

NEWS FROM THE SANGHAS

Help for Lahaina, Organic Eggs, Saving a Bodhi Tree

Here is a brief compilation of news and various activities from around Hawaii Honpa Hongwanji temples.

Maui

Dozens of Makawao and Wailuku Hongwanji Temple members united in a variety of ways to help Lahaina residents affected by the Aug. 8 wildfires. In partnership with "No Child Hungry," Boy Scout Troop 18 from Makawao Hongwanji transported dozens of boxes of food and hygiene bags assembled at Hamai Appliances which was only one of many efforts:

- Owner Bryant Hamai also donated refrigerators to the War Memorial Evacuation site;

- Sean Higuchi converted Anytime Fitness Center into a collection site and where fire fighters and fire victims could shower;

- Megan Nakashima set up Pukalani Superette into an Up-country Strong collection site and distribution center;

- Katie Higuchi from Momentum Dance Maui collected and delivered goods to victims and volunteers, and

- Carlys Higuchi of Maui Optic provided optometric care and eyeglasses at the Family Relief Center in Hyatt Kaanapali for those who lost eyewear in the fires.

Also helping, Makawao's Cub Scout Pack 18 assembled more than 80 wooden sifter boxes for Lahaina families to use when they were allowed to return to their homes.

The boxes, used to sift through ashes to find small items such as jewelry, were put



Makawao Hongwanji Buddhist Temple's Troop 18, in partnership with "No Child Hungry," transport boxes of food and hygiene bags assembled at Hamai Appliances for those Lahaina residents affected by the wildfires.



(left) Tori Higuchi, left, 18 and Eva Wehner of Cub Scout Pack 18 helped assemble some 80 screened wooden frames to help Lahaina residents sift through ashes for small items once they were allowed to return to their homes. (right) Pack 18 Scoutmaster Lorin Kosaka, left, drilled into one of the frames as Scout Dad Karsten Lee stabilized the wood frame.

to good use in November.

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Then at Wailuku Hongwani, Troop 40 postponed its Court of Honor ceremonies, donated their bento box meals to the Maui Police Department, focused their energies on helping their Lahaina ohana by organizing donations dropped off at the scout office.

The troops set up their own Venmo account and as funds arrived, they purchased much-needed supplies including extension cords for those displaced and staying at Camp Maluhia.

Their help allowed families to charge their cell phones and laptops as well as power up their cabins.

Then the scouts packed up and delivered boxes of food, household and personal hygiene products to Camp Maluhia.

Kauai

When Lihue Hongwanji's Preschool children and teachers first got word about the Lahaina wildfires, they all wanted to do something to help both Lahaina Hongwanji Mission and the Maui Humane Society.



Lihue Hongwanji's Preschool students collected more than \$1,000 — most in pennies — for both Lahaina Hongwanji Mission and the Maui Humane Society to help with Maui wildfire relief efforts.



Wailuku Hongwanji Boy Scout Troop 40 organized boxes of household goods, personal hygiene items and food donations for Lahaina residents affected by the wildfires who were taking up temporary shelter at Camp Maluhia.

Donation jars were created for a Penny Drive Fundraiser and placed around the school.

Piggy banks and wallets were emptied of coins and as word spread among parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and temple members, the jars filled up.

The 48 preschoolers between 3- and 5-years-old learned the values of each coin, how to count and add them up and what compassion and caring for others can mean.

They raised \$505.18 for Lahaina Hongwanji Mission and \$500 for the Maui Humane Society.

Veteran's Day marked the 25th anniversary of the Lonesome Grave Project, coordinated by Kauai United Hongwanji Buddhist Women's Association which represents three temples: Kauai- Lihue, West Kauai and Kapaa Hongwanji Missions.

More than 40 members and friends took part in the project

by placing flowers and greenery at Kauai Veterans Cemetery.

Rev. Tomo Hojo of West Kauai Hongwanji conducted a short service; Dan Funamura, husband of the late Barbara Funamura who started the project, performed the song "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," and Eddie Kawamura Sr., Commander of the Kauai Unit of Disabled American Veterans, presented United BWA with a special certificate to honor its 25 years.

The Grand Hyatt Kauai also added lei to each grave and the columbarium.

Hawaii Island

Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple is continuing its Feeding Our Keiki and Kupuna program, celebrating its fifth anniversary last month.

Every Friday, more than 40 volunteers assist members to prepare some 400 meals, handing them out at the temple and delivering them to needy families. To date they have served more than 75,000 meals.

