

LĀNAʻI TODAY

APRIL 2024



A Message
From Lānaʻi
Federal Credit
Union

PAGE 12

**Maintaining tradition as First Hawaiian Bank departs,
Lānaʻi Federal Credit Union remains a cornerstone of support for our community.**

Photo by Anthony Kaauamo

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Slang for Non-Slangularly People: Out of Pocket

by Sharmaine Mae Elan

Out of Pocket – /aʊt ɒv ˈpɒkɪt/

The phrase “out of pocket” isn’t quite what you might think. It’s not about spending your own money, but refers to someone acting or speaking in a way that’s unusual for them. To be “out of pocket” means to behave out of character. This could mean acting wild, unhinged, out of line, or making inappropriate and uncalled-for remarks. Older generations might have different interpretations, but “out of pocket” is commonly understood as behaving in a manner that is “off the rails,” “out of bounds,” or “extra.”

Example:

Student: I didn’t do my homework; my dog ate it.

Teacher: Let’s be real, *you* probably ate it.

The teacher glares at the student, scanning him up and down.

Student: That was out of pocket, Mr. Smith.

Historically, the term has roots in Black English and among pool players, where it meant being out of line or extreme, often to one’s detriment. Over the last few years, its meaning has evolved to encompass broader notions of strange or uncharacteristic behavior.



This segment is part of “Slang for Non-Slangularly People,” a series by Sharmaine “Silveress” Elan exploring Gen-Z slang, making the lingo of today’s youth maybe a little more understandable to all.

The Lānaʻi Destination Management Action Plan

Back in 2020, as the pandemic was unfolding, the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority began to form steering committees on each island in the state, including on Lānaʻi. Made up of local residents and representatives from the visitors industry, the Lānaʻi Steering Committee brainstormed how they would like to redefine the direction of Lānaʻi tourism. Their work resulted in the Lānaʻi Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP). This solutions-based plan outlines the work needed to steer tourism on Lānaʻi in a culturally-sensitive, community-driven direction.

In fall 2021, the Lānaʻi Steering Committee, alongside the Maui Visitors & Convention Bureau (MVCB) and Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority (HTA), established the Lānaʻi Advisory Group (LAG) to update Lānaʻi City’s branding, aiming for tourism that respects the island’s culture and environment. The group addressed inaccuracies, including misused place names and luxury perceptions, and discouraged misleading or disrespectful imagery. They also shifted focus from crowded areas like Hulopoʻe Beach to quieter sites, promoting tourism that aligns with Lānaʻi’s values.

While the LAG recognizes the role the two large resorts on island play, their efforts have been geared towards highlighting Lānaʻi City as well as culturally sensitive, responsible tourism. One aspect of this has been minimizing messaging featuring Hulopoʻe Beach and educating visitors about alternatives to the beach to alleviate overcrowding. Additionally, the LAG rejected the use of photographs showing pineapples (when taken out of context within plantation history) and photographs of Jeeps speeding down dirt roads, giving the impression that it’s acceptable to drive irresponsibly.

The LAG aims to embody the “Aloha spirit” in representing Lānaʻi, portraying it as a peaceful, serene, and restorative haven. They emphasize Lānaʻi’s uniqueness, friendliness, and the close-knit community of Lānaʻi City, advocating for imagery that reflects the island’s rich culture, history, and commitment to natural

resource conservation. The group seeks to move away from luxury-focused imagery, instead highlighting Lānaʻi as a welcoming place for locals and visitors alike, with visuals that capture its mysterious beauty, like the often cloud-draped mountains, suggesting a deeper exploration.

LAG rebranding efforts, supported by DMAP funds and in collaboration with the MVCB, have produced a new Lānaʻi brochure. This brochure, featuring the slogan “Escape to the quiet island of Lānaʻi,” includes a city map, highlights attractions like the Lānaʻi Cat Sanctuary and the Lānaʻi Art Center, and offers a QR code for the Lānaʻi Guide app. It emphasizes community messages, encouraging visitors to engage warmly with locals.

Community-driven rebranding efforts have included:

- Revising Expeditions Ferry website with community-supported messaging
- Revising collateral provided to partners, travel agents, meeting planners, wholesalers, media and visitors.
- Revising Go Hawaiʻi website (in progress)
- Creating and distributing a new Lānaʻi brochure
- Creating a social media campaign with community-supported messaging
- Procuring new photo assets from a Lānaʻi-based photographer with a focus on Lānaʻi City and community-supported activities
- Producing five, 3-minute HI Now TV spots with a focus on Lānaʻi City, the Lānaʻi Guide App, Lānaʻi Cat Sanctuary, Lānaʻi Adventure Park and the Malama Lānaʻi Day Trip
- Community-supported messaging woven throughout each video

Lānaʻi Air Welcomes Cessna Sky Courier C-408

by Anthony Kaaumo with photos by Sharmaine Mae Elan



Lānaʻi Air, operated by Western Aircraft, Inc., introduced the Cessna C-408

SkyCourier to its fleet, marking its inaugural flight on Friday, March 29. This twin-engine turboprop aircraft, accommodating up to 19 passengers, now facilitates scheduled flights as public charters between Lānaʻi and Honolulu, with departures at 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. from Lānaʻi, and at 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 2:00 p.m. from Honolulu. These flights complement the existing service and times provided by the Pilatus PC-12.

Jollette Silva, operations manager of Lānaʻi Air, highlighted the Sky Courier’s features, stating “It’s an additional option for residents to be able to fly between Lānaʻi and Honolulu. The aircraft boasts large windows offering panoramic views, USB charging ports, convenient overhead bins and easy boarding with fold-down entry stairs. Additionally, for passengers with mobility challenges, a passenger ramp is available upon prior request.”

Silva noted that integrating the SkyCourier aligns with Lānaʻi Air’s commitment to operational efficiency and maintenance compatibility with their fleet. This approach ensures the SkyCourier serves as an additional asset within the broader air transportation framework of the island.

For more information or reservations, visit LanaiAir.com.



Mālama Gun Range

photos provided by Mos Masicampo

In early February, over 20 Lānaʻi residents gathered at the Pālāwai Basin gun range for maintenance and improvement. The event was organized by the Lānaʻi Hunters Focus Group and Pūlama Lānaʻi.

Mos Masicampo, Game Management Manager at Pūlama Lānaʻi said, “It’s a community gun range, and it’s open to the public seven days out of the week. I believe it’s the only gun range in Hawaiʻi that is open to the public like that, where you can just go down and sign the waiver and you’re free to go.”

The day’s work involved installing new targets, clearing overgrowth, picking up litter, repairing shooting benches and rebuilding target stands. Volunteers brought tools and worked together. After the cleanup, they shared a potluck.

Mos outlined future plans. “But we’re going to try to do it maybe twice a year. There’s a lot of other things that we want to do in the future, like maybe plant more trees to give the shooters more shade, because it gets real hot down there.”

The gun range serves as a community hub. Cleanup day boosts spirit and pride. For future events, contact Stan Ruidas or Mos Masicampo at 808-563-0086.



Expanding the REACH in Response to the Pandemic’s Impact on Youth

by Anthony Kaauamo

During the COVID-19 pandemic, students at Lānaʻi High & Elementary School (LHES) faced considerable challenges, primarily due to increased isolation and limited opportunities for social interaction. This period significantly altered their daily routines and access to after-school activities. Among these changes was the suspension of the REACH Program, which had been active from the 2016-2017 through the 2019-2020 school years. While not the sole focus of student activities, the program’s absence was one of several factors that contributed to a reduced availability of structured, group-based enrichment opportunities during this time.

The REACH program, part of the Hawaiʻi Department of Education’s Community Engagement Branch, stands for “Resources for Enrichment, Athletics, Culture, & Health.” It provides critical Out-of-School Time (OST) opportunities for intermediate students across Hawaiʻi. The program is unique in its comprehensive approach, offering a blend of academic enrichment, arts, culture and athletics, and is one of the few OST programs nationally supported by state funds.

Zachary Holsomback, an LHES middle school social studies teacher and the current volunteer coordinator for Lānaʻi’s REACH Program, closely witnessed the varied impacts of the pandemic on his students. He saw firsthand the decline in their social, emotional and mental well-being as a result of prolonged isolation and the disruption of their regular school and social routines.

Understanding the critical role that structured activities play in student life, Mr. Holsomback recognized the pressing need to not only reactivate but also expand the REACH Program. He aimed to address these observed challenges by offering students more opportunities for engagement in a post-pandemic world. “The social, emotional and mental health of kids were badly impacted,” Mr. Holsomback said. “After COVID, we faced the question of what we could do to help our students reengage socially, improve their health and rekindle their athletic and academic interests.”

His concern extended beyond the physical aspects of student life to encompass their overall holistic development. Mr. Holsomback’s approach was to create an environment that would support the students in regaining their confidence, reestablishing social connections, and enhancing their academic and athletic skills. The expansion of the REACH Program under his guidance was envisioned as a key strategy in this endeavor, aiming to provide a diverse array of activities that would cater to the varied interests and needs of the students at LHES.

On Lānaʻi, the program’s primary focus has been on the letter “A” in REACH, representing Athletics. This focus is significantly influenced by Mr. Holsomback’s extensive background in sports coaching. His nine-year tenure as Lānaʻi’s high school varsity volleyball coach, from 2008 to 2017, equipped him with an understanding of the importance of sports in student development.

“After COVID, we faced the question of what we could do to help our students reengage socially, improve their health and rekindle their athletic and academic interests.”



He focused on skill-building, discipline and fostering a team spirit, elements he now integrates into the REACH Program at LHES.

The 2023-2024 school year marked an expansion for Lānaʻi’s REACH program which now includes a diverse array of sports: basketball, volleyball, cross-country, flag football and wrestling. This expansion was a strategic response to the pandemic’s impact. “We initially offered basketball, volleyball and cross-country,” Mr. Holsomback recalled. “Post-pandemic, we realized the need to offer more options to our students.”

The program’s growth is not just about providing a variety of sports; it’s about addressing the broader needs of students in the post-pandemic era. The isolation and lack of physical activity during the pandemic years necessitated a robust response to reengage students in a supportive and active environment. Managing the expanded program involves significant challenges, including scheduling, budgeting and coordinating travel for competitions, especially given Lānaʻi’s unique geographical location. “Travel is our biggest expense,” Mr. Holsomback pointed out. “We plan for our students to get the full experience by competing with other schools.”

The program operates on a legislative-funded budget, with a maximum of around \$12,000 each year. Despite the budgetary constraints, Mr. Holsomback and his team are committed to maximizing the impact of these funds for the benefit of the students.

Volunteer coaches and community support are vital to the program’s success. “Securing dedicated adults to coach was a crucial step. Their contributions are invaluable in providing quality coaching and mentorship to our students,” he said. This community involvement is a testament to the spirit of Lānaʻi and the collective effort to support the youth.

Beyond athletics, the program has positively influenced students’ academic performance. Regular grade checks ensure students maintain a 2.0 GPA with no F’s. “We’ve seen improvements in student motivation and engagement. It’s about teaching them responsibility, time management, and the value of hard work,” Mr. Holsomback shared.

The future of the REACH Program on Lānaʻi looks promising, with plans to embrace the full scope of its acronym: Resources for Enrichment, Athletics, Culture, and Health. “We’re looking at additional funding sources like Uplink to expand our program



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to include a wider range of interests like esports and cultural activities like hula and paddling,” Mr. Holsomback said.

Participation in the program’s sports has been robust, with 103 out of 130 middle schoolers so far involved.

