

island scene

well-being, family, and fun for **HMSA** members || winter 2025 || islandscene.com



leading the
island scene
team



fighting fires and leukemia || understanding a colonoscopy || rolling in rice bowls

connect
with us

Follow HMSA



Online

HMSA website: hmsa.com
My Account HMSA member portal

Island Scene website:
islandscene.com

For *Island Scene* contacts,
please see page 6.

Call HMSA

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

(808) 948-6079
1 (800) 776-4672

TTY: 711

For more phone numbers, visit
hmsa.com/contact.



An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

get
this
here!



whuuut?

All your favorite articles, recipes,
and more are just a tap away!

Check out **islandscene.com** or
scan the QR code to learn more.





COURTESY OF HO'OMAU FIRE ACADEMY



contents

IN EVERY ISSUE

up front
5

publisher's note
7

around the 808
8

LIVE BETTER

island scene self-care tips
26

trending now: ice baths – to
plunge or not to plunge
31

grayson murray: a champion's
hidden battles
32

expanded cardiac rehab benefit
37

for real: bath safety for keiki
39

know the basics: protect your
kidneys from ckd
40

health matters
42

MEMBER INFO

resources for life's journey:
we're here with you
44

provider perspective:
understanding a colonoscopy
46

for your benefit
48

FEATURES

leading the *island scene*
team
10

drug use: on and off
the market
14

fighting fires and leukemia
18

ho'omau fire academy:
mentoring for the future
22

FAMILY MATTERS

rocky olmos: from famous to
fulfilling career
50

by the book: stress less
55

keiki corner
56

EAT WELL

rolling in rice bowls
58

coconut: the tree of life
61

green smoothies
62



"Our employees are like family. It's very important that they have the best health care possible."

"Mahalo, HMSA, for 50 years of taking care of our employees."

- Jonathan Ota, Owner, Tip Top Cafe

For 86 years and counting, HMSA has had the privilege of providing our members and employers with access to quality, dependable health care. Watch their inspiring stories at hmsa.com/alwaysthere.

To learn more about our health plans, visit an HMSA Center near you.



aloha members,



I spent most of my professional life as a provider, delivering care. In that role, almost everything I did was to care for a person's acute illness.

Now that I have the privilege of working for HMSA, a health organization whose purpose is to improve the lives of our members and the health of Hawai'i, I have to pay attention to all aspects along the continuum of care and, at a high level, the most effective tactic to handle each one:

If the patient ...	Effective tactic
Is healthy and not engaged with the health care delivery system	Education
Is healthy and engaged with the delivery system	Prevention
Has an acute, non-life-threatening illness	Access to care
Has a chronic condition	Disease management
Has an acute, life-threatening illness	Quality care

In this issue of *Island Scene*, you'll learn about different phases along the continuum of care. Whether it's education on HMSA's chronic disease management programs, a colonoscopy screening, or how to combat a sedentary lifestyle, or a feel good story about a local firefighter successfully battling leukemia, there are all kinds of ways to manage your health.

When you're healthy, learn about ways to stay healthy.

When you see your primary care provider, work together to take steps to prevent serious disease.

When you have an acute illness, mental or physical, get it taken care of.

When you have a chronic disease, get the guidance and help you need to manage it and optimize your health.

When you have an acute life-threatening illness, choose quality care from HMSA's expansive and extraordinary provider network.

This is your health journey. We are proud to take it with you.

Sincerely,

Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S.
President and Chief Executive Officer

island scene

winter issue : 2025 || islandscene.com

HMSA COMMUNICATIONS LEADERSHIP

Christine Hirasa
Kathy Chang
Anna Koethe Pavao

PUBLISHER/EDITOR

Lisa Maneki Baxa

ART DIRECTOR

Lawrence Esperanza

ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR

Caryn Saito

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Kristen Nemoto Jay

FOOD EDITOR

Michelle Liu

WRITERS

Kevin Allen
Craig DeSilva
David Frickman
Christine Hirasa
Keely Kalama-Lahey
David Lato
Michelle Liu
Summer Nakaishi
Kristen Nemoto Jay
Lynn Shibuya
Courtney Takabayashi
Earl Yoshii

DESIGNERS

Tedra Hackett
Anna Manuel
Fannie Niyama
Garry Ono
Megan Wakayama
Brandon Young

WEB TEAM

Rodney Amian
Courtney Takabayashi

ADVERTISING

Alissa Mandich

CIRCULATION

Kay Yasufuku Tam

HEALTH INFORMATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Stefanie Park, M.D.
Andrew Perry, M.D.
Jeffrey Tom, M.D.
Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S.

