



Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

"Feeding our Keiki and Kupuna"

a program of the Peace Committee

Meals can be picked up every Friday between 4:00 and 5:30 PM at the Honoka'a Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, 45-5016 Lehua Street Honoka'a, HI 96727.

"Feeding our Keiki and Kupuna" is an important community meal program and has become a critical resource for many. The Peace Committee of Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple has instituted additional food safety practices for distributing meals via drive through, walk up and delivery.




SAFETY FIRST! – It is imperative that all volunteers comply strictly with safety protocols to minimize the chance of infection either at home, in the community or while volunteering at the temple. Do your best to avoid getting infected in your daily life away from the temple and avoid passing on your infection (often unknown to yourself) to those in the Feeding program.

Food preparation of the weekly Friday meals continue under supervision of certified food safety handlers. Cautionary steps include "social distancing" and all volunteers strictly follow Department of Health food handling and preparation guidelines as well as disinfecting techniques recommended by the federal Center for Disease Control.

Face coverings and social distancing are required when working in our feeding program. We appreciate every one of our volunteers, and rely on each of you to make our community meal program a success.

The public's understanding and cooperation is appreciated. During difficult times, our focus remains on peace, compassion and interdependence.


West Hawaii Today Sunday, Oct. 24, 2021 | Today's Paper | **Hawaii News**

Hometown Heroes: Honoka'a Hongwanji Buddhist Temple feeding and building the community

By Special to West Hawaii Today |
Wednesday, February 10, 2021,
12:05 a.m.

February marks two years since the Peace Committee of Honoka'a Hongwanji Buddhist Temple began sharing hot meals through its Feeding Our Keiki and Kupuna program, and the all-volunteer community labor of love has now fed more than 20,000.

What started as a Hamakua Youth Center cultural education/cooking class for kids has expanded into a weekly Friday meal and grocery bag service for hundreds in the community.



Some of the volunteers where the meals and grocery bags are handed out each Friday.

In addition to serving a hot dinner from 4-5:30 p.m., volunteers also distribute about 3,500 pounds of groceries and produce weekly, and several delivery crews deliver meals and grocery bags to kupuna and shut-ins. “We also make up different grocery bags for families and for those people with no place to cook,” said Ravi Singh, who co-created the event with Peace Committee Chairman Miles Okumura.

Singh and Okumura said the feeding program “takes a village.” They work closely with the Food Basket, as well as local farmers, restaurants and dozens of volunteers. Professional chefs have stepped up to help as well. Chef Jasmine Silverstein of Sweet Cane Cafe in Hilo regularly prepares pork adobo, and Chef Sandy Barr-Rivera, former executive chef at Merriman’s Waimea and culinary instructor at Hawaii Community College, supervises preparation of offerings such as meat stew (featuring venison from Maui), meat chili (with local beef), and spaghetti with whole wheat pasta. Singh himself is known for enthusiastically preparing vegan and vegetarian Indian fare.

“The chefs are joyful to work with,” Singh said. “We also have wonderful people like Eric Burkhardt who runs the plating crew. He worked front office for a fine dining restaurant on the mainland and oversaw a 40-person wait staff.”

Singh said the feeding program is about addressing food insecurity, and more importantly, building community.

“When people are breaking bread together they can take on bigger problems,” Singh said. “When we get together and leverage resources, it’s not about economic need — it’s about building community. Community can solve any problem.”

The Feeding Our Keiki and Kupuna team welcomes new members for a variety of tasks, from picking up food to preparation, delivery and clean-up. Donations of simple items (paper bags, produce, pinto beans, rice) are appreciated, as well as children’s books and funds. Checks can be mailed to Peace Committee, memo: For Feeding, PO Box 1667, Honoka’a, HI 96727.

For more information, visit www.honokaahongwanjibuddhisttemple.org/peace-committee

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75-5580 Kuakini Highway, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740.
Telephone: (808) 329-9311



Bags of groceries and produce are organized on Friday morning by the Packing Crew. Over 130 families receive them along with frozen meat, eggs, and sometimes dairy products.