Mr. Holsomback, along with the LHES community, extends heartfelt gratitude to the faculty and staff of LHES for their unwavering support. Special appreciation is also given to the volunteer coaches of the REACH Program, including Kendra Sabin, Tuma Fauatea, Jane Fauatea and Rahnia Boyer for Girls Volleyball; Andrei Badillo and Reylan Aguete for Boys Volleyball; Marylou Kaukeano, Christian Yumol and Gina Anton for Girls Basketball; Rodrigo Mirafuentes, Mar Dela Rosa, Keleah Koloï, Arjen Uminga, Chant’e Sproat and Kennidi Valladolid for Boys Basketball; Jesse Del Rosario, Jake Ballesteros and Liko Kuhnz for Wrestling; Jennifer Montgomery for Cross Country; and Roderick Noble for Flag Football.

Additional gratitude goes to the community and high school volunteers, including Douglas Boyer, Cody Patterson, Philip Bolo, Ross Morita, Jenel Uminga, Linfred Olter, Aiyana Hawkins,

Roxy Sumalbag, Jaeden Ranis, Kahea Tabucbuc, Leland Soriano, Diesel Del Rosario, Kalikar Debrum, Cash Atacador, Alex Hawkins, Roderick Sumagit, Michele Holsomback, Stacie Koanui Nefalar and many others for their invaluable support and dedication.

Under Mr. Holsomback’s guidance, the REACH Program at LHES has evolved into a multifaceted platform that not only addresses the athletic needs of students but also contributes significantly to their overall development. It stands as a symbol of the community’s resilience, adaptability and commitment to nurturing its youth in a post-pandemic world.



Project Hōkūlani is Getting Bigger and Better!

by Lisa Galloway, PhD

Seven Lāna‘i students, and four more on Maui, have just finished the first eight hours of their paid internships with Project Hōkūlani!

This University of Hawai‘i program, which began on Lāna‘i two years ago, introduces our young scholars to work based learning in science, technology, engineering and math, collectively referred to as STEM. They have been participating in hands-on lessons twice a month since September, and they have also been learning a lot about transitioning to college, and how Native Hawaiian knowledge connects to STEM.

Next up for this year’s cohort will be working 40 hours at the Lāna‘i site of their choice: the Four Seasons Observatory, Venture Physical Therapy or the Lāna‘i Limu Restoration Project. In June and July, look for announcements about these interns’ presentations, which will showcase their learning focus and provide the community with interesting and valuable information related to health, astronomy and wayfinding, as well as growing limu (edible Hawaiian seaweed). The tentative date for our ho‘ike, the final virtual wrap up, is Friday, July 12th and you may join us for that, too!

We are also recruiting for the following Project Hōkūlani/CLD TEAMS events:

1. Summer Science Camp June 10th to the 19th – This is a free event for middle and high school students who are interested in STEM. We’ll have high interest classes each morning with light meals, and several field trips will be offered both here on island, and one day in Kihei. Apply here online: go.Hawaii.edu/aQn. Or download the application here: go.Hawaii.edu/gQn
2. Applications for next school year will open later this summer, with a few virtual lessons beginning in September, and the paid internship starting in spring of 2025.

Look for our flyers at school, around town, and in this paper, or just contact me, the site coordinator, at lgallowa@Hawaii.edu if you want to know more!

And please spread the word! STEM fields are not only good for all students to explore their own interests and talents while in high and middle school, but the Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders who make up most of Hawai‘i’s population, represent the diversity STEM careers currently lack. Enrolling in projects like this is a way to sustain our unique cultures while at the same time encouraging young people to pursue vital, valuable careers and education!

Scan the QR code to learn more about Project Hōkūlani



Jennifer Hera Pimentel, Hawai‘i’s Vice Principal of the Year

written by Anthony Kaauamo

Jennifer Hera Pimentel, elementary vice principal for Lāna‘i High & Elementary School (LHES), has been honored as Hawai‘i’s Vice Principal of the Year. This prestigious award by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) acknowledges her contributions to integrating the educational environment with Lāna‘i’s community



Photos by Marisa Hera Photography

and cultural identity. In Hawai‘i, each of the 16 complex areas nominates a distinguished assistant principal for state-level selection. Jennifer was nominated for the award by LHES Principal Douglas Boyer and Complex Area Superintendent Rebecca Winky.

Reflecting on her career journey, Jennifer said, “I came back to Lāna‘i [in 2017] and taught fourth grade one year, then fifth grade for almost two years.” Despite her love for the classroom, Jennifer transitioned into administration, a move influenced by conversations with then-LHES principal Elton Kinoshita who saw potential in her, believing she possessed the qualities needed for effective leadership. Jennifer accepted the VP role, with a new conviction that the best way to create a ripple of impact is to take a role of leadership.

Jennifer’s dedication to Lāna‘i’s education system is evident in her work to align the school environment with the island’s community spirit. She has focused on developing a school culture that is deeply connected to Lāna‘i’s identity, ensuring the educational experience reflects the community’s history and values. Her leadership has launched initiatives like Lōkahi Day, which aimed to strengthen the connection between the school and the local community. Jennifer’s efforts are geared towards rekindling the active community involvement she recalls from her time as a student on Lāna‘i, bringing the community into the school to revive the shared experiences and traditions that shape the island’s identity.

In her VP role, Jennifer feels she embodies the leadership qualities of her father, Bob Hera, and the educational passion of her mother, Patricia Hera. She is grateful for the support of her husband, David Pimentel, and their children, Sophia and Corbin. “I’m also thankful for my principal, Mr. Boyer, who leads the way and believes in my abilities,” she said.

Jennifer is set to represent Hawai‘i at the national conference in Nashville on July 11, where the National Outstanding Assistant Principal will be announced. Despite the accolades, her primary commitment is to Lāna‘i’s students, whom she deeply considers as her own. “They don’t live with me, but they’re all my kids, and that’s where my efforts are focused,” she said.



Why the Story is Never About Anthony Kaauamo

Meet Lānaʻi Today's New Managing Editor

by Cory Lovejoy

Amid a plethora of books, camera and self proclaimed “geek” gear, I sit on a comfortable couch across the room facing Anthony. He is sitting at his desk, a painting of Nosferatu under a tropical night sky prominently displayed behind him. He excitedly tells me about his ideas for the photo spread he would like to create for an article about his work with Sharmaine Elan, the student intern at Lānaʻi Today. The photographs he describe are charming and “absurd,” like the duo fleeing from the undead during a zombie apocalypse, meant to evoke the spirit of their journalistic pursuits, rather than actual events.

“Get people to react. Be in the moment. Listen to what the person is saying. Dig in more,” Anthony says these things to me, and I must confess, Dear Reader, as I sit here writing this article, I cannot recall what his words were in regards too. I can say, they are classically Anthony.

I have known him for a decade now. First, as a contemporary creative, when he asked me to write, star in and help direct a short film for 5th Friday, inspired by “Un Chien Andalou,” a short film by Louis Buñel and Salvador Dali. During the filming process we became friends, who never tire discussing the structures and various devices used in stories and movies. As a fellow person of Native Hawaiian ancestry, we’ve had many discussions on discovering and representing what it means to be a Modern Native Hawaiian in our present-day colonized world. I cannot help but think that our Native Hawaiian ancestors are smiling at us collaborating on a newspaper article, as Nā Nūpepa ‘Ōlelo Hawaiʻi was, and is a very important part of Hawaiian culture, post colonization.

Anthony knows a lot about storytelling, writing and film. He attended the University of Las Vegas, Nevada for two years as an English literature major, to be a writer. While there, he took a film production elective class, which led to him switching his major to film. The change in majors brought him back to the islands, to the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa to make Native Hawaiian narrative films. In 2008 he graduated from UH Mānoa, with a film degree, with an emphasis on directing and screenwriting. He has made, helped make and starred in many a short film. You may have seen one or two of them, as they’ve played solo or at film festivals held at Hale Keaka. His wealth of cinematic knowledge and its devices has taught me to appreciate the medium of film from the viewpoint of a director, and greatly influenced my own writing endeavors.

Enough about me, let’s get back to the reason for this article, Anthony and his new job, as editor of Lānaʻi Today, starting in August 2023. I furiously take notes as he tells me about growing into his journalism shoes, and how writing for a small-town paper allows him to enrich it by using literary devices in a journalistic setting. His new job keeps him well informed on current happenings that affect our community, while giving him the chance to talk story with the populace, for him, a perk of the job. He is genuinely interested in what people have to say and finds that people who are shy will openly share their thoughts with him.

Being editor of Lānaʻi Today is more than interviews and writing. There is also the research he undertakes to familiarize himself with

and identify the subject properly, which starts with him crafting questions to ask that will best bring out the information he needs. This is followed by hours of transcribing quotes and processing what people have shared before he even attempts to write about it. All of this occurs in the midst of him organizing and planning for future interviews and articles, while juggling deadlines for research and publishing.

For his article on the recent Homecoming Day Parade he interviewed 20 different individuals, wanting “multiple voices” to create a “rounder perspective” of the event for readers. This left him with hours of interviews to sift through. Generally, editors have a team to tackle these tedious tasks. As it is just him, and his student intern Sharmaine, he finds himself doing the brunt of the work. By the time he gets to the writing part of being editor, he often finds himself “exhausted” by all these different aspects, and not in the “headspace” for writing.

Despite wishing he had more control over the layout of the paper, and knowing this is not realistic with the physical space constraints, he continues to exercise a deliberateness in the photographs he includes, and their connectedness to the flow of the story he is telling. He thinks words and photographs are an “interesting mix.” A way to say something without words, “like a children’s book,” that advances the story and adds more depth, by commenting on the article before one reads it, or repeating what was already said in the text. Pro Tip: While the print issues of Lānaʻi Today are lovely, I recommend viewing the issues on LanaiToday.com to fully appreciate Anthony and Sharmaine’s photographic abilities and stylings. The paper’s website is where one can find the latest news happening on Lānaʻi, like the closing of First Hawaiian Bank or LAPA’s cast announcement for their latest play, “Jo and the Gigalytes.”

Anthony’s cinematic approach to the paper, and writing, is a direct effect of his background in short films. Like in a film, everything he includes in the paper is deliberate, from the carefully chosen words to the visual content (where he and Sharmaine personally photograph and video segments for Lānaʻi Today, using his own camera equipment). While this approach gives the readers and viewers a more holistic view, it definitely makes the process arduous.

Our conversation turns off topic for a bit. (We’re friends, remember?) Eventually, I steer us back to the matter at hand, by mentioning I’ve heard people remark about the more “artsy” quality of the paper. Case(s) in point, the February 2024 issue which featured several Lānaʻi poets and a poem in Tagalog, with

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Anthony’s cinematic approach to the paper, and writing, is a direct effect of his background in short films.

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no English translation. Or the article he wrote with a comic book flair, in the December 2023 issue, about the new fire truck, Keahiakawelo, that left me feeling as if I had read about our very own Lānaʻi Superhero.

Another favorite was his inclusion of the drama that a *Streptopelia chinensis*, commonly known as spotted dove, caused during a Community Talk Story, held by Gabe Johnson. His inclusion of the spotted dove melodrama brought levity to reporting on an issue that, while important, can be dull at times. It also taught me the creature's scientific name and reminded me of every group activity I've ever participated in on Lānaʻi. If you've lived here for an extended period of time, or your whole life, you know as well as I do, that our community is made up of a bunch of lovable, colorful characters. His reason for the "artsy" approach is simple. He is "allowing" there to be "more creativity" in the paper.