NUTRITION ADVISERS

C. Alan Titchenal, Ph.D., C.N.S.
Joannie Dobbs, Ph.D., C.N.S.

Island Scene (ISSN 1064-8674) is published quarterly by the Hawai'i Medical Service Association – an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. HMSA, 818 Ke'eaumoku St., Honolulu, HI 96814-2365.

Island Scene is published as a benefit for HMSA members. A copy of each issue is mailed to plan subscribers. Additional copies are available to dependents on request. Subscription: No cost for all HMSA plan members. Nonmembers, call (808) 948-6839 for subscription information. Periodicals postage paid at Los Angeles, California.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Island Scene*, P.O. Box 3850, Honolulu, HI 96812-3850.

Copyright by HMSA. The entire content of this publication is copyrighted by HMSA and must not be reproduced in whole or in part without HMSA's permission.

Island Scene doesn't endorse and isn't responsible for services or merchandise advertised. *Island Scene* is not intended to replace the advice of health care professionals. Please consult your doctor for your personal needs and before making any changes in your lifestyle.

To be removed from the *Island Scene* mailing list, email feedback@islandscene.com or call (808) 948-6575.

For address changes:

- EUTF employees, contact your HR department.
- QUEST members, call HMSA at (808) 948-6486 or 1 (800) 440-0640.
- For all other HMSA members:
 - For *Island Scene* only: Email feedback@islandscene.com or call (808) 948-6575.
 - For other HMSA correspondence: Call HMSA at (808) 948-6079 or 1 (800) 776-4672.

Island Scene, P.O. Box 3850,
Honolulu, HI 96812-3850

Editorial: (808) 948-6839

Circulation: (808) 948-6575

Advertising: (808) 227-5662

Email: feedback@islandscene.com

HMSA website at hmsa.com

Island Scene website at islandscene.com

COVER: *Island Scene* Publisher

Lisa Baxa with the writing team.

Article by Christine Hirasa on page 10.

Photo by Lew Harrington.

dear friends,

If you glanced at the cover of this magazine, you may understand that this is an unusual issue of *Island Scene* for me. And when you read Christine Hirasa's article on page 10, you'll learn that I didn't want to be featured in it. Which is so true.

Yet here we are, celebrating my 40 years of service at HMSA, and even on the cover with our writing team. Christine is a force of nature. And she got early buy-in from Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S., our president and CEO. The two of them, plus everyone else mentioned in Christine's article, have been so very generous and kind in their comments about me. Thank you.

And if Christine is right and you'd like to get to know me a little, here are a few more fun facts.

- My favorites: The music of Henry Kapon and Cecilio and Kapon, going out to eat with friends, *The West Wing*, the color pink, and Winnie the Pooh.
- Best places: Walt Disney World, beautiful Kaua'i (where my mom is from), and Po'ipū Beach.
- Quotes: "You can't edit a blank page," "Everything is figureoutable," and "Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind. Always."
- My people: My best friend Maggie Hardman, who I've known since my first days at HMSA, and my family – Dan Schmidt, Nova (sweet and shy girl kitty), Comet (active and affectionate boy cat), and Frankie (smart and funny green-cheeked conure).
- My shining role models, always: My parents, Ray and Ellen Maneki.



At my UH graduation with parents Ray (left) and Ellen. I started working at HMSA two weeks later.

