hosting community discussion meetings and workshops

Please direct any inquiries regarding the Cultural Grants to Carolina Higa (committee chair) at

huiolaulima.funding@gmail.com

2026 Hui Makaaka Scholarship Recipients



The Herbert T. Oshiro Scholarship Foundation is proud to collaborate with the Hui Makaala Scholarship awards since 2019.



Katelynn Arakaki
Punahou School '26
Oregon State University
Bio-Health Science and
Pre-Pharmacy



Cara Kurokawa
Maui High School '26
University of Hawaii at Maui
Psychology



Dylan Sogawa
Moanalua High School '26
Grand Canyon University
Business Administration



Elizabeth Balanza
Roosevelt High School '26
Temple University Japan
Communication



Ashli Lum
Kamehameha School
Kapalama '26
Saint Martin's University
Computer Science



Christopher Tam
Kalani High School '26
University of Hawaii
at Manoa
Business



Makani Kaihe
Roosevelt High School '26
Kapiolani Community College
Business Management



Mari Miyasato
Pacific Buddhist Academy '24
Seattle University
Humanities for Teaching with
Specialization in Elementary
Education



Zachary Tam
Kalani High School '25
University of Hawaii
at Manoa
Bachelors



Mehana Kaihe
Roosevelt High School '25
Honolulu Community College
Welding



Ty Shimabukuro
Punahou School '15
University of Hawaii at Hilo
Masters in Tropical Conservation
Biology and Environmental
Science



Natalie Tulba
Moanalua High School '24
University of Hawaii
at Manoa
Elementary Education



Hui Makaaka's 55th Annual Scholarship and Fashion Show

WE ARE VERY HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE that our 55th Annual Scholarship Fund Luncheon and Fashion Show was a very successful event. It was held at Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel Coral Ballroom on Sunday, July 26, 2026. The theme was "YURATIKU", "Come By, Let's Get Together". We had 650 attendees and sold-out seats.

We sent our gratitude to those supporting us behind the scenes. The event committees with their undeniable support and with the diligent staff of the Hilton Hotel.

The event came alive at 9:00 AM with 29 vendors, Bake Sale, Door Prizes, Silent Auction and Raffle Prizes such as two nights stay at the Hilton, VIZIO 65" Color TV, and the Grand Prize of Diamond Jade Pendant; all happening in the Court Lounge before entering the Coral Ballroom to the awaited sit down served meal.

As the Coral Ballroom opened, you were invited to an enchantment of different realms. The beautiful table arrangement, gentle music and the staff of Hilton waiting to personally serve you.

We received our blessings in invocation by Tom Yamamoto, "Doxology" with ukulele and serenaded in Hawaiian.

The program opens with voices of two emcees, David Arakawa and Shelby Oshiro (past scholarship recipient) as they introduce our cultural event.

The Nakasone Dance Academy (Hooge Ryu Hana Nuuzi No Kai) with 13 dancers welcomed the guests with "Kazadihuu Bushi" a traditional dance performed in

auspicious occasion. It was performed with array and grandeur of royal court with king and queen, the nobles and their attendances in waiting. The bright costumes were introduced as a true color worn by the royals in Okinawa. What a touching way to show our pride as having our Okinawan Heritage. It was education itself. Such a gratifying performance. Next came the dance "Mensore", which means "Welcome". It emphasized and accompanied the meaning of the first dance with more fun and upbeat music. Among the 13 volunteer dancers, there were two past Hui Makaala scholarship recipients, Kaitlynn Canubida, Emily Tome and 2026 scholarship recipient, Mari Miyasato

The seven musicians accompanied the dances. Grant "Masanduu' Murata – Shihan and Chapter President (Uta/Sanshin: Ryuku Koten Afuso Ryu Ongaku Choichi Kai USA Hawaii). Sanshin, drum, singing and the koto players kept harmony with the Nakasone dancers. We were proud to have two past Hui Makaala scholarship recipients, Kassie Oda and Cuyler Murata among the volunteered musicians.

A special Shishi Mai dance was performed by Frances Nakachi Ryubu Dojo (Tamagusuku Ryu Senjukai Hawaii). It



CLUB NEWS

was a Shishi Mai dance with the movements of Karate which I call it "Bushy Shishi Mai". The Four dancers featured Karate movements as each held on their right hand the head of the shishi mai and snapping its mouth as they danced. It was a powerful and captivating performance. *Chibiraasan!!*

Next came the happy and mischievous Shishi Mai folk dance. It cleared any evil spirits and brought in joyous ambience into the audience and magically made everyone into happy spirits with laughter. Under the shishii mai costumes revealed the surprise, were the children performers. It was a warabi ashibi and it took everyone's breath away. *Ippee niffee deebiru* to Hawaii Okinawa Creative Arts to Jon Itomura and Eric Nitta.

"Warabi Gami" (Child of God) sung by Mike Nakada brought us special warmth and gratitude of mother's love for its child which we can relate to it very fondly. It is a beautiful lullaby like Tinsagunu Hana. Mike Nakada sang it in Okinawa guchi to emphasize the true feeling of the song. There was silence in the audience.