He hopes to actively get more Lānaʻi writers to participate in the paper regularly, as he finds it refreshing to hear different voices shared in unique ways. For examples of this, see Josh Ige's review on Ganotisi's Korean Chicken, or Rommel Rendon's article about "Embracing the Art of Slacking," both can be found in the December 2023 issue. Anthony thinks of "news" in broader terms than just information or what's happening with so and so. In our small community "news" is personal, as we are all connected to each other. He wants content and participation from everyone. His mission, "a community paper with community participation."

**His mission,
"a community
paper with
community
participation."**

He goes on to say, he thinks it is a distraction to include "himself" in what he writes, and makes an effort to not be present in the articles, as he feels this makes it become "my (his) personal paper." He is more interested in hearing other peoples' experiences. This, he knows is "unavoidable," as sometimes he has no choice but to include himself in an article, especially if he was a participant in the event.

Paradoxically, he encouraged Sharmaine into going the route of personal experience, with an article she wrote about the new priest at the Catholic Church. He describes her writing as being illustrative and expressive. Her reporting on the subject gave him room to experience what it was like to be at the Catholic Church too early in the morning for music performance. He expresses that he wants her to meet people and tell stories through actions, with ample space to explore them.

Our conversation wraps up with us exchanging memories of Joana Varawa, one of Anthony's predecessors as a former editor of Lānaʻi Times. He recalls how she was a "strong writer." I recall how she once told me she wouldn't write about plants she didn't know the names of. Whether or not Joana would approve, or enjoy Anthony's version of Lānaʻi Today, is hard to say, as she was the quintessential lovable Lānaʻi character I mentioned earlier. As for me, I look forward to every issue.

NOTE FROM ANTHONY: Out of respect for my dear mother, Darlene Baybayan, I want to clarify the use of my name: Anthony Kaaauamo. She worried I'd be unrecognizable without "Pacheco." Kaaauamo, our inoa 'ohana (Hawaiian family name), represents our lineage and kuleana (responsibilities). I changed my last name from Pacheco to Kaaauamo to honor this legacy. Translating to "the carrying stick," the 'auamo was a traditional tool for balancing and bearing burdens. -- See, I'm a good son, Mom!

Father Marcial of Lānaʻi's Sacred Hearts Catholic Church

written and photographed by Sharmaine Mae Elan

The spacious, yet modest sized church hosted a few attendees. Many of them were regulars to 7 a.m. Mass, each in their familiar pews. My dad and I were seated near the front left pews, where the choir is, both of our guitars laid on our laps perfectly, their smooth curves fitting like a jigsaw. The gleaming light from the small chandeliers filled every corner, leaving no shadows. It was cold inside and despite wearing two layers, I still felt like I was in an icebox, my eyes threatening to freeze shut and go into hibernation. The texture of smooth steel nickel-plated strings and the music it produced were some of the few things that kept me awake at this early hour. Even with eyes heavily lidded, the chord changes from 7s to minors felt like a shot of coffee to my ears.

"Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble, be with me, Lord, I Pray." The lyrics of the psalm piqued my interest with the way it merged perfectly with the chord progression. My fingers danced with the strings, syncing with the tempo my dad played, his foot tapping a rhythm on the wood-finished flooring of the house of God. Through the sound of the guitar and voices, I could feel the emotion and message the song conveyed; to trust in God, even in challenging times... though the lyrics don't explicitly state why...

At the song's finale, the priest, adorned in liturgical vestments, stood at the podium with the Gospel placed before him. "Life is like a garden because what we put in, we get out. Just like a gardener plants seeds and takes care of them, our actions and choices determine the outcomes we experience." His eyes shifted around the room, examining each member of the congregation as he delivered his homily. "If we are kind, loving and positive, good things will come our way."

Father Marcialito "Marcial" Indino Maglana is the newly assigned priest and parish administrator to Lānaʻi's Sacred Hearts Catholic Church. Though born and raised in the Philippine city



Father Marcial Maglana

of Davao in Mindanao, Father Marcial is a proud Boholano with family roots in the Visayas region of Bohol. His upbringing instilled a deep devotion to the Catholic faith, "My father was so active in the church. He was a leader until he died. We were still kids, they always brought us to the church, that started my vocation, my interest to serve the church. It is good to serve, to assist, to help, to be present in the church."

On May 27, 2003, Father Marcial was ordained to the priesthood, and over the next 20 years, he served in eight different churches in the Tagum Diocese of Davao. His service included roles in local neighborhoods, remote mining areas, and as a hospital chaplain during the pandemic. Then, on July 23, 2023, he began his new role as the Parochial Vicar at the Cathedral Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in Honolulu, moving from the Philippines to Hawaiʻi. This assignment was part of an agreement between Bishop Medel Aseo of Tagum and Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu to address the clergy shortage in Hawaiʻi. After beginning his service in Honolulu, Father Marcial was appointed to Lānaʻi to succeed Father Jojo, the previous priest at Sacred Hearts, who transferred for health reasons. This transition occurred on January 3, 2024.

Before heading to Lānaʻi, Father Marcial shared his initial thoughts, "I never realized it's an island. A small, isolated island." His curiosity about Lānaʻi led to further research, after which he felt encouraged and optimistic. Familiar with serving in small, close-knit communities, he felt at home. "A small parish, small town, peaceful. It's not a big deal for me, because I'm also from a small town."

Connecting with the Lānaʻi community, especially with the active Filipino church volunteers, Father Marcial looks forward to participating in future community programs and events. "I was confident that I would like it here. And indeed, so far, so far... I have no problem."

**"A small
parish, small
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It's not a big
deal for me,
because I'm
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small town."**



Polystyle

by Anthony Kaauamo

After graduating from Lānaʻi High & Elementary School (LHES) in 2023, Souina Seiuli, the eldest daughter of Johnny and Sivanila Seiuli, embarked on her college career at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Thanks to her dedication and success in the dual enrollment program offered at LHES, she earned her associate degree and began her college life not as a freshman, but as a sophomore.

Adjusting to life in Utah, Souina is experiencing a stark cultural contrast. “The people here are very different from Hawaiʻi people. I’m used to being so open with others and having that aloha with everybody, that when I went to Utah, it’s just like, not everyone is connected that way.”

The challenge of maintaining cultural connections while living away from one’s ancestral homeland is a common experience for second-generation individuals and beyond in diaspora communities. On Lānaʻi, where the U.S. Census Bureau reports less than 50 residents identify as Samoan, individuals like Souina, who are of second-generation Samoan descent with parents from Apia, Western Samoa, face the risk of losing touch with their heritage. This issue becomes more pronounced with each passing generation, as the connection to language and cultural practices can weaken over time. This gradual distancing from cultural roots is a significant concern for communities striving to preserve their unique identities and traditions.

In early 2022, while still a junior at LHES, Souina, together with her younger siblings, Sivanny and Victor, and friend, Sega Fauatea, laid the foundation for a unique cultural project. The four high schoolers, all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, were asked to showcase a cultural performance for an event on Maui. Embracing their roots, they chose to highlight their Samoan culture. This decision set the stage for the creation of the dance group that would come to be known as “Polystyle.”



Souina Seiuli, dances adorned with the Tuiga headdress, a symbol of honor and nobility

Their dance style, primarily based on siva, a traditional Samoan dance, shares similarities with other Polynesian dances like hula in its storytelling focus. In these dance forms, the movements are more than just physical expressions; they are a way of narrating stories. Each gesture, step and rhythm in siva is carefully crafted to convey a specific tale or aspect of Samoan culture. Such an approach to dance is a hallmark of many Polynesian cultures, where storytelling through dance is a revered and integral part of cultural expression.

After their performance on Maui, Sega’s grandmother, Jane Fauatea, encouraged them to perform at the 2022 Pineapple Festival. Seizing the opportunity presented by the festival’s return, which had been on hiatus since 2020 due to COVID, the teenagers decided to formalize and expand their group. “This was my last Pinefest in high school,” Souina said, “so me and my sister decided to make the group bigger, to share our culture with more people.”

The process of expanding the group was both personal and communal. “There’s a lot of kids that come over our house, like, every Sunday from our church, and so we recruited them, as well as some of our friends that were interested as well,” said Souina. To solidify their expansion efforts, a meeting was held in the county field directly in front of the Seiuli house, where discussions about participation and the group’s vision took place.

During this period of growth and formalization, the group, recognizing a kinship with the even smaller Tongan population on Lānaʻi, chose the name “Polystyle.” This choice was a deliberate effort to embrace their Polynesian cousins, reflecting their inclusive approach to not only preserving Samoan dances but also encompassing Tongan ones. They identified with the Tongan community’s similar struggle to stay connected to their culture.

In many communities, cultural dance groups are traditionally led by elders who carry the knowledge of cultural protocols, traditions, language, and dress. However, Lānaʻi’s small Samoan community lacks such figures, creating a gap in cultural leadership. This is where these teenagers have stepped in. By forming Polystyle, they’ve taken an active role in preserving their Samoan heritage, ensuring it remains a vibrant part of their lives and the broader community.

From a young age, these siblings were immersed in the world of dance, watching their parents perform at local events. Souina recalled, “Our parents used to perform for the Pineapple Fest and any events that were happening. A lot of the times when they would have their performance days, they usually practiced at our house. So, when we were little, we would just observe what they do.” Inspired by these early experiences, they have now embraced social media as a tool to learn Samoan dance routines themselves, refining them for teaching purposes, and consulting their parents to ensure cultural accuracy.

Teaching within Polystyle varies depending on the learners’ ages and experiences. This flexibility encourages learning across different age groups, from children to teenagers. Their performances, such as the recent appearance at the 2023 Lānaʻi Festivals of Aloha, serve as a platform for cultural expression and education. “Well, we definitely want it to continue. I think our thing is to have it passed down. And we hope that the kids we’re teaching are learning so that they can continue it in the future,” said Souina.

Polystyle addresses the challenge of preserving heritage in the diaspora. It offers a space for practicing, teaching and sharing cultural traditions, welcoming all community members interested. These young leaders play an important role in keeping their cultural heritage vibrant and accessible on Lānaʻi.

By forming Polystyle, they’ve taken an active role in preserving their Samoan heritage, ensuring it remains a vibrant part of their lives and the broader community.



Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center’s “Kodomo no tame ni” Exhibit

The Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center launched the “Kodomo no tame ni” exhibit in December 2023, and it will be on display through spring of 2024. The exhibit features a collection that includes traditional kimonos, Kokeshi and Japanese dolls, historical photographs, among additional cultural artifacts, all narrating the legacy of Lānaʻi’s Japanese community. Among the exhibited items, several pieces are shared publicly for the first time, having been previously preserved within family circles.

Visitors, including elder kamaʻāina from the Lānaʻi Senior Center, expressed a deep connection to the displayed items. Mrs. Michio Morimoto found a personal link to the past. “It was really interesting because there’s so many pictures and it’s very nostalgic,” she said, mentioning a photo of her younger brother, James Taguchi, among the exhibit.

Mrs. Midori Oshima was moved by the variety of items on display. “There’s so many things from the whole Japanese people donated to show for the future

“Items in the center sparked conversations of shared memories...”

generation,” Mrs. Oshima said, reflecting on one of the exhibit’s artifacts, an abacus, which reminded her of her own daily use since 1967. “Instead of a calculator, I use an abacus. It’s easier for me to add and subtract,” she explained.

Kris Kahihikolo, director of the Lānaʻi Senior Center, observed the positive impact of the exhibit on the visitors. “The kūpuna were so pleased to visit the center. Items in the center sparked conversations of shared memories,” she said.

Supported by the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority’s Community Enrichment program, the “Kodomo no tame ni” exhibit serves as a living testament to the enduring legacy of Lānaʻi’s Japanese community, bridging the past with the present and future. The Lānaʻi Culture & Heritage Center is dedicated to preserving and sharing the island’s history, actively inviting the community to contribute to its expanding archive and ensuring the cultural treasures of Lānaʻi are safeguarded for future generations.