Joe Clarkson, a.k.a. "The Egg Man," also hit a milestone. Since 2020, he figures he has donated more than 3,000 dozen organic eggs.

Food costs for HHBT's program are covered entirely from private and community donors including Catholic, Methodist and Mormon churches.

More than 90% of volunteers are not temple members but they simply enjoy taking part in its activities including Teen Movie Nights, supporting Ukrainian families adopted by the temple and marching in the United Nations Peace Day Parade with other community and civic groups.

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More than 50 members,

families and friends of Hilo Hongwanji's Hoyukai Friendship Society held its Gratitude Dinner celebration in November that opened with a craft fair that raised more than \$600 for its scholarship fund.

Rev. Joshin Kamuro led a brief Dharma service that included the history of Hoyukai which was established in 1943.

Yuma Kamuro, 16, accompanied the singing of the "Vandana ti Sarana" and the Nembutsu on violin followed by music from members of the Kamana Senior Center Karaoke Club including Diane Hakoda, Billy Medeiros and the "singing salesman" Hiroshi Suga. Dozens of Hoyukai volunteers prepared a feast that included a turkey dinner with all the trimmings and baked goods.

The Hoyukai plans to meet regularly after Covid restrictions had curtailed their past gatherings.

Lanai

As Lanai Hongwanji Mission looks to celebrate its centennial in 2024, president Christopher Richardson announced plans to convert the three-bedroom minister's residence on the grounds into a long-term elder care facility, to be managed by a Molokai-based company and a hospice facility on Maui.

The residence has not been used since 1988.

While the conversion will take time, it will eventually give the temple a stable income while Lanai Hongwanji continues to host Saturday morning services as well as both mixed-martial arts classes and a yoga program five days a week.

Oahu

Former Mililani Hongwanji minister Rev. David Fujimoto

can claim credit for saving the temple's Bodhi tree.

Shortly before Obon festivities, members noticed how the tree's leaves were prematurely falling and littering the parking lot.

Rev. Fujimoto, now the resident minister at Moiliili Hongwanji, had noticed some large beetles, he collected them, took photos and before long, the state Department of Land and Natural Resources confirmed it: an infestation of the destructive coconut rhinoceros beetle that is spreading through central Oahu and neighbor islands.

DLNR responded by sending its plan to eradicate the invasive species and within months, no new infestations were seen, new leaves began sprouting and Rev. Fujimoto turned the episode into a teaching lesson on perseverance and embracing nurturing actions through the Six Paramitas.

Toward the end of Waipahu Hongwanji's Obon celebration, two emergencies required medical professionals including first responders who happened to be at the festival to spring into action.

Fortunately both patients were stabilized and transported to area hospitals.

But to prepare for future incidents, the family of the late Setsuko Uyeno generously donated \$2,700 to purchase AEDs (Automated External Defibrillators) to be housed in the temple and in the Adult Day Care area.

The donation will cover AED certifications and first aid/CPR training for anyone interested.

□ Ewa Hongwanji Mission's historic book, "Cane Tassels, Work Whistles and Labor Day

Carnivals," compiled by Dennis Irie, is in its second printing.

Subtitled "Memories of Ewa Plantation Town in the Mid-1990s," the modest publication is the result of more than 60 interviews over 11 years of work and includes 175 photos and maps.

A highly successful Honolulu-based architect prior to his retirement, Irie grew up in Ewa and designed the front of the EHM temple.

The contractors he hired to work on the building donated their labor and largely charged only for materials used.

Copies of the book may be obtained for a \$20 donation which includes shipping.

Proceeds benefit Ewa Hongwanji Mission.

Information:
ewahm1901@gmail.com.

□ It looks as if Jikoen Hongwanji's "Cha Cha Cha" program will be switching from tea to . . . olive oil?

After December's third session on mamaki teas from Kilani Brew Company's fields thriving in Waiahua's Kunia plains, the sessions will now switch to healthy oils, according to Joanne Yosemori, director of the temple's community outreach program.

The two-hour long gatherings started in March 2023 with an Urasenke demonstration by Hideko Watanabe, followed by a session on herbal and naturopathic teas by Dr. Monique Yuen, then a thirst-quenching demonstration of cold and hot mamaki tea by Dave Wicker and Todd Kashima.

To receive advance information on upcoming programs, email jikoenprograms@gmail.com.