Then suddenly, we were awakened by the drum of Eisa performance which made our heart beat. The special beat of The Amazing Grace was a wonderful introduction to what sounds were to come. Yes! Chinagu Eisa Hawaii by Todd Kobayashi and its students continued to beat our heart. It was a cardio exercise of its own. The three Eisa performers, Elizabeth Balanza, Makani Kaihe and Mehana Kaihe are this year's 2026 Hui Makaala scholarship recipients.

Our cultural performance ended. However, now the show begins what we were all waiting for! The climax of our goal, pride and the true commitment for this event that we worked hard for. The introduction of 2026 Hui Makaala Scholarship Award Presentation given by Kevin Higa-Scholarship Chair and Jodie Ching- Herbert T. Oshiro Scholarship Foundation. This year we had 13 student recipients that worked diligently to prove their needs with hard work and pride in Okinawa legacy.

Then the lights dimmed and orchestrated music began; the execution of 55th Hui Makaala Fashion Show! The designers



were Angels By The Sea Hawaii by Nina Thai with outfits reminded one of cool breeze of the ocean, The Mu'umu'u Library with Program Director Haumea (Andrew) Shon which brought the reflection of the past, and SoHo Fashions by Annie Park with its sophisticated designs. We were fortunate to have the cooperations of 2026 Cherry Blossom Court winners and other volunteer models working with Ryan Brown ADR Agency. Also, with the help of some touch up in makeup and hair by Hawaii Institute of Hair Design Leo Williams Director, the glamorized models walked the runway and made the designer's outfits come alive.

The auspicious event ended with the celebration of event well done, in Kachashi dance, which I call it a crazy happy dance. The participation of audience brought many good fortunes which will continue to next year.

Final Words: although the excitement of July 26, 2026, ended, we would like to repeat such a wonderful gathering again next year at 56th Hui Makaala Luncheon Fashion and Scholarship on Sunday, July 25, 2027, at Hilton Village Coral Ballroom. This will make 80 years of Hui Makaala's existence, a legacy that still carries on.

Your presence and generous donations always support the scholarship recipients each year as 100% of the proceeds goes to our next generation to continue our lineage of Okinawan heritage. Always remember...our legacy began with our ancestors immigrating to Hawaii and our presence here would not be possible without the courage of our immigrated ancestors who venture into an unknown world and with them they brought their proud culture. To show our heartfelt gratitude, we must keep the legacy alive and that is through our future generation. Mahalo to all the past and current scholarship recipients coming forward to show your gratitude by volunteering for this event.

The committee of Hui Makaala and the Co-Chairs Jan Toma and Judy Shimabukuro wishes to express our utmost gratitude and appreciation of your support each year.

Niffee Deebiru and see you next year!

Co-Chairs: Jan Toma and Judy Shimabukuro 🍷



Ginowan Shijinkai Hawaii

BY JOY SCHOONOVER

GINOWAN SHIJINKAI MEMBERS volunteered to cook andagi for HUOA's 44th Annual Okinawan Festival held on September 5 & 6, 2026, overcoming numerous logistical challenges due to the ongoing renovation of the Hawaii Convention Center. Thirty-eight volunteers partnered with Oroku Azajin Club to mix andagi batter on Sunday, August 30th. Then on Saturday, September 5, over a hundred Ginowan members cooked andagi in giant woks set up on the Ala Wai Canal Promenade. We were joined by an associate professor from Japan, Yuko Tsuchiya, who has been volunteering with us for the past 5 years. In addition, Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO) contributed 18 workers to assist us in cooking andagi. In total, HUOA prepared over 160,000 andagi! Thank you to all our volunteers.

Reminder: Ginowan's next Shinnen Enkai Banquet is scheduled for February 21, 2027 at HOC. Save the date!



**JILL
TOKUDA**
FOR HAWAII

A SEASON OF ALOHA AND THANKSGIVING

Wishing you and your 'ohana a holiday season filled with aloha, joy and pride in the traditions that bring us together. Mahalo to our Okinawan community for all you do to strengthen Hawai'i – let's continue building a bright future for the next generation.

Jill

PAID FOR BY TOKUDA FOR HAWAII

Chatan Kadena Chojin Kai



Two Incredible Aquariums Come Together

BY JASON HONDO



IN OCTOBER 2025, Maui Ocean Center leadership—Sales Director Michael Takamura and General Manager Tapani Vuori—joined Governor Josh Green’s Trade Mission to Okinawa. A key goal of their trip was establishing a close partnership with Okinawa’s world-renowned Churaumi Aquarium. This mission is part of a larger effort to strengthen economic and travel ties between Japan and Maui, including advocating for direct flights and U.S. Customs pre-clearance facilities.

Following this visit to Okinawa, a delegation of senior leadership from the Okinawa Churashima Foundation and Churaumi Aquarium arrived on Maui on Tuesday, July 7, 2026. The visiting delegation included:

Mr. Seijun Wakugawa, Chairman, Okinawa Churashima Foundation

Dr. Keiichi Sato, Director, Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium & Research Institute

Ms. Hikaru Oyadomari, Section Chief, General Affairs Division

Dr. Nozomi Kobayashi, Chief Research Scientist, Zoological Laboratory

The landmark visit culminated in the official signing of a Memorandum of Collaboration between the two institutions, establishing joint objectives and collaborative marine projects moving forward.

