

July 1, 2025

## *In This Edition*

01.

United on Hawai'i Island

02.

President's Message

03.

Givers Gala and  
Ripple Effect  
Awards

04.

Impact Stories

05.

Spring 2025 Recap



## UNITING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE ON HAWAI'I ISLAND

Now more than ever, nonprofit organizations need strong, steady, visionary leadership. Hawai'i Island United Way is no exception. This is why we are thrilled to mahalo our strong, steady, visionary board members! On June 30<sup>th</sup> we had an exciting hybrid annual meeting and nonprofit partner mixer where we honored outgoing board members: Dwight Matsumoto, Allen Giles, and Jessica Carriaga. Additionally, we welcomed incoming new and returning board members: Tanya Yamanaka Aynessazian (Chair), Kai Steuer (Treasurer), Shawn Henderson, Sebastian Blanchette, Kimberly Lin, Dennilynn Mock Chew, and Bobby Watson-Correa. Mahalo to Pacific Tsunami Museum for hosting this very special event.

**25**

Nonprofit Partners  
Supported This Year

**\$487K**

Total Raised for  
Hawai'i Island  
in FY 2023-4



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

PRESIDENT & CPO, JESS THOMPSON

Aloha Friends,

In times of uncertainty, one thing remains clear: investing in our community is the most powerful way to shape a better future. As we navigate a world that continues to shift and surprise us, Hawai'i Island United Way (HIUW) is responding with purpose and heart.

In our April newsletter, I shared what we learned from listening sessions with over 100 supporters, nonprofit partners, staff, volunteers, and board members. Mahalo to everyone who contributed! Now, we're excited to share how we're turning that feedback into action by launching the HIUW Hawai'i Island Nonprofit Network.

### Community Impact Grants

We currently distribute about \$18,000 per month in grants to nonprofit partners serving communities across Hawai'i Island. Our goal is to increase that to \$24,000 per month in the 2026–2028 grant cycle—amplifying the reach and impact of local organizations.

### The Givers Gala + Ripple Effect Awards

Join us on October 24, 2025, at the Arc of Hilo for our new signature event: the Givers Gala. This celebration will honor the incredible contributions of nonprofit workers and raise \$40,000 to support our mission. We hope it will inspire pride in the sector and encourage future generations to serve. Learn more at [www.giversgala.com](http://www.giversgala.com).

### Program Incubator

Many grassroots groups have powerful ideas but need support to bring them to life. Our Program Incubator offers space in our Kino'ole Street office and connects new initiatives with local professionals. Our first project? A mini furniture bank! If you have gently used small furniture, clean linens, or kitchenware, we'll store and distribute them to nonprofit partners helping neighbors in need.

### **3 ways to help HIUW today:**

- **Schedule a Workplace Campaign:** Connect with Development Manager, Al Santos, at [campaign@hiuw.org](mailto:campaign@hiuw.org) to bring The Power of Giving campaign to your workplace. Together, we can grow our network and increase our impact.
- **Nominate a Nonprofit Champion:** Know someone making a difference? Nominate them for a Ripple Effect Award by July 15, 2025. You can also sponsor the Givers Gala. Join other community-minded companies or organizations in supporting this special event. Details at [www.giversgala.com](http://www.giversgala.com). You can also reach out directly to me with questions. [cpo@hiuw.org](mailto:cpo@hiuw.org)
- **Volunteer at the HIUW Furniture Bank:** Want to help us pick up, deliver, clean, or organize donated gently used household items? Have gently used utensils, dishes, linens, or small furniture to donate? Email us to learn more – [info@hiuw.org](mailto:info@hiuw.org)

In uncertain times, your support helps us build a stronger, more connected Hawai'i Island—together.

With gratitude,

*Jess Thompson*



# Announcing The Givers Gala & Ripple Effect Awards

Honoring the Heart of Hawai'i Island's Nonprofit Community



## NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!

Hawaii Island United Way is excited to introduce the Ripple Effect Awards to celebrate Hawai'i Island-based nonprofit employees who make a big difference on Hawaii Island. Nominations close July 15, 2025.

From unsung champions in the community to legacy leaders and innovative organizers, the Ripple Effect Awards celebrate individuals and organizations who are making waves – not for recognition, but for the love of Hawai'i Island and it's people.

Nine awards are open for nominations: 6 individual recognitions, 2 team recognitions and one organizational recognition. Awardees will receive staycation gift baskets and beautiful hand-crafted awards.

<https://giversgala.com/ripple-effect-awards/>

To Nominate, go to

<https://giversgala.com/ripple-effect-awards/>

## Sponsor the Givers Gala + Save the Date

Hawai'i Island United Way is proud to present the first annual Givers Gala – a celebration of compassion, commitment, and community. This inspiring evening will shine a spotlight on the remarkable individuals and organizations who work tirelessly to uplift lives and strengthen our island 'ohana.

- Ripple Effect Awards Ceremony recognizing outstanding nonprofit leaders and changemakers
  - Elegant Gala Dinner with local flavors and entertainment
  - Stories of Impact that highlight the power of giving
  - Networking Opportunities with community leaders, philanthropists, and advocates
- Join us as we honor those who give selflessly and work passionately to make our island a better place for all.

**Save the Date: Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

Location: The Arc of Hilo



To purchase tickets or sponsor the Givers Gala, go to  
<https://giversgala.com>

# COMMUNITY IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Your investment in Hawai'i Island United Way is an investment in community health.

## Family Support Hawai'i: Fatherhood Initiative

"During my divorce, I was recommended to attend the Fatherhood Initiative. Initially, I was hesitant. Struggling with some social anxiety and feeling like I already knew what it took to be a good father, I almost skipped my first meeting. However, after meeting the group, hearing their stories—both the struggles and the successes—I quickly recognized the value of being part of a community of men, a comradery, committed to becoming better fathers and better men. That was nearly five years ago. In addition to parenting skills, I've also learned how to be a better co-parent with my children's mother. Many of the topics discussed address the dynamics of both parents—whether they're together or not. Through the Fatherhood Initiative, I've gained tools for communicating productively with her, despite our differences and past grievances. I'm deeply grateful for the Fatherhood Initiative, the many men who have shared their insight at the meetings."

To learn more about Family Support Hawai'i and the Fatherhood Initiative, please visit: <https://familysupporthawaii.org/>

**A Fatherhood Initiative participant shares the importance of providing fathers the tools they need to thrive in the parenting journey.**



## **HIUW Program Incubator: HAWAI'I ISLAND FURNITURE BANK**

**We need volunteers!  
HILO**

**Saturday, July 19th**

light cleaning and organizing of  
donated household goods for  
partner agency clients.  
Email [info@hiuw.org](mailto:info@hiuw.org) for more  
information.



# HAWAI'I VISITOR INDUSTRY CHARITY WALK RECAP



Mahalo to everyone who volunteered with HIUW or came out to run./walk for charity! We gave out over 500 goodie bags filled with chap stick, homemade fans, and water.

## UNITE FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY THROUGH MONTHLY GIVING!

Help us reach our goal of signing up 7 new monthly donors to Hawai'i Island United Way! Lori is our newest Sustaining Circle Member.

The first 7 Sustaining Circle Members receive an HIUW Yeti! To become a Sustaining Circle Member, go to: <https://hiuw.org/how-to-help/give.html> or email [info@hiuw.org](mailto:info@hiuw.org) if you would like help signing up!



<https://hiuw.org/how-to-help/give.html>