Outrigger® Supports Waikīkī Aquarium Concerts
By Dr. Chuck Kelley

Once again, the Outrigger® Enterprises Group is proud to be a major sponsor of the Waikīkī Aquarium’s Ke Kani O Ke Kai summer concert series. No, the fascinating creatures that call the Aquarium home will not be singing – or blowing – “Tiny Bubbles.” However, these five delightful evening concerts will not only offer wonderful summer entertainment for the whole family, but also raise funds for the Aquarium to carry on its important mission of educating the public about marine life and conservation.

You may not know it, but the Waikīkī Aquarium is one of the oldest and most respected aquariums in the United States. This hidden gem was founded in 1904 by Charles M. Cooke and his business partner, James Castle. Their company, the Honolulu Rapid Transit and Land Company, operated a streetcar line from downtown Honolulu to the Waikīkī beaches and was in need of more riders. Cooke and Castle believed that building a unique attraction in Kapi'olani Park would give the public a reason to ride the line all the way to the last stop. Their marketing concept worked and the Aquarium quickly paid for itself.

Today, 109 years later, the Aquarium is still entertaining and educating many thousands of visitors and kama'aina each year, and it is a world-class facility we can all be very proud to have in Waikīkī. Under the direction of the University of Hawai'i, it conducts world-class research on fish, corals and other marine life and shares its findings with the world, thereby enhancing aquariums and marine habitats around the globe.

Stop by the Aquarium any day and you will see a non-stop parade of keiki being bused in for educational tours. On weekends you will see local families enjoying the exhibits and participating in the many programs offered. And every day you will see visitors from all over the world delighted to find an affordable, outstanding half-day attraction within walking distance of their hotel rooms.

Recognizing the importance of the Waikīkī Aquarium to residents and visitors alike, Outrigger has long been a major supporter. In past years, we have sponsored the building of exhibits such as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands exhibit which now showcases fish species found nowhere else in the world.

This year, we are once again the major sponsor for the Ke Kani O Ke Kai summer concert series which began this week with an on-the-lawn sunset concert by John Cruz and Nathan Aweau. Our very own Chef Guido of Kani Ka Pila Grill prepared and served the food, and it was delicious!

Many years ago, the ownership of the Aquarium was given to the University of Hawai’i, which has done a great job of keeping this more than century-old facility running. The exhibits are beautifully maintained, and the employees’ pride and dedication shine through. But constant upkeep is needed, and major enhancements are necessary from time to time. Funds are currently being raised to build a new major exhibit showcasing Kāne'ohe Bay; proceeds from the summer concerts will go a long way toward making this a reality.

Outrigger Enterprises recognizes the importance of the Waikīkī Aquarium to both local residents and visitors. We are proud to contribute toward making the summer concert series a success and keeping our little Aquarium a recognized world leader in marine education and conservation.

A terrific educational and fun experience for our keiki

Dr. Chuck Kelley is interviewed by Hawaii News Now's Dan Cooke
as Chef Guido looks on