Our MOKK members—Ruth Murata, Christine Hondo, Julie Higa, and Jason Hondo—were proud to attend in support of this milestone. They joined notable community figures including Hawai’i State Representative Elle Cochran, HUOA representative David Arakawa from Oahu, as well as representatives from UH Maui College, Ma’alaea Ebisu Jinsha Shrine, Ululani Shave Ice, the Maui Japanese Chamber of Commerce, and the Maui Sister Cities Foundation.

It was an inspiring gathering that not only created new relationships between MOKK and members of our own Maui community, it also further strengthened our bridge between Maui and Okinawa.

Returning to the Roots: Yaese Town's Historic Youth Exchange

BY DEREK UESATO

IN 2001, KOCHINDA TOWN AND GUSHICHAN (Gushikami in Okinawa) Village merged, establishing Yaese Town. In 2012, Yaese Town started its first international student exchange with Hawaii and has been sending students to Honolulu almost every year since. Gushichan and Kochinda clubs have been hosting those students for weekend homestays and have made lasting relationships with those children.

For the last three years, Yaese Town has been coordinating with Gushichan and Kochinda clubs to have member students come to Yaese for an exchange program. Finally, from July 2nd to 9th, 2026, four students from Gushichan club were able to return to their roots and experience the land and culture their great-grandparents left to give better lives to future generations. Leia Nishida (parents Dwight Nishida and Lyn Uesato-Nishida), Duncan Uesato (Derek and Pearly Uesato), Dustin Casallo (Johan and Shari Casallo (Omonaka)), Jett Jakahi (Wade and Rhonda Jakahi), with chaperone Derek Uesato (president, Gushichan club), embarked on July 1st on a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The Yaese Town office, led by coordinator Ikumi Kinjo, made an amazing itinerary that was highly educational but also afforded the students a lot of fun. Our stay was at Platto Yaese, a town-owned community lodging facility that has tatami mat rooms and an onsen-style public bath.

The first morning of the exchange began with a visit to the Yaese Town government building where a large contingent of office workers and officials greeted our small delegation. Even Shii-chan, the official town mascot, was there



to greet us! Mayor Yasuhiro Arakaki, vice mayor Katsuhiro Ishikawa, Education Superintendent Tsuneo Tamae, and Councilmember Kunio Nohara met with the five of us in the mayor's office for formal introductions and to speak about this historical exchange. Kunio Nohara, who worked hard to start this exchange, got emotional talking about how important it was for the future generation to reconnect with their roots, learn the Uchinanchu spirit, and carry that with them for the rest of their lives.

Next stop was the Tomori Shiisaa, the oldest and largest shiisaa statue in Okinawa. An Okinawa TV news crew filmed Nohara-san explaining the history of the statue and interviewed Leia and Dustin!

We then took a tour of the Yaese Town Gushichan Museum of History and Folklore where the students learned about the history of Okinawa and special archeological discoveries like the "Minatogawa Man," a 22,000-year old skeleton found in a limestone fissure in Yaese.

The next stop was Himeyuri Peace Memorial Park with a guided tour of the park and museum. There, the students gained an appreciation of the world's connection to Okinawa, how many lives were lost to the Battle of Okinawa, and the brutal conditions in the refugee caves. They also gained an appreciation of the Okinawan summer heat!

The whirlwind day ended at Platto Yaese, where they got to create their own personal necklaces made from hot lead poured into a mold made out of fishbone.

Three Yaese families with children picked up the students the next morning for a busy and fun weekend filled with great food, shopping, and memories. Derek was lucky enough to have dinner with Nohara-san and watch a local play about Taro Higa at Kitanakagusuku Central Community Center during the students' homestay.

The next day they made the long drive to Churaumi Aquarium and visited Kyuzo Toyama Memorial Museum in Kin Town on the way back.

The 5th day was special as they went to Gushichan Junior High School where they introduced themselves in Japanese to the entire school at a morning assembly! They were then



CLUB NEWS

sent to 4 different classrooms to practice various Okinawan arts with 9th graders who were preparing for a big performance that afternoon for an Ashimiji Bushi festival, an homage to farm workers in Okinawa and Issei immigrants.

Duncan and Jett did a tandem shishimai, Leia practiced and performed a *hanagasa* (flower hat) dance, and Dustin played sanshin with his class. They also joined the school students' daily chores of serving lunch and cleaning the school's grounds.

Because our students were from Hawaii, the entire student body was interested in meeting and talking with them!

Later that night, they got to learn *eisa* and *paranku* drumming and dancing with Gushichan Eisa Youth Association. What an amazing experience drumming and dancing at night in the middle of a street in a quiet neighborhood!

On the final day, we visited Kamekoubaka (Tomimori Stone Gateway tomb) to learn about ancestral tombs and then went to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Okinawa Center. With the help of Hawaii-born translator Wreyn Waniya, the students learned about early immigration to Hawaii through a fun picture matching game where they

had to guess which picture belonged to what time period. Another game had them matching the Okinawan soba to the part of the world the photo was taken in.

We then took a quick trip to Heiwa Dori and Kokusai Dori for omiyage shopping.

Unfortunately, due to Typhoon Bavi, our trip needed to be cut short one day. The students lost out on seeing Shuri Castle, Okinawa World, and a big Aloha party at the community center. But we were able to have a smaller Aloha party at Platto Yaese where we had dinner with the three homestay families and Yaese officials. After dinner, the students entertained everyone with Jett performing kata, Duncan singing Somewhere Over the Rainbow with Leia playing the ukulele, and Dustin playing the guitar for Hawaii Aloha, Aloha 'Oe, where the entire room stood up and held hands. Of course, the night ended with a spirited *kachashi*!