Clean-up Crew members Lucy, Gretchen and Celeste in the kitchen.



Volunteer Shigeko prepares vegetables and salad each Friday morning.

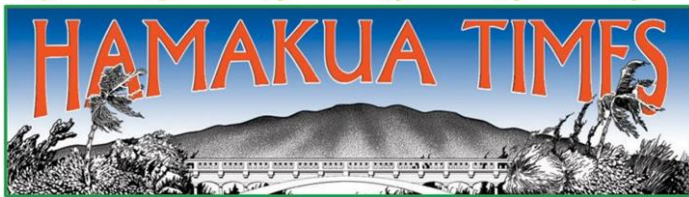


Left: Janet, Paul, and Vince follow the directions of Chef Jasmine Silverstein, preparing kabocha pumpkin to accompany pork adobo.

Right: The Plating Crew works in the kitchen after the Prep Crew prepares meals. The food is then brought upstairs for distribution during a drive through process.



The entire community is invited to enjoy meals every Friday at Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. In addition to the meals, more than 2,000 pounds of groceries and frozen meat is handed out each week.



Now in the 20th Year!

HAMAKUA'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

P.O. Box 1800 Honokaa, HI 96727

MONTHLY COLUMNS: Honoka'a Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (APR 3, 2020)

"Feeding our Keiki and Kupuna" will continue in Honoka'a

In response to health and safety concerns over the COVID-19 virus, the Peace Committee of Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple began in March to institute additional food safety practices and distributing "Feeding Our Keiki and Kupuna" meals via take-out only. This reduced the chance of transmitting any illnesses via social contact, and is in line with government agency public health directives.

"Feeding our Keiki and Kupuna" is an important community meal program, which has become a critical resource for many. And, while the initiation of the takeout style service seemed extreme at the time (early March), review of current events worldwide and nationwide demonstrates that an overwhelming number of governmental and business organizations are taking equivalent actions to reduce the chances of spreading the dangerous virus.

Committee chairperson, Miles Okumura, shared that "when entering the kitchen, immediate washing of hands is required followed by the use of gloves at all times." Prior to the start of the morning work session on Fridays,

cleaning and then disinfection is done of all work surfaces, handles on doors and cabinets, knobs on appliances, light switches, plumbing faucets, and bathroom facilities, etc.

During preparation and plating of food, volunteers (always numbering less than a total of ten) practice "social distancing." Diners do not enter the kitchen, but rather pick up the pre-wrapped "to-go" plates at the landing outside of the kitchen. Social distancing is maintained for diners via signage and set up. See attached photo.

The Peace Committee of Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist temple is the only agency in the entire Hamakua area providing a hot meal on a weekly basis, and one of only three agencies on the entire Big Island. The program celebrated its one year anniversary in February, having served over 5,000 free meals at no cost to guests.

Added Okumura, "Many of our diners will continue to view the meal served as a necessity. No one is turned away so long as we have food to serve. This is an opportunity for us to practice engaged Buddhism." Support is welcome; financial donations can be made in the name of the "Peace Committee. Donations of groceries, produce and non-perishables can be dropped off at the temple with prior notice. Volunteers are always needed for food prep, serving, and/or clean up.



The Feeding program is a good opportunity to involve young people as volunteers. Here Tayson and Emily work in the "wok room."

MONTHLY COLUMNS: Honoka'a Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (AUG 5, 2020)

Food Insecurity and Abundance, Hunger Meets "Langar"

"Feeding Our Keiki and Kupuna," the food program of the Peace Committee of Honokaa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, continues to forge ahead four months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it has been in operation since February of 2019, the program had to rise to the occasion of need when the State of Hawaii shut down this past March. Provision of their Friday hot dinners rose from an average of 100 weekly to over 400 in less than two months. The distribution of the meals also began to include bags of groceries for families driving through the pick-up line at the temple parking lot, 4:00 to 5:30 pm each Friday.

