Visitor Industry Charity Walk
Tradition of Kōkua Continues

By Dr. Chuck Kelley

Everyone knows that in Hawai‘i “Tourism Is Everybody’s Business,” meaning that the visitor industry is the main driver of our state’s economy, creating good jobs for local residents and bringing in dollars that circulate throughout our community and ensure livelihoods for many more people than just those who work directly in Travel & Tourism.

Another way the visitor industry benefits our community is through the Visitor Industry Charity Walk. Each spring the walk is held across the state to raise funds which are then distributed directly to nonprofit organizations that assist people in need. The event is sponsored by the Hawai‘i Hotel Industry Foundation (a part of the Hawai‘i Lodging & Tourism Association, formerly the Hawai‘i Hotel & Lodging Association). Throughout the state, the visitor industry goes all out to make this event a success, maximizing what can be contributed to our community.

Paradoxically, the walk is touted as one after which you may actually weigh more than when you began! While many walking events give participants a piece of fruit and a bottle of water at the end, this one is done in true “local style,” starting off with a breakfast buffet, then handing out snacks and goodies all along the route and concluding with entertainment and lunch.

Everyone is welcome to join in the walk, and each year I am amazed at the level of participation and enthusiasm throughout the state. Standing in our company-sponsored checkpoint along Waikiki Beach Walk® last Saturday, I cheered the 6,300 participants who walked past or stopped by. I saw people from all walks of life including:

- Hotel workers and their families
- Employees of companies that serve the industry
- Charity group beneficiaries
- Politicians (like Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle, who ran by early, and state Senator Glenn Wakai who assisted with the route van)
- High school students and teams
- Tutus and grandpas
- Infants in strollers

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- Joggers and walkers enjoying the exercise
- Visitors who plan their vacation around the walk

Walks were also held on five neighbor islands (Hawai‘i Island, Kaua‘i, Lana‘i, Maui and Moloka‘i); the funds raised there go directly toward each island’s own local charities. A board decides where and how the funds will be distributed and a wide range of organizations benefit. Here are just a few examples of where last year’s funds went:

- Early education tuition aid
- Children’s playgrounds
- New clothing for schoolchildren
- Service dogs for blind and disabled children
- Transitional housing and skills training for men and women coming out of prison
- Comfort gifts for emotionally stressed children of deployed military personnel
- Running a learning center to help men and women earn a high school degree
- Food for the needy

Preliminary counts found that 12,412 residents across the state pitched in to help. Everyone who passed by our checkpoint seemed to recognize the value of this event and participated with great enthusiasm. By giving up just one Saturday morning, the hard-working people of Hawai‘i’s visitor industry collectively raised over $1.37 million dollars around the state. This will go a long way toward helping many in need.

“For a second consecutive year, our Charity Walk has set a statewide fundraising record,” said HLTA President and former Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann. “That’s a wonderful statement on how much HLTA and our visitor industry care about helping our community.” I couldn’t agree more!

Maintaining our tradition, Outrigger/ OHANA Hotels & Resorts hosted the most upbeat checkpoint of the walk at our Waikiki Beach Walk promenade. We thank the following volunteers who set up, manned and broke down the checkpoint: Tammy Awong, Danette Bolosan, Skip Boyce, Nancy Brunner, Mikala Chang, Peggy Chasteen, Rowena Collins, Dan and Nancy Daniels, Jerry Dolak, Edlynn Maku‘e, Terri Escritor, Ally and Nikki Fa, Kathy and Patty Foley, Kathy Hansberry, Kaipo Ho, Linda Honma-Lacaran, PK Kaahanui, Sandy Kaleohano, Marsha Kapu, Taylor Kranz, Carl Kruse, Myra Kuboyama, Amanda Lacaran, Char Luning, Conchita Malaqui, Bruce Musrasrik, Alison Nagamine, Natalie Young-Aranita, Sharon Okada, Kathy Oyadomori, Michelle Piaaina, Jean Rolles, Val Tanaka, Ofelia Valdez, Todd Wakida, Sheryl Yee, Bob and Yumiko Yeoman, Jo-Ann Yonamine and Reid Yoshida.