The students had a memorable trip, and Yaese Town was able to reach its goal of imprinting the Uchinanchu spirit of hard work, kindness, perseverance, and connection onto our keiki. 🇺🇸



HUOA Softball

2026 SOFTBALL CHAMPION is Club Urasoe. They beat Wahiawa for the championship. Thanks to all the clubs that participated in this year's softball season: Hui Makaala, Itoman, Gushikawa, Gushikawa Blue, Gushichan, Nakagusuku, Nishihara, Wahiawa and this year's champion Urasoe. If they are any clubs that wants to participate in next year we start in May till August please contact Ian Tamashiro at ian.tamashiro@gmail.com.



Uchinanchu spirit at the University of Hawaii BankOH Arena. We hope you were a part of it!

WITH HUOA CLUB flags flying to greet the Rainbow Wahine Classic Volleyball Tournament on Sunday, August 30th, the fun was about to begin! Out on the concourse were the dynamic and colorful performances of Chinagu Eisa and Hawaii Okinawa Creative Arts (HOCA) shisha! Inside, sharing of the Okinawan Culture on the HUOA sponsor table, videos and trivia on the big screen, energizing music to help promote the upcoming Okinawan Festival!

Brent Inouye and Louis Bernard of the Wahine VB Athletic department reached out to HUOA to participate in one of their three community promotion events. It was a short turnaround time to plan and share the event with our membership - especially since everyone was prepping for the festival.

Dazzman Toguchi became our Uchinanchu Emcee, Todd Kobashigawa and his awesome Chinagu Eisa team were the intermission performance taking over the full court, Eric Nitta with the sparkling HOCA shisha stood alongside on court

during the national anthem, and Seila Davenport did the first serve to start the game! The volunteer crew came through as always, and everyone represented HUOA well! *Ippee Niffee Deebiru!!*

Sharing Uchinanchu Aloha included green and white nuchibana lei for the team; festival fans; kurujaataa (kokuto) packets and odaiko charms; a small artifact display; photo op character boards; providing the video and music clips, trivia spots, and greeting people at the entry gate.

A special *Ippee Niffee Deebiru* to all who quickly responded to filling up our HUOA cheering sections - and to all the regular-season ticket holders who continue to support the Rainbow Wahine! *Chibariyoo!!!*

And Governor Linda Lingle subsequently signed COS into existence in 2007, leading to the Center's formal opening in 2008! Whoa, what a story!

Given its history and unique importance, we should all support the Center for Okinawan Studies at UHM to ensure its continued success!



Uchinanchu Across the Ocean Celebrating 100 Years of Okinawan Heritage in Brazil

BY FRANCES KUBA

IT WAS A GREAT HONOR to represent the Hawai'i United Okinawa Association (HUOA) at the historic 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Okinawa Kenjin Kai of Brazil—a memorable celebration of friendship, culture, tradition, and Uchinanchu pride.

Before the festivities, we had the privilege of meeting President Rui Chibana, Celebration Chair Terio Uehara, staff, Fujinkai, and members of the many Kenjin Kai clubs. Their dedication and love for Okinawan heritage were evident throughout the celebration.

A highlight was visiting the beautiful Okinawa Center and Museum in Liberdade, a meaningful home for Okinawan history and culture. We honored the Issei pioneers whose courage and sacrifices helped establish the Okinawan community in Brazil. We were also deeply moved by the respect shown to the Nenchosha, whose longevity reflects the strength and resilience of our Uchinanchu ancestors.

The 22nd Okinawa Festival at Vila Carrao was unforgettable, attracting more than 40,000 people and featuring over 500 performers. Seeing hundreds of *hanagasa* dancers together was a powerful expression of unity and pride. A special performance by BEGIN brought the sounds and spirit of Okinawa to Brazil.

It was also wonderful to reconnect with Senjukai Brazil and Satoru Saito and visit his dojo—a reminder that Okinawan culture continues to flourish across generations and oceans.

Last year, HUOA celebrated the 125th Anniversary of



Okinawan Immigration to Hawai'i and Emigration to the World, when we welcomed President Rui and members of the Okinawa Kenjin Kai of Brazil to Hawai'i. Returning that aloha this year was especially meaningful.

Joining me from Hawai'i were Randy Kuba, representing WUB, and Linda Okabe of JTB. Delegations from Okinawa and representatives from Los Angeles, New Mexico, Canada, and other communities also joined this historic celebration.

On behalf of HUOA, we presented Certificates of Appreciation and gifts to President Rui Chibana, the Okinawa Kenjin Kai of Brazil, and Vila Carrao President Mr. Oshiro. We also presented a commemorative HUOA paddle symbolizing our shared heritage and the courageous journey of our Issei ancestors.

Though Hawai'i and Brazil are thousands of miles apart, our hearts remain connected as one global Uchinanchu family. May we continue our ancestors' legacy through *Chimugukuru*—compassion and heart—and *Yuimaaru*—mutual support.