Mrs. Michio Morimoto holds a photo featuring her brother, James Taguchi

Nā Kūpuna & the Arts

contributed by Kim Dupree

The Lānaʻi Senior Center is a happening place for art nowadays. Since last year, Kapua Weinhouse, dedicating time away from her 2.2-acre farm, has been imparting the joy of various art forms to our Nā Kūpuna. Kapua shares, “Seniors complete projects that not only bring joy to our nā kūpuna that participate, but also builds confidence, exercises fine motor skills and strengthens camaraderie between our nā kūpuna who attend the Senior Center.”

Kapua occasionally collaborates with the Lānaʻi Art Center (LAC) for “supplies, equipment, and as a place to showcase completed projects.” She recounts a memorable interaction, a conversation between a kupuna and her grandchild about “gramma’s painting.” It was a priceless moment that would not have happened without LAC’s participation in exhibiting the artwork.

Kris Kahihikolo, Program Coordinator for the Lānaʻi Senior Center, remarks, “Art stimulates our older generations’ social, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being, and enhances and builds new skills and opportunities to make the retirement years the best years.”

Contrary to the notion that painting and drawing are mere hobbies, research indicates their substantial benefits for seniors’ physical and mental health. Art, as a form of therapy, is beneficial across all ages but particularly so for seniors, aiding in regaining normalcy in their lives.

Some benefits are:

- Improved cognitive function: Challenging seniors to create art sharpens their senses and enhances neural connections, which is potentially lost with age.

- Improved mood: Art helps in reducing anxiety, depression and stress. Studies have found that seniors engaged in creative arts report lower levels of depression and loneliness, showing a more positive overall mood.
- Enhanced motor skills: Practicing painting and drawing exercises hands and arms, improving coordination, enhancing blood flow and building dexterity.
- Increased social interaction: Art classes provide a platform for seniors to meet, interact and bond, helping to alleviate loneliness and enhance emotional well-being.
- Greater self-expression: Art offers a medium for seniors to express thoughts and emotions, particularly when verbal communication may be challenging. It also aids in processing grief or health issues, potentially uncovering hidden passions.
- New thought processes: Art encourages engaging different parts of the brain and body, helping seniors to reframe their perspectives and find new joys.
- Improved memory: Creative arts can assist seniors with memory loss, helping to revive memories of loved ones and past experiences.
- Pain relief: Art therapy has been found to help manage chronic pain, allowing individuals to focus more on creativity and less on their pain.

Art proves immensely rewarding for seniors, fostering positive emotions, enhancing physical abilities and offering therapeutic benefits. The creative journey at the Lānaʻi Senior Center enhances the quality of life for our kūpuna, making it worthwhile to encourage their participation in the arts.

After 100 Years, First Hawaiian Bank Closes its Lāna‘i Branch

by Anthony Kaauamo

The impending closure of First Hawaiian Bank’s (FHB) Lāna‘i branch, slated for June 28, 2024, has raised significant concern within our community. Originating as Bank of Bishop and Co. in 1924, this institution has been a cornerstone of Lāna‘i’s financial landscape for nearly a century. With the planned closure, the island will be left with only Bank of Hawaii and Lāna‘i Federal Credit Union, marking a significant shift in our community’s banking landscape.

The decision, which was communicated to the community in early March, has heightened worries among Lāna‘i’s residents, especially the kūpuna, many of whom face challenges with digital banking platforms. In a community where personal interaction is paramount, the loss of FHB’s physical branch presents difficulties for those relying on in-branch banking services. Furthermore, our Filipino and Kosraean communities, many of whom depend on direct communication for banking services, will encounter additional challenges. The closure of FHB’s branch not only limits banking options but also affects the vital social interactions that are integral to the well-being of our island’s diverse population.

First Hawaiian Bank Statement

Lāna‘i Today sent a series of questions to First Hawaiian Bank on March 6 regarding the planned closure of its Lāna‘i branch. The bank released a public statement on March 9 and provided another on March 29, neither of which directly addressed the specific questions posed by the newspaper. Below is the bank’s statement from March 29.

“We continue to prioritize supporting our customers and staff on Lāna‘i with this transition. Our teams are engaging with individuals who have requested personalized assistance to navigate next steps, whether it involves training on our digital platforms or facilitating a smooth transition to another financial institution on the island.

We encourage customers to reach out to the branch with any questions or call (888) 844-4444 for further assistance. We made the decision to share this information early, understanding the importance of giving everyone ample time to plan ahead and ensuring that any questions or uncertainties can be addressed with care and consideration.”

Community Response and Efforts

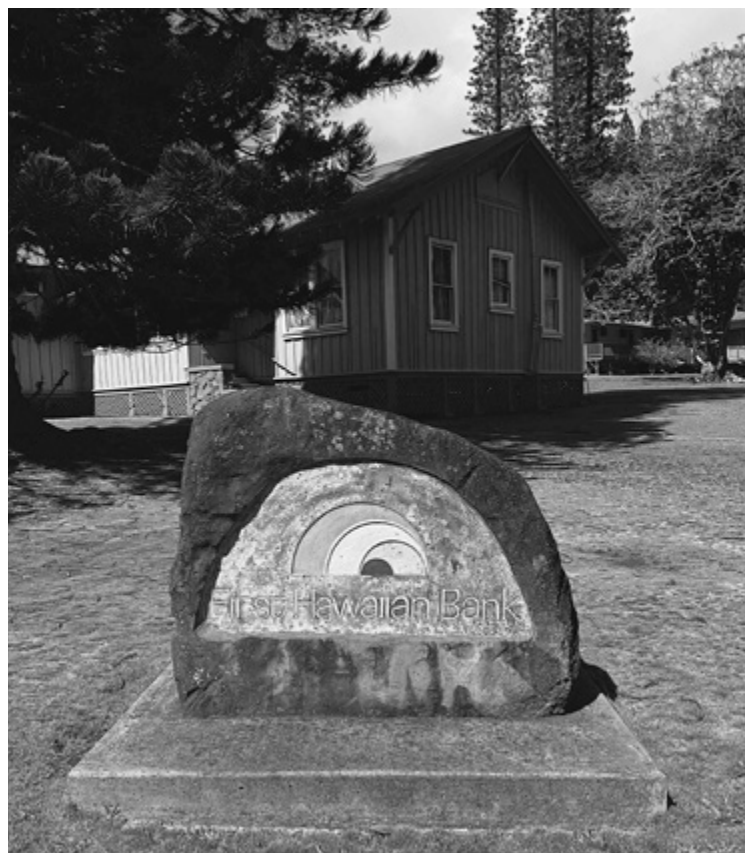
Following the announcement of the bank’s impending closure, the Lāna‘i community quickly mobilized, driven by a collective determination to explore all possible avenues to keep the bank operational. Upon learning of FHB’s impending departure, Lisa Grove was immediately

concerned about the repercussions for the community. She reached out to Shelly Barfield, initiating a series of discussions and brainstorming sessions to address the situation. They were acutely aware of the potential hardships for Lāna‘i’s residents, especially the kūpuna and those for whom English is a second language.

For these community members, the bank was more than a financial institution; it was a place of social interaction, trust and support, serving as a vital source of face-to-face interaction and guidance. The kūpuna, many of whom face challenges with digital banking platforms, rely on in-person assistance with their banking needs, finding security and support in the staff’s familiarity and kindness. The bank’s local employees, deeply integrated into the community, had built trusting relationships with their customers, making the closure a significant personal and collective loss.

Driven by these concerns, Lisa reached out to Senator Brian Schatz and Representative Jill Tokuda. Despite being in the midst

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of a critical budget week in Washington D.C., both Sen. Schatz and Rep. Tokuda responded within half an hour and immediately engaged with FHB, exploring alternatives to a complete branch closure. They proposed various solutions, such as reducing operational hours, maintaining ATM services, or setting up a smaller branch or service point within an existing local business. Their goal was to retain some level of banking service on the island, acknowledging the essential role these services have in the daily lives of Lāna‘i residents.

Meanwhile, Lisa and Shelly mobilized to organize a community demonstration, hoping to publicly express the collective concern and opposition to the closure due to the community’s reliance on the bank and the deep-seated desire to preserve it.

As discussions with FHB continued with Sen. Schatz and Rep. Tokuda, it became clear that the bank would not reconsider its closure. FHB had declined all proposed solutions, leaving no alternatives for keeping the branch operational. This decision, made independently as a business move, reflected the stark reality that corporate choices can unilaterally end services, deeply impacting communities like Lāna‘i.

Lisa and Shelly reassessed the feasibility and potential impact of holding a demonstration. Given the swift and irreversible decision by FHB, they questioned whether a public gathering would be an effective use of the community’s time and energy. The realization that the bank’s decision was final, despite the community’s outcry and the efforts of their congressional representatives, led to a difficult decision to call off the planned demonstration.

“Everyone says to me, this is how Hawai‘i used to be,” Lisa said. To visitors from other islands, Lāna‘i represents a bygone era of Hawai‘i, reminiscent of a time when community and personal connection were everyday occurrences. FHB’s 100-year presence on Lāna‘i had played a part in this, being one of the places where our tightly knit community regularly gathered, caught up with one another, and supported each other. As Lisa pointed out, the bank’s closure symbolized the disruption of a central hub for the island’s social interaction and identity.

The closure of FHB on Lāna‘i became a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between progress and preservation, the value of local institutions, and the profound impact of such losses on small, close-knit communities.

Kūpuna and Elder Kama‘āina Responses

The closure of First Hawaiian Bank’s Lāna‘i branch has resonated deeply with our island’s kūpuna and elder kama‘āina, unearthing concerns and emotions rooted in decades of personal and financial history. These long-standing residents, some of whom have been FHB customers since the 1960s, express a blend of disappointment and worry over the impending changes, particularly the tangible

Continued on page 11.

Continued from page 10.

shifts in managing personal documents and assets. One resident described transferring important documents from a secure bank safe deposit box to a Tupperware container at home due to the bank's closure. Similar stories echoed across conversations with elders who preferred to remain unnamed, sharing a sense of disruption in their banking routines and personal security.

The transition has been fraught with challenges. The news, initially spread through the island's "coconut wireless," compelled many to verify the facts through personal visits to FHB. The emphasis of moving towards digital banking looms large over those who have relied on the tactile familiarity of in-branch services, revealing a significant gap in accommodating kūpuna preferences. This shift to digital platforms, mirroring a growing trend in various industries, disrupts traditional service models, often leaving those less tech-savvy at a disadvantage. Despite FHB's public assurances of providing assistance for customers to transition to online and mobile banking, the reality felt by many on the ground diverges sharply. An elder's admission, "I don't use a computer... why am I going to learn now?" captures the prevailing skepticism and resistance to digitally exclusive services.

Many elders faced the challenge of swiftly adapting to banking changes due to the closure's short notice. The tight 4-month deadline forced them, especially those with off-island children, to quickly arrange for account closures and transitions. "They should have given us more time, at least 12 months," some remarked while detailing the strain of coordinating with family members who needed to return to assist them. Concerns were also raised for unsupported elders with some saying, "It's sad for those without family to help them. Hopefully, someone is offering the assistance they need."

Beyond the practicalities of banking and financial management, the closure touches on deeper themes of community, identity and belonging. Elders lament the loss of social interactions and the familial atmosphere in local banks, where staff, known personally to them, provide a touchstone of familiarity and respect. This loss contributes to feelings of loneliness among the elderly population who value the socializing aspect of their bank visits. The prospect of losing these connections speaks to a broader narrative of change and loss within the community, as elders mourn not just the bank's closure but the erosion of a way of life that prioritized personal connection and mutual support.