Over 10,000 meals and many tons of groceries have been provided to young and old at no cost to recipients. The question of how this has come about was posed to the creators of the program, Peace Committee chairperson Miles Okumura and member Ravi Singh. "I first met Ravi when he sought permission from the Peace Committee for the seemingly hair-brained idea of giving away free food at the 2018 Peace Day Parade and Festival. I told him 'No way!' unless he stayed far, far away from our vendors at the festival!" Singh repeated the same practice at the 2019 Peace Day Parade, giving away over 500 free meals of vegetarian Indian food.

By then Ravi had convinced Miles to start a weekly feeding program at the temple each Friday, starting in February of 2019. The meal is based on a central practice of Ravi's Sikh religion, namely "langar." Ravi explained, "Langar means a community meal for the town to gather around and grow in friendship. However, it literally translates as 'anchor for the community.' While eating together, people share ideas to address the town's problems and perhaps create social enterprises. We believe it is easiest to start a langar program if one is grounded in the belief that a group of like-minded selfless people can manifest anything. Our definition of abundance is being able to manifest what you need when you need it."

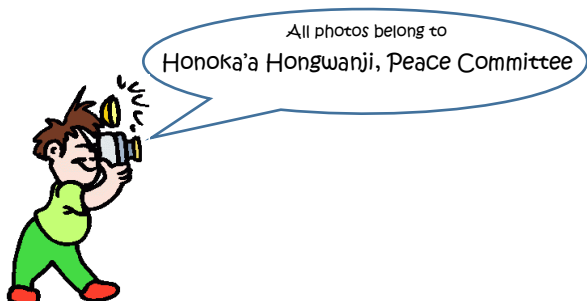
Abundance is more than wishful thinking, and it has become a practical reality for the Peace Committee, experienced by 350 to 400 members of the community each Friday. There is an abundance of volunteers each week, as approximately 35 people join in for the shopping, preparation, cooking, plating, sorting and bagging of groceries and distribution. The leadership team of the Feeding project includes professional restaurant chefs and cooks, kitchen helpers, food platers, fund-raisers, volunteer organizers, and a shopping and transportation team. There is an abundance of high-quality quality ingredients donated by and purchased from local farmers and food distributors. And, of course, the program would be impossible were it not for generous cash donations from individuals, families, churches, local businesses, and other foundations and not-for-profits.

During this pandemic, the community cannot gather and break bread together. (Dinners used to be served in a communal setting in the temple kitchen.) However, "We can serve the community while maintaining six feet of social distance and take a moment to express gratitude for each other's selfless efforts," says Ravi. "We call this work Dynamic Meditation. Meditation means different things to different people. Dynamic Meditation is a positive action to achieve outcomes. We are overwhelmingly grateful for the response of the community in helping us to succeed in manifesting the abundance that we have been able to share with others."

In keeping with the concept, values and meaning of langar, the Peace Committee clarified that "Feeding Our Keiki and Kupuna" is not only for those who face an economic need. Those who have "enough" are welcome and encouraged to participate in the meals while contributing what resources they have, whether financial or through volunteerism. Aside from financial support, volunteers are especially needed to help pick up groceries and donations and to assist with clean up in the kitchen. All food and pandemic safety rules and practices are followed.

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May 7, 2021 Rev. Yamagishi on his first day working at Honokaa Hongwanji temple, he helps distribute meals and bags of groceries. Sometimes he works with the delivery crews dropping off meals and groceries to the elderly in the community.



Two of our mainstays in the kitchen, Annie and Chef Sandy Barr-Rivera, stirring up meat stew in the wok room.

For more information on "Feeding our Keiki and Kupuna," visit
www.honokaahongwanjibuddhisttemple.org/peace-committee

Online donations may be made via [寄付する \(paypal.com\)](https://www.paypal.com)

A \$5 donation in the name of the "Peace Committee" helps buy
dinner for an entire family!