Honolulu Marathon 2013
By Dr. Richard Kelley

Early tomorrow morning, one of the biggest groups of runners in 16 years will line up on Ala Moana Boulevard, just ‘ewa of Ala Moana Center, to start the 41st running of the Honolulu Marathon! As always, it will be an exciting moment that will keep everyone’s heart rate high!

The first Honolulu Marathon, in 1973, had only 167 entrants. But the event’s popularity soared rapidly, and, in 1995, it attracted a record 34,434 runners. Since 1997, however, the number has generally hovered in the mid-20,000s. For 2013, Dr. Jim Barahal, president of the Honolulu Marathon, is anticipating close to 30,000 entrants, about the same as in 2012, which was up considerably over the 2011 registration of 22,806! Among this year’s runners, to the best of our knowledge, will be at least six members of the Outrigger ‘ohana – Lianne Bryant, Ashley Cabradilla, Kristy Im, Robert Ishihara, Bruce Musrasrik, Calvin Ng, Lily Tran and Dan Wacksman – for whom we will be cheering.

Once again, the number of entrants from Japan is significant, with some 16,000 from that country registering as marathon runners or participants in the accompanying 10K walk. The sponsorship of the event by Japan Airlines, NTT DoCoMo, Sato Pharmaceuticals and Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG Card) and Adidas is clearly a critical factor in the popularity of the Honolulu Marathon in Japan.

The rebound in the number of participants toward the 30,000-level is predicted to once again provide a significant economic boost to Hawai’i. The race is projected to generate income on the order of $135 million for the state’s economy, up dramatically over the estimated $107 million in 2011. Moreover, the economic benefits are not limited to Honolulu, but are spread throughout Hawai’i since roughly one in every five out-of-state registrants, together with accompanying friends and family members, plans to visit neighbor islands before or after the race.

Dr. Barahal is rightly proud when he points out that the Honolulu Marathon is self-supporting. Unlike some other major sporting events in Hawai’i such as the Pro Bowl, the Honolulu Marathon does not ask for or receive any taxpayer support. It enlists private sponsors to help, and with registration fees, it pays for its operations, advertising and promotion, over 400 special-duty police, park use and cleanup, road barricading and cleanup, and the use of the Hawaii’i Convention Center.

Thanks to the large number of elite runners participating, the 41st Honolulu Marathon should be particularly exciting. There is a large men’s contingent from Kenya including Martin Lei, Nicholas Chelimo, Solomon Busendich and Kiplimo Kimutai, any one of whom could be first across the finish line. Valentina Galimova from Russia is expected to have the best time in an exciting women’s race.

Security will be an important issue, following the terrorist bombing of the Boston Marathon in April. Dr. Jim
Barahal says “We are working closely with Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell, the Honolulu Police Department and federal agencies to ensure a safe and secure event while at the same time keeping the Aloha spirit and tradition of the Honolulu Marathon intact.”

Outrigger Hotels and Resorts and OHANA Hotels and Resorts are the Official Hotels of the Honolulu Marathon, and we proudly provide rooms for all the elite runners at Outrigger Reef on the Beach as our contribution to this important community event.

At the finish line, only a handful of competitors are hailed as winners, but in reality, everybody in Hawai‘i wins when the Honolulu Marathon races into town.

Thanks to Dr. Jim Barahal and all the staff and volunteers of the Honolulu Marathon for everything you do for our state year after year.

Dan Wacksman and his son Dylan (14) ran a half-marathon last month

Lianne Bryant at the Nike San Francisco half-marathon last year

Robert Ishihara at the Hapalua Half Marathon

Bruce Musrasrik (center) at an Ekiden event with the Outrigger team

Lily Tran trains by hiking Koko Head twice a week