Bank of Hawai'i Response

As First Hawaiian Bank prepares to close its Lāna'i branch, Bank of Hawai'i (BoH) is positioning itself to address the island's banking demands. With a legacy of 127 years in Hawai'i, including 27 years on Lāna'i, BoH is assessing its strategy to fill the gap left by FHB. BoH CEO Peter Ho detailed these plans in an interview, expressing readiness for the upcoming challenges. "The next several months is going to be kind of intense for us, which is fine. We're up to the challenge and the team's excited. We're looking to be helpful. We're looking how to be supportive longer term," said Ho.

The bank has experienced a significant increase in new customers since FHB's announcement, described by Ho as a "30-fold increase." To manage this surge, BoH has extended its operating hours and has brought in additional staff from other islands. "In the short term, we're going to send staff from other islands into Lāna'i. Pūlama Lāna'i has been kind enough to help us with workforce housing. Obviously, that's an additional expense but it is what it is," Ho said, "Our usual hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. but we're extending them to 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. That's an additional cost as well. But what that does is, I think it gives customers more time to get done what they need to get done. And then it also helps to relieve the operational burden and the stress levels on our teams."

Touching on the financial realities of serving smaller, rural communities like Lāna'i, Ho stated, "And so we are in lots of places

This shift to digital platforms, mirroring a growing trend in various industries, disrupts traditional service models, often leaving those less tech-savvy at a disadvantage.

that are not the biggest, most profitable marketplaces in the world. Obviously, that's not what we're about. We're about serving the islands."

In line with this commitment, BoH announced the Branch of Tomorrow initiative in March. This extensive program aims to modernize and improve the banking experience, with Lāna'i earmarked as one of the five locations for these upgrades over the next two years. The initiative began with the opening of the 'Ele'ele branch on Kaua'i, featuring a suite of advanced services like a technology-focused Teller Bar, private Pili consultation rooms, continuous ATM access, and extended hours, all customized to meet the distinct needs of each community. Lāna'i's Branch of Tomorrow will be specifically designed to address and support the unique requirements of the Lāna'i community, ensuring a tailored banking experience. Ho added, "We try to keep these branches within the design element of their location, and so they won't all look exactly the same because we want them to be appropriate to the communities that they reside in. So, yeah, we definitely are going to be investing into Lāna'i, but it won't look exactly like 'Ele'ele. It will look like its own, what is appropriate to it."

As Bank of Hawaii prepares to fill the void left by First Hawaiian Bank on Lāna'i, Peter Ho noted the community's positive response: "Everyone that we've spoken to has been thankful and supportive of our decision to remain in market on island."

Lāna'i Federal Credit Union Response

Since its inception in 1938, Lāna'i Federal Credit Union (LFCU) has been a steadfast financial pillar for the residents of Lāna'i, offering essential banking services tailored to the local community's needs. Under the leadership of CEO/Manager Charity Figuerres, who took the helm in 2015, LFCU embarked on a transformative journey, evolving from a conservative institution into a dynamic entity ready to address modern financial challenges.

"So, when this news came out, I was like, okay, what am I going to do? Our commercial relationship is pretty deep with First Hawaiian," said Charity. The end of FHB's operations on the island posed significant challenges for LFCU, particularly affecting daily depository transactions and cash handling services. Furthermore, this situation disrupted LFCU's initial plans to implement an ATM service in partnership with FHB.

This situation hastened LFCU's move to introduce new services like checking accounts with no monthly fees, interest earnings, and complimentary first-order checks, alongside ATM/debit card and bill payment services. These initiatives were part of a broader strategy to transition LFCU into a full-service financial institution.

LFCU's current location is facing space limitations due to growing service demand. Charity has approached FHB regarding the acquisition of their property at 7th and Lāna'i Ave. Although FHB has expressed interest in using this property to benefit the Lāna'i community, they have not committed to specific actions or plans.

Charity's dedication to Lāna'i's community is evident in her and her team's efforts, which go beyond regular office hours. They engage deeply with the community, especially the kūpuna affected by the banking changes. Charity has been instrumental in these efforts, spending hours in personal sessions to guide them through the banking transition, ensuring they feel supported and comprehend their options. "And when they come back and they're like, 'oh, thank you for this. I could sleep last night knowing this is what's going on, and you helped me to understand how I'm going to do it.'"

Their interactions extend beyond the credit union, touching everyday life in Lāna'i City. "I mean, we go to the store now, it's like, I can't go to the post office without somebody asking me something, and I have to stop. I'll take the time. Come and see me. Call me. Let me walk you through what you need to do."

This situation hastened LFCU's move to introduce new services like checking accounts with no monthly fees, interest earnings, and complimentary first-order checks, alongside ATM/debit card and bill payment services.

A Message From Lānaʻi Federal Credit Union



Charity Figuerres, Abegail Alcantara, Arlene Rabaca, Elizabeth Magaoay

Who We Are: A Brief History of the Lānaʻi Federal Credit Union

Chartered in 1938, the Lānaʻi Federal Credit Union (LFCU) has a storied history intertwined with the evolution of Lānaʻi itself. The island, purchased in 1922 by James Dole, president of the Hawaiian Pineapple Company (HAPCo), was transformed into the world’s largest pineapple plantation. This development substantively diversified the island’s community.

Recognizing the need for financial services, a group of managers established the HAPCo Lānaʻi Federal Credit Union on October 14, 1938, under the charter approved by the Farm Credit Administration. Initially serving the employees of HAPCo and permanent residents of Lānaʻi City, the credit union became a cornerstone for the community’s financial needs.

The credit union’s journey mirrors the island’s history, from the pineapple plantation era through the transition to tourism and development initiated by David H. Murdock in 1985. As the community evolved, so did the LFCU, adapting its charter and services to meet the changing needs of Lānaʻi’s residents.

How Lānaʻi Federal Credit Union is Addressing the Closure of First Hawaiian Bank

As the First Hawaiian Bank Lānaʻi branch closure approaches, LFCU remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the island’s residents. We are dedicated to providing continuity in banking services and appreciate the patience of our members as we expand our offerings.

We’re excited to announce the launch of our new share draft (checking) accounts! Benefits include:

- Zero Monthly Fee
- Interest Earning
- Free Checks on your first order
- ATM/Debit Card
- Bill Payment Services

In addition, we continue to offer online and mobile banking options, including our Apple and Android apps.

Looking ahead, we are working to enhance our services further by:

- Installing an exterior ATM
- Introducing business accounts
- Developing remote deposit capture capabilities
- Offering certificate of deposit accounts

LFCU is here to navigate these changes with you, ensuring our community’s financial resilience and growth.

Visit our website at www.lanaifcu.org or contact us at 808-565-6522 for more information.

Finding Her Way Back: Olivia Pascual’s Lānaʻi Story

by Anthony Kaauamo

Olivia Agtarap Pascual, a Lānaʻi High & Elementary School graduate of 1998, has charted a remarkable path in her health care career. After leaving Lānaʻi for four years to study in Colorado, then dedicating 13 years to med-surg nursing at Queen’s Medical Center on Oʻahu, the pull to return to Lānaʻi grew stronger. In 2016, the timing felt right for such a move; Olivia was keen on returning to her roots, her husband Neizen Pascual was retiring from the Navy, and a job opportunity presented itself on the island. “And life got busy. Oʻahu got busy. And quite honestly, at that point in my life, I was ready to come home. And it was the perfect opportunity. A childhood friend of mine, Cindy Figuerres, called me and said, ‘hey, I got a job opportunity.’ And I think the stars aligned,” Olivia recounted. With their two daughters, Alexa and Sophia, the family moved back to Lānaʻi, where in 2017, they welcomed their youngest daughter, Avery.

Upon returning, Olivia embraced a new role as the clinical operations officer at Lānaʻi Community Health Center (LCHC). Yet, her longing for direct patient interaction lingered. At the age of 40, this desire prompted a pivotal decision. “My decision to go back to school really stems from missing patient care. I honestly really missed my patients,” she expressed. This sentiment, coupled with encouragement from her mentor, former LCHC Executive Director Diana Shaw, propelled Olivia to pursue further education.

The challenge of juggling motherhood, a full-time job and studies was formidable. “It was a struggle, but I think when you have a vision and you know what you want, you’re going to go for it. And so, I kept pushing and I kept chugging on through, and many times I didn’t see the light, but it was there. So, I am grateful for the journey,” Olivia shared. “It strengthened me in many different ways. Not to say I feel invincible right now, but I feel like I could take on more with the community.” Her perseverance paid off as she completed a Master of

“There is so much purpose in this profession I chose to continue,” she shared, eager to enhance her contributions to the community’s health.



Olivia Agtarap Pascual

Science in nursing as a family nurse practitioner in August of 2023 through the University of Southern California’s virtual program, all while supporting her family.

In March of this year, Olivia transitioned to her new role as a family nurse practitioner at the Lānaʻi Community Health Center, facing the initial hurdles of administrative tasks with optimism. “There is so much purpose in this profession I chose to continue,” she shared, eager to enhance her contributions to the community’s health. Olivia’s journey, underscored by determination and community support, serves as a powerful example for her daughters and Lānaʻi’s youth. She emphasizes the importance of hard work and commitment to achieving one’s goals, demonstrating that despite challenges, success is attainable. Olivia’s dedication to health care and the Lānaʻi community illuminates her enduring commitment to improving the well-being of its people.

Chronicles of a Cultural Homecoming

by Anthony Kaauamo with research support from Sharmaine Mae Elan

“Culture, it’s our identity, right? To understand others, first, we need to understand our own culture. When we see what’s compared and what’s different, that’s when appreciation happens. This is how we embrace diversity.” – Jerico Jaramillo, senior class of 2024 advisor.

Pre-Homecoming: Saturday, February 24th

“You guys need to grab way more paint than that,” Mrs. Michelle Fujie-Kaauamo said. She serves as class advisor for the juniors, class of 2025, is the person I am privileged to call my wife, and was communicating via FaceTime with Colton Morimoto, the junior’s president, alongside my daughter, Meyah Fujie, the junior class vice-president. We were in Kahului, walking through a towering rainbow aisle of paint supplies at Home Depot. As the designated adult in charge, I suspected that five spray paint cans per color wasn’t nearly enough for what the class needed, but I wasn’t completely certain. This was my first honest effort at lending a hand for their class’s homecoming preparations, 21 years past my own half-hearted homecoming participation as a student at Lāna‘i High & Elementary School (LHES).

Following Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo’s instruction, Colton and Meyah added twelve more cans of spray paint for each of the primary colors they needed: white, red and blue. The float they planned to build was the Flag of Samoa, a design featuring a red field with a blue canton bearing a white Southern Cross constellation. Red reflects the strength and heart of Samoa, blue for the surrounding sea and liberty, and white for the stars of the Southern Cross, guiding faith and navigation.

This school year, LHES had chosen “cultures” as the overarching theme for homecoming. The senior class celebrated Filipino heritage, the juniors Samoan culture, the sophomores Hawaiian, and the freshmen Brazilian.

Homecoming, corresponding with Spirit Week, was scheduled from February 26th through March 2nd. There were five competitive categories: Routine, Alma Mater, Banner, Float and Overall. Secret judges were assigned to score each category.

After securing what we hoped was an adequate amount of spray paint, our next task was to collect the 100 square feet of chicken wire that Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo told us to gather. Since Lāna‘i Hardware shut down last year and HPM Building Supply was still setting up shop, we had to head over to Maui to get float supplies. It was an 8-hour trip for a brisk 45 minutes of shopping.