I came to Brazil representing Hawai'i, but returned home with new friends, new family, and memories I will treasure forever. Muito obrigada! *Ippee nifee deebiru!*

Kodomo Konkuru Yūshūshō: Hawai‘i Uchinānchu Keiki Continue Traditional Music Journey in Okinawa

BUILDING UPON THEIR achievement in earning the Shinjinshō award, three dedicated young musicians from Hawai‘i—Ian Sadaoka (age 13), Bayes Izawa (age 11), and Emma Sadaoka (age 10)—returned to Okinawa to take the Kodomo Konkuru Yūshūshō uta-sanshin (traditional Okinawan vocal-instrumental art form) test on July 26, 2026, under the continued teaching and guidance of their sensei, Sean Sadaoka.

The Kodomo Konkuru is a formal proficiency test in Okinawa for youth students of uta-sanshin, structured into three progressive levels: Shinjinshō/Shoreishō (Beginner/Encouragement), Yūshūshō (Intermediate), and Saikōshō (Advanced). Earning the Yūshūshō certification reflects an elevated level of skill, artistic refinement, and dedication to preserving Okinawan traditional music. Just as with the adult konkuru certification process, participants perform solo on stage before a distinguished panel of five respected sanshin sensei from Afuso Ryū Gensei Kai in Okinawa.

Advancing to the Yūshūshō level required sustained commitment and months of rigorous preparation. The students practiced and performed Dakidun Bushi, a classic piece in traditional Okinawan music, cherished for its bright tempo, steady rhythm, and roots in Yaeyama folk traditions. Frequently featured in classical Ryukyu dance accompaniments—such as Nuchibana—the song highlights precise sanshin technique and vocal control, making it both a staple of traditional repertoire and an ideal demonstration of intermediate musical discipline. Specifically, it requires students to move their hands up and down the neck which requires skill because there are no frets (a small raised metal bar across the neck of a stringed instrument). Building on years of foundational practice in Hawai‘i, the students deepened their studies with extra lessons and targeted rehearsals to refine voice control, sanshin technique, and traditional stage presence. Upon arriving in Okinawa in late July 2026, they trained at the Afuso Ryū Terukina dojo in Naha, honing their craft alongside teachers and senpai in the heart of the tradition.

“The kids were much more confident ahead of the Yūshūshō test,” said Sean Sadaoka Sensei. “I reminded them that it was not like taking Shinjinshō - while you know what to expect, the song is much harder, and it is up to you to pass. They committed to individualized practice to refine the small details of their play. It was truly an amazing experience to watch their growth.”

While the Yūshūshō certification marks an important milestone in their musical development, the heart of this experience lies in the cultural growth and personal reflections of

the students themselves. In their own words, Ian, Emma, and Bayes share their reflections from this year’s journey:

WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT TO RETURN FOR THE YŪSHŪSHŌ TEST?

IAN SADAOKA: It was important for me to do Yūshūshō because it helps me prepare for when I take regular test and it will hopefully inspire more kids to do sanshin with us.

EMMA SADAOKA: It was important to me because I knew I could accomplish more.

BAYES IZAWA: I really wanted to return because I wanted to make my sensei proud and show everyone how much he’s taught me. He puts so much work into us, and I wanted to prove that his lessons are really sinking in.

WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE YOU RECEIVED DURING PRACTICE?

IAN SADAOKA: The most important piece of advice was to work on my pronunciation and to practice as much as possible here before we left.

EMMA SADAOKA: The most important piece of advice I got was to make sure that the bottom string sounds like the top string.

BAYES IZAWA: My sensei told me to stop looking around and just focus. It really helped me find my rhythm and made me feel so much more connected to the song when I was playing.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM THIS TRIP TO OKINAWA?

IAN SADAOKA: My favorite memory from the trip was getting the chance to do the test again and just to go back to explore Okinawa with my family and friends was really fun.

EMMA SADAOKA: My most favorite memory from the trip was being able to see the outside of Shuri castle.

BAYES IZAWA: Everything was amazing, but my favorite part was just hanging out and exploring Okinawa with my friends. Eating delicious food like sashimi together and seeing all the sites made the whole trip feel super special.

This achievement was made possible through the lineage of Grant “Masanduu” Murata Sensei, President of Ryukyu Koten Afuso Ryu Ongaku Kenkyu Chōichi Kai USA, whose mission is to nurture future generations of cultural bearers. The enduring legacy and artistry of the late Chōichi Terukina Sensei continue to guide and inspire students in Hawai‘i, ensuring that Okinawan uta-sanshin traditions

remain vibrant across generations.

“Witnessing Ian, Bayes, and Emma’s growth impressed me; what excites me is their dedication to their craft and love for our culture,” shared Kenton Odo, Shihan. “They represent the continuity in their generation and hopefully inspiration for future generations.”

Mahalo nui loa to Grant “Masanduu” Murata Sensei, Kenton Odo Sensei, Susumu Terukina Sensei (President of Afuso Ryū Gensei Kai), the families of the Sadaokas, Okamuras, and Izawas, the friends who embody the yuui-maru spirit, and the broader Hawai’i Uchinanchu community for their continued support. 🇺🇸



On July 26, 2026, the three students proudly represented Hawai’i in the Kodomo Konkuru Yūshūshō, carrying the spirit of Afuso Chōichi Kai USA across the Pacific.