Mahalo as well to our Charity Walk Committee: Danette Bolosan, Peggy Chasteen, Jerry Dolak, Terri Escritor, Kathy Foley, Kathy Hansberry, Marsha Kapu, Charlene Luning, Alison Nagamine, Michelle Piaaina, Sheryl Yee and Jo-Ann Yonamine.

The orchestration of the checkpoint was done with Kinā‘ole (flawlessness) and Aloha! More pictures on pages 3 - 8

Yuet Chun Fung Liang, Ryan Cabulera and Karen and Wendy Lee

Chuck and Lynn Shishido
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In Charity Walk shirts: Connie Camang, Shao Fei Huang, Elena Ballan, Tereza Gapuzan, Narita Fangon, Josephine Villar, Valeriana Domingo, Esferia Savit, Marites Tagala, Nenita Nerveza and Lillian Acosta. Front: Marylou Dela Cruz. In Housekeeping uniforms starting from left back: Herman Chiu, Shao Ling Huang, Jie Li Huang, Conrada Corpuz, Nieves Libed, Imelda Guillermo, Narysa Valmoja, Bobbie Asato, Kiyo Kaneshiro. Front in uniform from left: Anna Lee Managad, Marivin Nastor and Ill Son Kim

Cheerleader Debbie White

Back: Carl Kruse, Dr. Chuck Kelley and Sally and Perry Sorenson
Front: Ruthann Yamanaka, Jo-Ann Yonamine, Danette Bolosan, Kathy Oyadomari and Myra Kuboyama
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Teresa Shepherd and Janice Shizumura
Analyn Gima, Normalita Lorenzo and Sue and Norman Chang
Mark Pascua, Erlinda Barredo and Lorraine Sales
Tino Geronimo and son Bryce
Holly, Dean and Sammy Nakasone
Natalie Young-Aranita, Val Tanaka and Todd Wikida
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Alfredo Encomienda, Carnita Encomienda, Marilyn Castillo and Ampel Lagalo

Milagros Robinio (right) with friends Minda and Jenny

Angela, Harold and Jane Inouye

Cheerleaders Jerry Dolak, Hans Weger and Danette Bolosan

Nikki Fa, Taylor Kranz, Ally Fa, Patty Foley and Sharon Okada

Terry and Gloria Daoang, Manuel Nicolas, Roy Shimabuku, Crystal Nichols, So'o Tana and Peter Nonaes
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Marilyn Pagaragan, Elizabeth Aguinaldo and Jacqueline Baluban

Kelcie, Stan and Karen Emoto

Vinnie and Mila Javier, Gloria (Betty's sister), Betty Cabasag and Debra Chan

Elena Shiroma, Jo-Ann Yonamine, Therese Chee, Diane Lau and Arnold Kishimoto

Kimberly Nishibata, Rorie Frias, Jennifer Frias and Keenan Nishibata in the stroller

Bob and Yumiko Yeoman

Skip Boyce and Nancy Brunner
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Donna Leong and Hans Weger

John Dooling, Toshi, Jack and Patti Blezard, Jeffrey Loo, Jenny Dooling and Amanda, Pat and David Blezard

Barry and Nancy Wallace and Jenny and Innika Pang

Lori Ishiyama and Sherry Matsumoto

Terri Escritor, Steve Winter and Sheryl Yee

Gloria Rombaoa, Mariko Idbi, Sachi Maruyama, Kay Lee and Mona Fujimoto
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Eva Bumagat and Tammy Arakaki

Un Ha Zheng, Karen Fong, Fu Hua Chen, Xiu Qing Li, Jenny Bao Hong and Cecilia Yip

Cherie Ching, Ashley Cabradilla, Sheri Uyematsu, Anna Li and Ryan Ohisa

Robert Ishihara, Nancy, Anna Lau, Jennifer Agdeppa, Antonio Rubi, Amador Manzano and Kathryn

Lily Tran, husband Phillip, son Justin and friend Christina

Myra Kuboyama, Jean Rolles and Char Luning