On our car ride back to Ma‘alaea Harbor, I asked Colton why his class chose to represent Samoa. “We wanted to honor the culture of some of our classmates, like Sivanny and Kaydence, who are leading the cultural parts.” Navigating the fine line between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation presented a challenge, but the presence of cultural representatives in each class helped them keep their depictions respectful and authentic.

I asked Colton how he thought his class would perform and he replied, “We’re in a strong position. I believe we’re gonna get some first-place trophies this year.” Though I had only recently met Colton, the week ahead would give me a deeper understanding of his character, starting with our arrival at Ma‘alaea Harbor that morning.

Lāna‘i middle school boys, who were visiting Maui to play basketball, called out to Colton. “We love you, Colton! We love you, Coach Colton!” they called out. Colton moved among them, shook hands and gave supportive claps on the back saying, “You boys got this. I know you’re gonna do great.”

“What was all that about?” I asked Colton. He shared, “Some of the boys are on the football team I coach,” referring to his volunteer work with the REACH program’s flag football team for intermediate students at LHES. I asked him how they are as a team. “They’re good kids, they got talent, but just gotta keep pushing,” Colton said. “There’s always room for improvement.”

Homecoming Day 1: Monday, February 26th

“What was made really clear to the students was we’re not putting on one lū‘au show, we’re not doing one airport lei greeting. We are just as if Hōkūle‘a was to arrive; we’re focusing on traditional times, and we want to make sure that we stay in that focus.” – La‘i Hanog, sophomore class of 2026 Hawaiian cultural advisor.

Daily from 2 to 8 p.m., each class converges at a designated parent’s house, their base for crafting homecoming banners, constructing floats and rehearsing routines. Each site requires the presence of two parent chaperones at all times, with other parents who provide daily meals. Students exclusively manage the

construction of banners and floats, as well as the choreography and rehearsal of their performances though parents are allowed to assemble paper flowers. Additionally, a school representative visits each site daily to ensure adherence to school rules.

That evening, running from house to house to visit each class’s progress, I felt very self-conscious. My wife is the junior class advisor, and my daughter, along with many of her friends and my student intern, are all juniors. I am familiar with their class the most. Though I make it a point to cover stories like this impartially, I still worried I might be seen as a “spy” to the other classes.

FRESHMEN c/o 2027

When I arrived at AJ and Rachele Garbin’s home, the site for the freshmen class float and where their daughter, Alina, a freshman, is actively involved, it was about 7:32 p.m. I asked Kalei Kaho‘ohalahala where I could find class president Millie Pavsek. She was somewhere with her classmates under tarp covered canopies eating a parent-prepared dinner. Spotting me, freshman Leland Soriano asked, “What are you doing here, Uncle?” Still feeling super self-conscious, I tried to assure him, “I am covering homecoming for the newspaper.” Detecting skepticism in his gaze, I added, “I am not a spy.” Leland, still appearing doubtful, replied respectfully, “Ok, Uncle.”

Interrupting Millie during her meal, I asked about their day’s work. Smiling, she promptly set aside her plate and offered me a tour. We approached their float trailer, sheltered under a large tarpaulin tent. The trailer’s floor was neatly covered with unpainted paper flowers and protruding from the floral base was a tree trunk with bare branches. “So the main piece is going to be a huge tree with animals hanging off of it and on it,” Millie said, “and there’s going to be a soccer goal and there’s going to be like a toucan on a soccer ball and a sign that says Brazil.”

She then took me to a high-ceilinged shed behind the Garbin home, revealing their banner’s progress. “BRAZIL” is centered up top, with a player lining up a kick that sends a curve to the words “Kick it off with c/o 2027.” Trees border the scene with a solitary toucan’s head peaking out of the foliage. “We sketched all of it out already. We have some paint on it and then we have about a minute of our dance routine,” Millie said, nodding and clasping her hands together.

SENIORS c/o 2024

We have all seen a Ronald and Susu Woosley ‘ohana production. Their ingenuity and dedication have been central to crafting many of Lāna‘i’s iconic moments, consistently fostering experiences that bind the community. Peering behind the curtains for the first time, I caught a glimpse into their world of creation but this time as facilitators for the senior class of 2024.

At Hawaiian Homes, off the longest numbered road in Lāna‘i City (5th Street), Ronald and Susu Woolsey’s hale became the workshop for the seniors, offering their property and advice as the class undertook the construction and choreography work themselves.

The seniors planned to construct a traditional bahay kubo as the centerpiece of their float, using halved bamboo sticks for its crafting. The float would be comprised of three distinct tiers: the top tier would feature a carabao, symbolizing the agricultural lifestyle, the second tier would host a rotating lechon with simulated smoke, and the bottom tier would showcase a colorful assortment of fruits and vegetables. Within the upper area of the bahay kubo, a Filipino star would be displayed, while the bottom area would function as a chicken coop. The rear of the bahay kubo would bear the word “PSTA,” an abbreviation for “fiesta.”

Inside, the Woolsey home served as the painting station for the senior banner, set upright for easier handling and detail work. Vice president, Hershey Manuel, overseeing the banner, stepped outside to speak to me. “So we just finished the full sketch of the banner in three hours. We have the bahay kubo already up. We have till Wednesday to finish the banner and the float. Then the rest of the days, we’ll dedicate it to the dance and the alma mater. Because that’s our weaknesses, especially the dance. Because we have not placed either second or first on the dance before.”

Hershey was the creative force behind the Philippines banner. Jerico Jaramillo, the senior class advisor and one of Lāna‘i high school’s English teachers said, “Hershey showed me her sketch and detailed the elements. She had done some studies about the Philippines, and I was so surprised that she knew a lot about her country, especially since she was raised abroad.”

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Freshmen, class of 2027



Juniors, class of 2025



Sophomores, class of 2026



Seniors, class of 2024

Continued from page 13.

Jerico described the banner’s symbolism, highlighting the Philippines’ landscape, culture and history. The green backdrop signifies the mountains, with religious icons for Christianity and Islam representing the diverse faiths. Spanish colonial architecture, a jeepney and the Philippine eagle reflect the country’s heritage and symbols as does the carabao agricultural roots. The Philippine flag’s three stars denote the main islands: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, while the sun’s eight rays represent provinces that revolted against Spanish rule. National hero José Rizal and the fictional character Maria Clara from his novel, “Noli Me Tángere” (1887), embody Filipino identity, with Maria Clara symbolizing the epitome of female finesse and elegance. The national flower, Sampagita, and colors representing peace (blue), bravery (red) and other national elements are included. Modern buildings signify the Philippines’ progress and emergence as an international business hub.

SOPHOMORES c/o 2026

Next, I headed over to the Kahihikolo residence, home base for the class of 2026 and where Saul and Kris’ son, sophomore Micah Kahihikolo, is part of the team. As I got out of my vehicle, I saw Susan Chew, Spencer’s mom and fellow sophomore, carrying a pan of food for the class dinner. I walked with her towards the setup: a large white canopy tent with sidewalls that blocked the driveway. Inside, the float’s structure was taking shape, a double-hulled canoe, its framework augmented by boxes and chicken wire.

Most of the class was either eating or tidying up, except for their class president, Kimora Agliam. She was busy stamping a design onto a kihei — a traditional Hawaiian garment, often used in ceremonies. Disrupting her work, I asked about their day. “I think we’re progressing well compared to last year. I am glad that a lot of our classmates who usually do not participate are participating now because of homecoming.” She had one concern, however. “Right now, we only have enough flowers to cover maybe half of our float.”

In October 2023, after the LHES student body selected “cultures” as the homecoming theme, and the sophomores chose to represent Hawaiian culture, they visited the Lāna‘i Observatory, guided by the Four Seasons’ Love Lāna‘i cultural advisory team who shared stories and insights about Hōkūle‘a while the class observed constellations using telescopes. The visit inspired the idea for a Hōkūle‘a-

themed float. During homecoming week, the class asked La‘i Hanog to be their Hawaiian cultural advisor. The students wanted to emphasize mālama honua, “to take care of the earth,” in their routine. La‘i advised focusing on Hawai‘iloa, often regarded as the legendary navigator who discovered the Hawaiian islands, linking directly to the heritage and navigational prowess represented by Hōkūle‘a.

Recalling last year’s results with disappointment, Kimora remained optimistic about the competition. “Last year, we got last in everything except for our float, which we got first for, so this year we’re striving to get first for the float again. We’re going to try our best to win. No matter who is on the other side of the losing side.”

JUNIORS c/o 2025

Earlier in the day, I found myself aiding the class alongside Sharmaine Mae Elan, collecting hot glue sticks, scissors, drinks and ice as commanded by Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo. Then I was dispatched to accompany Kaiser Jimenez, Tulenkun Cantero and Jake Barcena to retrieve power tools and wooden pallets from behind the Central warehouse, sparking a debate over the safety of using red-colored pallets, which might have been used for transporting chemicals, versus the presumably safer blue pallets.

By day’s end, the juniors built out some of the structural support for their “SAMOA” lettering, which would crown their float of the Samoan flag. While they had managed to secure a trailer, although one without a current safety check, the logistical challenges were part of the day’s hurdles.

They had nailed down about a minute of their routine. Unlike the other classes, their cultural advisors were peers: Sivanny “Vanny” Seiuli and Segā (Kaydence) Fauatea, who are among the leaders of their Polynesian fusion dance group, Polystyle, guided their classmates in Samoan cultural appreciation and authenticity.

“I think our main concern is we’re trying to guide them to get to know our culture. But it’s a matter of getting them to actually get into it and get physical with it and actually experience it,” said Segā about the importance of cultural immersion in their class’s routine. “And it makes us super happy that we are able to share our culture with them. And they might not be Samoan by blood, but all of the work that they’re putting in to be a part of our culture, it’s like what a real Samoan would do.”

Continued on page 16.

Watch the routines

videos recorded by Sharmaine Mae Elan



Freshmen



Sophomores



Juniors



Seniors



Freshmen c/o 2027's Brazil inspired float



Sophomore c/o 2026's Hōkūleʻa float



Junior c/o 2025's Samoa flag float



Senior c/o 2024's Philippines-inspired float



9th grade banner



Senior float with produce and rotating lechon with "cooking" smoke effect



Senior's karabao fronting the bahay kubo



10th grade banner



11th grade banner



12th grade banner

Homecoming Results

Banner Competition: 1st Freshmen, 2nd Seniors, 3rd Sophomores, 4th Juniors

Alma Mater Singing: 1st Seniors, 2nd Sophomores, 3rd Juniors, 4th Freshmen

Routine Performance: 1st Seniors, 2nd Juniors, 3rd Sophomores, 4th Freshmen

Float Display: 1st Seniors, 2nd Juniors, 3rd Sophomores, 4th Freshmen

Overall Results: 1st Seniors, 2nd Juniors, 3rd Sophomores, 4th Freshmen

Homecoming Court

Seniors: Queen Eliasha Romero & King Diesel Del Rosario, Alexa Pascual & Alexander Hawkins

Juniors: Seth Willett & Julian Elaydo

Sophomores: Kimora Agliam & Balian Garbin

Freshmen: Millie Pavsek & Albert Ranis IV

photos by Thessalonica Sandi

Continued from page 14.

That night, after visiting the other homecoming sites, I returned to the juniors' site at Jr. and Martha Cantero's home. The class trailer lay without cover under the open night sky, flanked by a disarray of pallets, while their banner workspace was under a pole tent on the far right side of the backyard. The classmates, standing in two orderly rows outside the incandescent glow of the tent string lights, faced Aryanna Medriano, their conductor, following her directions.