Emma Sadaoka, Bayes Izawa, and Ian Sadaoka enjoying a celebratory meal together in Okinawa.



Ian Sadaoka receiving his Yūshūshō certificate.



Emma Sadaoka receiving her Yūshūshō certificate.



Bayes Izawa receiving his Yūshūshō certificate.



Uchinaa Junior Study

BY FAITH LIBARIOS

HAITAI! MY NAME IS Faith Kiyomi Toma Libarios and this Summer 2026 I had the privilege of participating in the Uchinaa Junior Study Program.

“This is just like Hawai’i!” is what I kept thinking during my memorable week in Okinawa. There were 27 students of Okinawan descent from across the globe, 16 of which were from Okinawa and 11 from Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Australia, Virginia, California, and Hawai’i.

We stayed in Okinawa Prefecture for one week between Urasoe, Naha, Itoman, and Kin. In Urasoe, they hosted a Welcome Party and a Champuru Festival. Every student shared about their Kenjinkai, so I shared about the HUOA and Okinawan events in Hawai’i like the Okinawan Festival. All of us students also prepared a performance. There was eisa, karate, sanshin, singing, and more. I danced a hula to “Ka Nohona Pili Kai” by Keali’i Reichel, accompanied by a recording of my Aunt Cheryl Toma Sanders singing and playing the ukulele. I picked this song because it’s familiar to us in Hawai’i and to Okinawans, and I believe it captures the connection that Hawai’i and Okinawa share.

When we visited Kin Town, I learned that Hawai’i and Kin Town maintain close ties and have a friendship agreement. Kin Town is home of Toyama Kyuzo, who led the first group of Okinawans to Hawai’i to work. This town is also famous

for a variety of taro grown in their spring water. It was fascinating to see and taste taro prepared in various ways.

It was touching to see other Okinawans my age who have so much love for their culture. I watched in awe as they went all out in their eisa performance. I was filled with happiness, appreciation, and pride for Okinawa and to be Okinawan. It was amazing to be in the motherland and to be among people who have curiosity and passion for where we come from. Later, we learned eisa as a group. We practiced every day and then performed at the end of the program. This was very memorable for me to have learned and performed eisa for the first time!

More memorable moments were going to the Himeyuri Peace Museum, singing BEGIN songs around the campfire, and getting through Typhoon Dolphin. This was truly one of the most memorable experiences of my life. I’m deeply grateful to have participated in something so wonderfully curated for young Okinawans. I feel honored to have represented my family, my heritage, Hawai’i, and the HUOA. I am inspired to carry on the Worldwide Uchina Network, and while the purpose of this program is to expand our knowledge of the history and culture of Okinawa, it also deepened my understanding of who I am and our people.

For more information, please visit huoa.org/scholarships or feel free to reach out to me at faithklibarios@gmail.com.

Cultural Fusion by Senjukai Hawaii

Sunday, October 25, 2026

10:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Hawaii Okinawa Center 94-587 Uke'e St.



Tickets: \$75 | Table of 10: \$750

VIP Table of 10: \$1000

For more info: www.senjukaihawaii.com



Scan the QR code for Tickets!

<https://senjukaihawaii.square.site/cultural-fusion-2026-tickets>

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

Congratulations on a great 2026 Obon Odori season sharing our Okinawan Culture!

Ameriprise
Financial

From Valerie Aniya Schmidt & Executive Assistant Melissa Uyeunten Yamashiro

Valerie H. A. Schmidt
CFP®, ChFC®, CFS®, AEP®, CAP®, BFA™
Private Wealth Advisor

808.380.8629

1585 Kapiolani Blvd, Ste 1616, Honolulu, HI 96814

valerie.x.schmidt@ampf.com

ameripriseadvisors.com/valerie.h.schmidt/



Not FDIC OR NCUA Insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value

CA Insurance #0J18310

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S.

Securities offered by Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC.

© 2026 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.



The Sound of the Kuto Continues to Echo In Hawaii

BY COURTNEY TAKARA

TEN YEARS HAVE passed since the Ryukyu Sokyoku Koyo Kai Hawaii Shibu (“Koyo Kai Hawaii”) held its 40th Anniversary Concert at which time Derek Fujio and Sara Nakatsu, among others, were awarded their Shihan certification. Fast-forward to 2026, under their steadfast leadership, Hawaii Chapter President Derek Fujio and Vice President Sara Nakatsu worked tirelessly to plan for the 50th anniversary. Keeping in mind Koyo Kai Hawaii’s mission to develop and perpetuate the traditional Ryukyuan art of koto music, two special events were held to celebrate the auspicious occasion.

Koyo Kai Hawaii hosted a free public koto workshop on Saturday, September 12 at Kaimuki Middle School featuring Hideaki Miyazato Sensei from Okinawa. Miyazato Sensei provided instruction in dan no mono (instrumental repertoire) and shared valuable insight of the history and evolution of koto music in Okinawa. Thank you to Miyazato Sensei for conducting the workshop and to Norman Kaneshiro Sensei for providing translation.

On Sunday, September 13, Yo-In: Echoing through time to enter the hearts of the future, was held at the JCCH Generations Ballroom. The sold out 50th Anniversary Celebration opened with a program featuring the kutu (Okinawan koto) followed by lunch and fellowship.

During his message, President Derek Fujio shared, “It is not often in Hawaii that the koto is featured as the main focus of a performance, and in fact, it has been ten years since our last anniversary concert. In those ten years, much has changed in our koto world. With the passage of time, some kaishu and members have left us, along with mothers, fathers, grandmas, grandpas, aunties, and uncles who were so supportive to our cause of preserving Okinawan koto. In their memory, and even more so, for the sake of those who are still



here working to share kutu, we continue to try our best to perpetuate their legacy, like the echoing reverberations of the koto strings.”

Thank you to everyone who attended, Koyo Kai members who traveled from Okinawa and Los Angeles, guest musicians and dancers, the many volunteers, and family and friends for their never-ending support.

Watch the full Yo-In
program here:



2026 Children's Cultural Day Camp

BY CHRISTINE HONDO

WE OPENED OUR DOORS FOR the Maui Okinawa Kenjin Kai Children's Cultural Day Camp on Tuesday, June 2, and celebrated our fun times with a family pot luck and performance on Friday, June 5.

It was a wonderful time to welcome back our children after a year away from us and to welcome new campers into our Cultural Camp family.

Eisa, Odori, Karate, Cooking, Plantation Games, Calligraphy, Arts and Crafts filled each day and ended with a visit to the Plantation Store. This year the focus was farm to plate, and the children visited our beautiful and bountiful MOKK garden, picked items to be used in their cooking class, then enjoyed cooking and eating their treasures.

Nothing could have happened if not for our many volunteers, helping in the kitchen, helping teach classes, leading



the children as they moved from activity to activity, tending to our wonderful garden, keeping the grounds safe for our children, taking pictures to remember our good times, and, most of all, sharing the wonderful Okinawan culture with everyone. Thank you, thank you to you all! We look forward to our camp next year: June 1-4 (tentative dates)

Autumn Matsuri

I N THE SPIRIT of obon and welcoming the autumn season, HUOA held its Autumn Dance Matsuri on September 19 at the Hawaii Okinawa Center. Inside the Legacy Ballroom, the hatagashira was surrounded by spirited dancers and drummers, and the night was filled with both old-time favorites and new dances.

Outside, fresh hot andagi and andadogs, Okinawan soba, taco rice, baked goods, and refreshing vinegary drinks were being sold. Our wonderful emcee Kylie Sato kept everyone informed and excited about every performing group, upcoming events, and highlighted the wonderful foods and goodies being sold.

The planning committee would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of the performers, food booth groups, volunteers, and participants who made Autumn Dance Matsuri a memorable event. Everyone's hard work, commitment, and energy remind us that while the bon dance season in O'ahu is coming to an end, our love and honor for our ancestors remain. As Ashimiji Bushi sings, *Shura yo, shura hatarakana!*



Workshops

at the Hawaii Okinawa Center - Chaya

With Ellise Uyema from Livelong and Plant. Includes all the supplies, along with care instructions. More info: www.livelongandplant.com



Kokedama

Thursday 11/12

1 pm

\$55



Scan to sign up



Kokedama Christmas Tree

Thursday 12/3

1 pm

\$75



Scan to sign up

Beats, Blessings & 30 Years of Heart: Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Hawaii Celebrates a Milestone Landmark!

ON AUGUST 22, 2026, there was positive energy at Natsunoya Tea House on the island of Oahu, as Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko (RMD) Hawai'i gathered to celebrate an incredible 30th Anniversary! With deep roots dating back to the Hawai'i organization's founding in 1996 and branches spreading across the entire state, this milestone was a joyful showcase of community, tradition, and pure passion.

A GATHERING OF FAMILY, FRIENDS & LEADERS

The room was filled with warm smiles, lifelong supporters, and key figures who have shaped RMD Hawaii into the thriving community it is today. The gathering was attended by Kent Yamauchi from Kaua'i—a former Kaua'i Shibuchō taking on a new role as RMD Advisor, Secretary/Treasurer Noriko Sogawa, and newly appointed Regional Director Kathy Matsuda.

Extra-special shoutouts went to founder of RMD Hawaii Akemi Martin Sensei—a true Uchinanchu at heart—and Lifetime Advisor Bob Nakasone, who was in attendance. RMD alumni Kylie de Guzman-Arakaki brought heartfelt inspiration to the room by reading a moving statement from Akemi Martin Sensei, who was not able to attend, however sent her best wishes and aloha from Florida.

BLESSINGS, HONORS & GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

The celebration began with a sacred opening blessing by Amano Sensei of Izumo Taisha Hawaii, setting a wonderful tone for the event. HUOA President Bob Shiroma presented a Certificate of Appreciation to RMD Hawai'i for 30 years of dedicated service.

The gratitude flowed from across the ocean, too! Takeo Mendoruma, Artistic Director and Founder of RMD Okinawa, extended warm thanks to Bob Nakasone, Akemi Martin Sensei, and Kathy Matsuda in her new role as the Regional Director of the Hawaii Region. RMD Okinawa Chairman Naomi Kurane also sent a certificate honoring Kathy's new position, presented by Kent Yamauchi.

Embodying the "Spirit of Gei-On"—a deep respect for people of all countries—the event highlighted the strong ties that bind this community together. Everyone wore a vibrant red lei (representing the Big Island) and taiko drums emblazoned



with the Akemi Martin Sensei name Akatsuki. Reflecting on her journey, Kathy shared how she originally started RMD Kohala through Warabi Ashibi and expressed her deepest gratitude for Akemi Sensei's guiding hand over the years.