As their alma mater practice ended with the "hail, hail, hail to dear Lāna'i," their formation began to disperse until a sharp whistle from president Colton called them back. He hopped onto a chair with the silver whistle dangling from a lanyard around his neck, "Listen, I just want to talk to you guys." Some students were whispering amongst themselves, others chuckling, "I hear a lot of yapping in the back, bro." A few other students were gazing up at the darkened sky, now sprinkled with stars, seemingly lost in thought. "We paying attention or what? You guys running or what?"

With a sharp stare cutting across each of his peers, Colton addressed them firmly, "Listen here, guys. Remember, this is Samoa, guys. This is someone's culture, all right? We got to take this serious, I'm being for real. Vanny and Kaydence, they're spending a lot of time working on this for us, okay? A lot of time. Right? We wouldn't be where we are right now without them. We gotta really thank them. But listen, you have to be more serious, okay, guys, remember, we're repping our class. This is our class. We got one more year together after this and we out of here. With Lucie especially. This is her last Homecoming week with us." The mention of Lucie Reese brought a scattering ripple of "Yeah, Lucie!" from the classmates, recognizing her upcoming graduation a year early with the class of 2024.

"Good stuff today for the first day, all right?" Colton continued, "But we got to be better tomorrow. Always got room for improvement."

Homecoming Day 5: Friday, March 1st

"So there was a lot of learning lessons for them. We went out, I showed them how to properly gather lā'i (ti leaf), how to properly make the lā'i, what to do after you pau with the lā'i. You don't want to go out and just rip the plants apart. It's not about just you and what you need. It's about, 'will my grandchildren still have this if I gather this way?' So it was a lot of things that they learned along the way." – La'i Hanog, sophomore class of 2026 Hawaiian cultural advisor.

FRESHMEN c/o 2027

After checking in at the LHES administration building and getting my school visitor sticker, I found myself with an hour to spare before the Homecoming assembly started. The freshmen were gathered between the bandroom and the gym, under the old albizia tree, its trunk marked by blackened sap. Their attire varied, with some in casual clothes, others donned in white collared shirts, and a few in athletic jerseys hinting at their Brazilian soccer theme. Several students were calling for Graziella Reese, their routine choreographer, needing assistance with their multi-colored feather hairbands.

As she adjusted their wardrobe she shared, "It was definitely challenging getting the routine together, maybe just to get the class together and show them the moves, but we worked piece by piece. Normally I would feel, like, really nervous, but I actually have confidence right now because, I mean, everyone's excited and I just think it's going to be fun."

SOPHOMORES c/o 2026

The pū, sounded four times by Micah Kahihikolo, signaled the start of the sophomore routine. On the far side of the gym, freshmen, juniors and seniors were grouped by class, while community members filled the opposite bleachers. Jake Ropa began narrating, "In the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean, where the sky meets the sea, the tale of Hawai'iloa unfolds!"

Their performance depicted the arrival of Hawai'iloa and his crew to Hawai'i, showcasing a voyaging canoe crafted from cardstock and bamboo. Kahiku Mano, Jaidon Vidad, KJ Kanno and Balian Garbin, depicted the crew, while Makaio Mano portrayed Hawai'iloa. As they enacted their arrival, 'oli and ho'okupu were offered.

"A lot of people don't know about Hawai'iloa. When asked who discovered the islands, the Hawaiian stories speak of Hawai'iloa, often seen as the father or mother image to Hōkūle'a," said La'i Hanog, the sophomore's cultural advisor. "So, when we were researching for the routine, the class asked about him and it was an opportunity for them to learn." She facilitated this exploration by

providing reference materials, which helped the class put together the narrative of Hawai'iloa's discovery and naming of the islands, and highlighting modern figures like Papa Mau in the revitalization of navigation.

Jake's narration continued, "I please ask everyone to stand and join us in unity as we sing 'Hawai'i Aloha.' And seniors, this is for you!" The sophomores linked hands and formed a line across the gym floor, they advanced to encircle the seated seniors on the bleachers. They sang "Hawai'i Aloha" in a complete circle, an embracing "Lei of Aloha" that symbolized unity and respect.

"It was Kailurn Cervania's idea to make the circle around the seniors," said Natalie Ropa, Jake's mother and class helper. "They didn't plan it like that. At first it was just supposed to be a half-circle with audience participation. But right before going on, she suggested they do something special for the seniors."

Alexa Pascual, senior class president, responded, "The Lei of Aloha took us by surprise. It's one of those moments you can't prepare for, especially as a senior. Seeing the younger classes, who are like siblings to us, coming together like that — it was overwhelming. It wasn't just beautiful; it was meaningful on a level that we hadn't experienced before. It definitely made an impact."

JUNIORS c/o 2025

A war cry from the Siva Tau, a traditional Samoan war dance performed before battles in ancient times, thunderously opened the junior class routine. In white tops and 'Ie Faitaga — a traditional Samoan lavalava marked by dark, patterned fabric and a striking red Samoan sei at the waist — the boys' movements mirrored the martial origins of the dance. Following, the girls gracefully entered the floor clad in black outfits with a red Samoan sei flower behind their ear and black c-shaped markings on their faces, they performed "Siva Samoa 2K22," an all-girl number that showcased their elegance and coordination.

On the eve of their performance, the juniors gathered in front of Sivanny's house in the county park for rehearsal. The boys, still somewhat self-conscious about their synchronized movements, received encouragement from Johnny Seiuli, Sivanny's father. He reassured them, saying, "In Samoan dance, every type of movement has its place. There's no need to fear mistakes. Let yourself dance freely."

Reggie Adams, who was bestowed the role of 'Aiuli, and adorned with a boar's tusk necklace, took his place for the final song, "Falenaoti." In this closing number, Sivanny, and later Lucie Reese, took center stage for the taualuga — a prestigious dance that marks the completion of a monumental task. The rest of the class formed a half-circle around the main performers, with Reggie directing their dynamic, free-form dancing. As Sivanny and Lucie performed their solos, Johnny Seiuli, from the audience, threw money towards the dancers — a traditional gesture symbolizing prosperity and communal support.

SENIORS c/o 2024

The senior class were lined up behind a massive Filipino flag at the side of the gym. Diesel Del Rosario, Hawai'i's state wrestling champion and the first from Lāna'i, burst out holding a gold-glittered belt labeled "DZO," wearing a boxing glove on his right hand, adorned with a multitude of dangling medals. The Filipino flag trailed behind him like a cape, his white collared shirt and rolled-up jeans evoking the image of a worker in the rice fields.

As tinkling music filled the gym, the seniors moved to the center of the floor, their movements accentuated by blue, red and yellow ribbon wands. Some held bamboo sticks, ready to perform the tinkling dance.

Alexa Pascual, the senior class president, shared, "In our performance, we wore traditional outfits borrowed from relatives and community members." The boys sported Barong Tagalog, while the girls wore either Baro at Saya or Filipiniana dresses, each reflecting a unique cultural tradition. Some girls were dressed in white lace, others in colorful sequined tops. Alexa added, "We also had the Igorot outfit," referring to the attire of ethnic groups from the mountains of northern Luzon in the Philippines, known for maintaining their traditional customs and religious practices in the face of colonization.

"When we decided to showcase Filipino culture, everyone wanted to help — lending us clothes to teaching us traditional dances." The inclusion of both traditional and modern elements, from folk dances like "Maglalatik" with sakuting sticks to contemporary hits like "Bebot" by the Black Eyed Peas, mirrored their journey from the past to the present.

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Homecoming Day 6: Saturday, March 2nd

“I’m really proud of them; no other class could have represented Samoa as good as they could. The week made us closer and everyone learned a lot about our traditions. Watching the video of our dance, I feel so proud of how we did it together.” – Sivanny Seiuli, junior and class of 2025 cultural advisor.

11:30 a.m. at Dole Park

The parade kicked off with each class circling Dole Park once, showcasing their floats as a mix of cultural and popular music played from speakers on their trailers.

SENIORS c/o 2024

“I’m really proud of my seniors. They have so much knowledge about the Philippines they were able to share and because of the success of our homecoming theme we will have a new Filipino Studies class next school year in which we’re going to start teaching students conversational Filipino.”– Jerico Jaramillo, senior class of 2024 advisor.

FRESHMEN c/o 2027

“It was a nice bonding. And I see it follow through, because these past couple of weeks after homecoming, [my daughter, freshman Heavenly, said,] ‘Mom, our friends and I are going to Gano’s.’ I’m thinking, just a few that she bonded with before homecoming. But now it’s like a good 20 of them over there. And the different cliques. They’re all one clique now. They are not individuals. It’s the boys, it’s the girls. It’s the quiet ones. That’s their word now, ‘class bonding.’” – Kahea Tabucbuc, freshmen class of 2027 advisor.

SOPHOMORES c/o 2026

“Even though they didn’t score well or they didn’t come first place or whatever, I was like, I was so proud. I told them they did something that not a lot of people can do in, I say three and a half days, because the first two days was just setting up and all that kind other stuff. And so I’m like, ‘You guys really worked hard and came together.’ And so when we first started with them, I brought them all into my classroom and I sat them down and I said, ‘Know what your kuleana is so that you can show respect at all times when people coming in and out to help you guys as a class, because the worst thing you can do in life is waste somebody’s time. Promise.’”– La’i Hanog, sophomore class of 2026 Hawaiian cultural advisor.

JUNIORS c/o 2025

6:29 p.m. at the Royal Hawaiian Golf Course on the Windward side of O’ahu

As the dim sun dipped behind the clouded Ko’olau mountains, Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo and I sat among other guests at Spencer Kaiakamalie and Shelly Preza’s wedding reception on O’ahu. Her attention had been divided between the wedding festivities and the distant homecoming event on Lāna’i. Earlier in the day, she

had spent time monitoring the class through Facebook’s livestream of the parade. Her phone’s silence was unusual given that the homecoming award announcements were expected at 6:00 p.m. Natalie Ropa, also in attendance at the reception, approached us, “Go check on your class because the results are in.”

Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo texted the junior class group chat, “What are the results?” Messages from the class flooded in revealing their disappointment about the outcomes: surprise, confusion and a sense of the weight they felt in carrying the Samoan culture.

Then, a call from Colton Morimoto abruptly cut off the flow of messages. “He was clearly overwhelmed. I thought somebody got hurt.” Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo excused herself from our table and stepped outside.

“What’s going on?” Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo asked. She was standing on the second floor balcony overlooking the dark tropical forest outside the venue.

“Miss, I failed everybody,” Colton said. The raw honesty in his admission hinted at the pressure of expectations he had shouldered as the junior’s class leader.

Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo’s calm voice cut through Colton’s distress, “Hey, you didn’t. You made everybody proud. You saw the look on Uncle Johnny [Seiuli’s] face and you saw the work your class did and how much fun they had while they were doing it.”

“I failed everyone, and we didn’t... and the banner, last place.”

“I understand. We did not get the results that we wanted,” she said, “but is anyone hurt?”

“No.”

“Is everybody healthy?”

“Yes.”

“And did you guys bond as a class?”

“Yes.”

“So in my book, you guys were successful.”

Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo asked Colton if he had anyone around him for support. She heard the class huddling around him and said to all of them, “You know what? You guys make me proud. You should be very proud of the work that you guys did. And I am.”

After speaking with Mrs. Fujie-Kaauamo, Colton messaged his classmates on Instagram, “All I want to say to you guys is that I’m proud of us. Not only did we learn a whole new culture together in 5 days, but we loved it. . . today shows how much we love the culture . . . And compared from freshman year to now, we did not really fight this week. To me, that shows how close we have become and how much we all love each other. If you watch our routine, you will see how happy all of us look in it. And to me, being a close class is better than winning some trophy to look at for 5 minutes.”