FOND MEMORIES & EXCITING NEW HORIZONS

Kent Yamauchi shared wonderful memories from a 2018 tour to Okinawa with Akemi Sensei, where they met the Ishigaki mayor and planted a plumeria tree to symbolize growing friendship.

The festivities also recognized key leaders like Shibuchō Melissa Ching, Fukushibuchō Jonathan Loomis of Oahu, as well as Bob Shiroma, HUOA President. A touching tribute honored the late Chef Hisashi Uehara of Agu Ramen Bistro, who was a huge supporter of RMD Hawaii and who sadly passed away in 2019. His nephew and RMD drummer Dylan Sogawa of Only One Studio is carrying on the creative spirit. Dylan designed amazing 30th Anniversary tote bags with an Only One original print. We presented attendees with a bag.

Looking to the future, big congratulations went to Nathan Perez, the very first recipient of the Home Stay Study Tour program award! Nathan told the audience of his recent travels to Miyazaki.

The attendees renewed longtime connections, and there were animated and lively conversations throughout the celebration, including throughout the delicious lunch.

SWEET TREATS & A BRIGHT FUTURE

Guests enjoyed a nostalgic slideshow tracing RMD's amazing journey and enjoyed delicious special mochi brought all the way from Japan.

From its humble beginnings to being part of a global movement with over 3,000 members worldwide, RMD Hawaii continues to bring people together through the power of the drum. Here's to 30 years of rhythm, heart, and community—and many more to come!

HAWAII OKINAWA CENTER CALENDAR

Important notes for our calendar entries:

- All events may be subject to change. Entries as of 10/9
- EC and BOD meetings will be held in a Zoom format until further notice

NOVEMBER 2026

- 03 HOC OFFICE CLOSED - GENERAL ELECTION DAY
- 05 Executive Council meeting (nomination slate) online only at 7pm
- 11 HOC OFFICE CLOSED - VETERANS' DAY
- 19 Board of Directors meeting (nomination slate) at 7pm
- 26 HOC OFFICE CLOSED - THANKSGIVING DAY

DECEMBER 2026

- 10 Executive Council meeting - online only at 7pm
- 25 HOC OFFICE CLOSED - CHRISTMAS DAY

CLASSES • OTHER MEETINGS:

- Sanshin: Every Thursday @ 7pm
- Shorin-ryu Seibukan Karate Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 6:30pm-8:30pm
- Ichi Go Ichi E: 1st and 3rd Tuesday @ 7pm
- Ikebana: 2nd Tuesday @ 7pm
- Karaoke: 3rd Thursday @ 10am
- Monday Crafters: Every Monday @ 9am
- Okinawan Genealogical Society general monthly meetings: 3rd Saturday @ 9am (except November and December). The Board of Directors meets as needed, usually via Zoom.

For more information, please call 808.676.5400 or email info@huoa.org

HOT 'HAWAII OKINAWA TODAY' & SPECIAL PROGRAMS SCHEDULE



'Olelo 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 air-time is available.

All 'Olelo shows are concurrently streamed on the Internet at www.olelo.org. Our latest shows are available on-demand on the 'Olelo website: select Tune In, then 'OleloNet 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 'Olelo 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 'Olelo 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.

OCTOBER 23 AT 7PM; OCTOBER 24, NOVEMBER 7, 14, 21 AT 5PM

HAWAII OKINAWA TODAY: 2025 Okinawan Festival featuring Chinagu Eisa Hawaii, Shoshin Dance Company

NOVEMBER 27 AT 7PM; NOVEMBER 28, DECEMBER 5, 12, 19 AT 5PM

HAWAII OKINAWA TODAY: 2025 Okinawan Festival featuring Hawaii Okinawa Shinden Shorin Ryu Karate Association, Azama Honryu Allison Tokuko Yanagi Ryukyu Dance Studio

DATES AND TIMES TO BE ANNOUNCED

SPECIAL: OKINAWAN FESTIVAL 2026 - FIRST LOOK SPECIAL featuring performance highlights with interviews from senseis and students



MANA-SU
for a HEALTHIER you!

Why Mana-Su?
Gut Health!

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!

Direct to your door:
www.HealthyManaSu.com

Available at:
Marukai, Don Quijote, Times

Okinawan Super Vinegar





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.



Kahuushi, Heartfelt appreciation
TAMAGUSUKU RYU SENJUKAI FRANCES NAKACHI RYUBU DOJO



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

Culture of Joy!
Learn Okinawan Dance!

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

Come for a free trial class!
www.senjukaihawaii.com





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

* WINTER CRAFT & GIFT FAIR *

at the Hawaii Okinawa Center **FREE**



Saturday, November 28 / Sunday, November 29
9 am to 2 pm * Early entry (8:30 am) with \$5 donation *



The "Evening in Waipo"
Craft Fair, usually held on
a Wednesday evening in
December has been
canceled in 2026

➔ Hawaii Food Bank drive: bring non-perishable
food items and get one free andagi!!!
(one andagi per person, per day)

➔ Limited Parking at the Center and Puahi Street
Free shuttles available



94-587 Ukee street - Waipahu



More info at www.huoa.org