“At that moment, I felt like I might have let the class down. Everyone worked really hard. I watched the video of the performance so many times, and I am proud of what we accomplished. No other class could have represented Samoa as good as this class. We’re closer as a class, and that’s what really matters.” – Sivanny Seiuli, junior and class of 2025 cultural advisor.

Kanoe Shimizu Appointed to Independent Nomination Board

“I want better for my community, for my children, for the future to come. I think it’s important to step in where I can make a difference and just plan for the future so that future generations are left with a good structure,” said Kanoe Shimizu.

Shimizu’s commitment to Lāna’i and its future led her to join the Independent Nomination Board (INB) for Maui County, where she sees a vital role in shaping the island’s representation. “The INB’s mission resonated with me, especially because it’s about empowering our community through participation in governance,” she said. Her involvement signifies a critical effort to “help bridge the gap between Lāna’i and the county’s decision-making processes.”

The INB, established following a 2022 charter amendment in Maui County, consists of nine members, one from each council residency area, appointed by the mayor and approved by the council. This board plays a crucial role in the governance structure, tasked with recruiting, evaluating, interviewing and nominating individuals to serve on all county boards and commissions, including key positions like the county auditor, county clerk, corporation counsel and prosecuting attorney. The INB’s responsibilities also encompass reviewing application procedures and ensuring that the nomination process is aligned with the specific requirements of each board or commission. In cases of vacancy, the INB is required to present a list of nominees within 60 days, maintaining confidentiality in applicant considerations as mandated by law.

“For too long, Lāna’i has had vacant seats in important county positions. I want to change that narrative and ensure we have strong representation,” Kanoe said. She believes that being on the INB allows her to advocate for Lāna’i effectively and contribute to the island’s development within the county’s framework.

Kanoe’s work is profoundly influenced by her Native Hawaiian heritage, which she sees as central to her identity and approach to community service. “My reason for community involvement is my passion for the Native Hawaiian language and rights. It guides my actions and decisions,” she said.

This passion extends to her other commitments on Lāna’i, including her roles on the Domestic Violence Task Force Committee, the Lāna’i Cancer Fund, and as treasurer for Ke Kula Kaiapuni o Lāna’i. Through her participation in the INB and other community organizations, Kanoe seeks to enhance Lāna’i’s representation in Maui County’s governance and ensure that the community’s needs and perspectives, especially those rooted in its Native Hawaiian heritage, are acknowledged and addressed.



Kanoe Shimizu



No Playground

written and photographed by Sharmaine Mae Elan

Friday, March 13, 2015 – 9 years ago at Lānaʻi High & Elementary School (LHES)

The small grassy field for first and second graders, fronting the school cafeteria, echoed with the sounds of running, screaming and laughing. I joined in, racing aimlessly with my peers, our course around the area like a mapless cross-country marathon.

A little tired out but still driven by an inexhaustible desire for play, I headed onto the playground at the center of the field, a structure I remember seeming like a vast and vibrant castle. A line of kids were already at the monkey bars, waiting for a turn to channel their inner Tarzan. Watching them swing from bar to bar for a moment, I eventually turned and headed to the quieter spots I usually retreated to: the spiral pole, the large slide, and especially the narrow teal tunnel, where my friends and I would talk until the end of recess break.

Friday, March 15, 2024 – LHES, Present Day

Talking with those same friends, now in our final years of high school, we recall our elementary days nostalgically, observing how the field remains green but the once sturdy and towering playground has vanished.

Earlier this school year, Goodfellow Bros., the construction company involved in the Hōkūao project, dismantled and removed the playground, charitably donating their time and resources. Hawaiʻi's Department of Education (DOE) had deemed the playground unsuitable and unsafe due to its rotting wood, rusting metal and damaged rubber surface. Before being taken down, the playground had been barricaded with plastic fencing and declared off-limits for several years.

The elementary school schedule includes two recess periods, one in the morning and another post-lunch, offering ample time for play and social interaction. Now, with the absence of the playground, one might wonder how the children occupy themselves during these breaks.

On a recent visit to the elementary side of the LHES campus, just as the 2:00 p.m. bell announced the end of the school day, I observed the vacant lot where the playground once stood. The cafeteria hallway was dotted with parents waiting to pick up their children. Seizing the opportunity, I sought permission from a parent to interview their child, leading to a conversation with Levi Alcantara, an LHES first grader. Curious about how the kids enjoyed recess without a playground, I asked Levi. He replied that he spends time with his friends playing football and Bingo during recess, and despite the lack of a playground, he still enjoys it, especially when playing with toys such as Legos. “I still have fun at recess.”

I also had the chance to interview Kiaʻiola Medeiros, a second grader, who shared his perspective. He explained that even without traditional toys, they found enjoyment in playing with balls and inventing games like Shadow Tag. Curious about this game, I asked Kiaʻiola for details. He said, “You know your shadow? The human that has it, they have to step onto their shadow.” From his explanation, I understood Shadow Tag as a game where players chase each other, trying to step on the shadow of the person who is “it” to tag them.

Speaking with an elementary teacher who asked to remain anonymous, they shared, “I find the students are able to entertain themselves without a playground. And I also enjoy the unstructured play. I think it helps with their social development, because they’re learning what games to play and how to make up their own little games.”

This was an eye-opening perspective to me. The children didn’t seem anywhere near bothered about not having a playground.

They’ve creatively devised various activities, using their imagination to stay engaged without the traditional playground setup like with Kiaʻiola’s introduction of “Spies,” a game where they act as secret agents, spying on one another.

When I asked Levi what he hoped to see in a new playground, he shared, “I want to have swings. A seesaw.” He paused, then added, “I want to have a diamond. Yeah.”

As for Kiaʻiola, after I asked him the same question, he seemed to go into a blinkless trance. He tried to describe the playground he pictured in his head, saying, “You can go through something and swing down, down, up then down, and then this is the high place, and it goes down, and then down, and then it goes. It’s a slide tunnel. Yeah, make the slide that goes like this,” Kiaʻiola gestured a wavy motion with his hand and continued, “If you’re in the place, like an under place you can play. There is a tackle. I also want one that you can enter a door.” I asked a clarifying question, “Like a house?” The young boy shook his head and corrected, “No, it’s open, but it’s like a door that you can open into.” I nodded, trying to grasp his imaginative vision, the puzzled expression plastered on my face clear to any observer.

While the children’s resilience and imaginative play without a traditional play structure is evident, the DOE has plans to install a new playground in the next school year between November 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025.

Wednesday, June 1, 2015 – the last week of 2nd grade

I hurried over the platforms and mounted each step. My movements were punctuated by a resonant “THUMP, THUMP, THUMP,” until I reached the tallest point of the playground. This was where I could see a panorama of the entire play area and surrounding grass field. I enjoyed coming to this point and rewarded myself with a slide down the slide or twirl down the spiraled-pole — over and over again. That is, until the day I chose to do something different.

Breaking from my endless loop of real-life Chutes and Ladders, I found myself at ground-zero again. Drawn by an unquenchable curiosity, I stepped towards the wooden bridge. Beyond it, the familiar line of kids waiting to swing on those baby blue monkey bars came into view.

Reaching the front of the line, my reluctance returned, I was afraid of not being able to make it over. This was the reason I avoided the monkey bars in the past.

Yet, I did it anyway.

I wrapped my fingers around the bar above me, lifted off from the platform, and swung from the first bar to the next, to the next, to the next... I was only able to reach the center before I dropped. I walked away in defeat, unable to do it, unable to reach the end. After that day, I never approached the monkey bars again. But now, as a young adult, oh how much I wish I could take on the bars once more, to prove to myself I could.

The children didn’t seem anywhere near bothered about not having a playground. They’ve creatively devised various activities, using their imagination to stay engaged...

In The Shade of Sobriquets

by Cory Lovejoy

Titan, come from across the sea-

See-
The Duality Of Man!
The Infinity Of Perspective.

A conversation,
fashioned in atomic number 13,
and boundless clouds for company.

Infraction interminably mars
the pili grass and aimless assortment
of herbaceous stowaways.

Islands hold hands beneath white horses,
as I reconnoiter & reconcile the 0.125
of me that is 'āina.

Knowledge of ancestors
cleave as a tongue, kissing sky,
forever falling languidly.

Hands & Cranes & Smoke & Fire,
and ire, to erect you from imagination

Idea Capital.

The discoloration of a scar, marks early days.

For a piece-
an ant at your side, whilst
the spider's swaying tendril of web
remains smaller than me.

CKL
2-24-2024



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Saturday
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Sunday
Closed

AFTER HOURS PROVIDER LINE

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LCHC'S NEW MEDICAL DIRECTOR



Sara Haack, M.D., M.P.H, is a clinical psychiatrist specializing in integrated care, which is the delivery of mental health care in a primary care setting. She has been a psychiatric consultant with LCHC since 2018, primarily through telehealth. She has served as LCHC's Medical Director since January 2024.

Dr. Haack graduated from the University of Michigan (medical school) and the University of Washington (psychiatric specialty training). After training, she was an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry with the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine, engaging in a variety of mental healthcare activities within both mental health and primary care settings. She enjoys building collaborative treatment relationships with individual patients, as well as supporting healthcare professionals in delivering mental health services.

In addition to her work with LCHC, she has an Oahu-based private practice. In her free time, she enjoys running (slowly but steadily), watching NPR Tiny Desk Concerts, and going on outdoor adventures with her family.

LCHC LEADERSHIP TEAM TO WASHINGTON, DC.



Photo above from left to right: Cindy Figuerres, Chelsea Tadena, Jared Medeiros, Jacey Laborte, Cori Takesue, Nina Medeiros

Lāna'i Community Health Center's Leadership Team embarked to Washington DC with the National Association of Community Health Centers to meet and discuss fundamentals which affect our communities both near and far. LCHC met with policy makers on Capitol Hill to discuss the importance and sustainability of health-center funding, 340-B Program (Pharmacy), Workforce Development, and Telehealth programs.

Each leadership team member succinctly and beautifully demonstrated their skills and knowledge to discussed Grant-In-Aid, and how appropriations requests are imperative to our facility expansion project. Further advocacy on our own tele-pharmacy program, which has a letter of resolution to sustain itself for the foreseeable future was presented, along with discussions of necessity for attracting and engaging with full-time providers on Lanai. We discussed how our rural health scores, and loan repayment programs are imperative to continue to create an environment which keeps our providers independent from commuting.

Lastly, this was the first trip to Washington DC for some of our team members. They were able to engage with the rich history and tapestry celebrated in Washington DC, and for those who were able to return, could once again experience the wisdom, wonder, and awe Washington DC has to offer!



LCHC Team meeting with Jade Rowland, Legislative Assistant, for Senator Mazie Hirono



Photo comprises of LCHC Leadership, Hawaii Primary Care Association, other Hawaii FQHC Leadership and Board Members. This was taken in the Hart Senate Office Building, Washington DC.



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


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Why work with me? With my roots stretching across five generations in Hawai'i, I was raised amidst the vibrant culture of Oahu before relocating to Lana'i nine years ago. My unique blend of deep local insight, design expertise, and genuine passion for people and their stories sets me apart in my endeavors.

If I can ever support you or your family in selling, buying, or relocating, I would be honored to have a conversation and see if I am the right fit for your needs.

With gratitude,
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- An immediate and confidential meeting with the victim of abuse to assess personal needs and preferences for treatment;
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when i go away

written by Naighgel Sudio
photos by Sharmaine Mae Elan & Anthony Kaauamo



to a place where city lights replace the stars



towering buildings,
the pine trees



and endless highways, the borderless seas



when the faces of my youth fade,
their laughter a memory,



things will be better



or will they?