While I prefer to stay behind the scenes, I'm happy to celebrate our work at HMSA for our members, including *Island Scene* and *islandscene.com*. And as I've said before, it's the team that deserves all the credit. In the Communications department, heartfelt thanks to each of you, including our writers, who have come together as a really special group this year, and to our senior management team. I couldn't get through all this craziness without you.

And, of course, a special mahalo to our members and readers. We wouldn't be here without you. When I write my column for every issue, I feel like I'm settling in for a chat with friends.

OK, enough about me, please. As President Bartlet often said on *The West Wing* when he was ready to move on to the next topic, "What's next?"

Love,

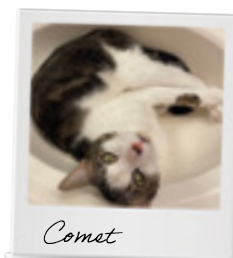
Lisa Maneki Baxa
Publisher and Editor



Nova



Frankie



Comet

around the 808

big island

Tutu's House welcomes you

There are groups for 'ukulele, writing, quilting, and mahjong, just to name a few. Tutu's House, a Waimea nonprofit, focuses on health and wellness and is home to these free community groups, gatherings, and more.

"Tutu's House is a neutral place to gather where people are welcomed," says Michelle Medeiros, resource development leader with Tutu's House's parent nonprofit organization, Friends of the Future. Their partnership has helped Tutu's House serve the community for over 30 years.

"The leaders and founders of Tutu's House always had a sense of kuleana to their community," added Shawn Saito, program leader of Tutu's House. "It was a value that was important to them."

The team is also proud to work with each member as they embark on their own holistic journeys while making lifelong friendships.

"Participants experience a sense of belonging," says Medeiros. "That's very much what Tutu's House is about."

For more information on Tutu's House, go to tutushouse.org or call (808) 885-6777.



To learn more about Tutu's House and Maui Walking Tours, visit islandscene.com/more.



Mat Pilates is one of the many free group classes offered at Tutu's House.

maui, moloka'i, and lāna'i

Walking through history

Keith DeVey, founder of Maui Walking Tours, is sharing Maui's history, one step at a time.

DeVey offers free guided tours in Kihei and Wailuku, giving participants a chance to learn about the island's history while getting exercise. Tours are about 90 minutes on relatively flat terrain.

"Having grown up on Maui, I truly believe Maui nō ka 'oi (Maui is the best), so I started free walking tours to share Maui's beauty and history," says DeVey.

DeVey spent six months interviewing community members, historians, authors, city planners, cultural advisers, and families, collecting stories before launching his first tour in March 2024.

The Kihei tour runs every Monday and Wednesday. The Wailuku tour occurs every other Saturday and combines history and art.

For more information and to reserve a spot for Maui Walking Tours in Kihei or Wailuku, please visit mauiwalkingtours.com or email mauiwalkingtours@gmail.com.

kaua'i

Celebrating cycling

Bikes on Rice is on the right path to better health and fitness. The nonprofit group organizes community rides to help promote cycling as a healthy, sustainable way of transportation.

Held on Rice Street in Līhu'e, the monthly event brings together about a dozen riders of all ages and experience levels to explore the town on a fun, leisurely ride. Organizers conduct a brief orientation on safety and the path. Rides are typically 6 miles and last an hour.

Bike rides are held every second Saturday of the month starting at Kalena Park. Visit bikesonrice.org or call (808) 693-1018.



Bikes on Rice



Maui Walking Tours



leading the *island scene* team with heart and an eagle eye

words Christine Hirasa

photos Lew Harrington

Lisa Baxa has contributed to *Island Scene* magazine since it launched in 1992, and she celebrated 40 years as an HMSA employee in June 2024! Lisa is extremely humble and didn't want to be featured in *Island Scene*, but I thought our readers would enjoy learning some fun facts about our dedicated publisher and editor.

As a fan and avid reader of *Island Scene* from the beginning, I'll always remember the first time I met Lisa when I joined HMSA in 2019. I went into small kine fan girl mode, thinking about how my college professor encouraged me to reach out to Lisa to "get to know her" as a storyteller in the communications industry. I was too chicken to initiate contact all those years ago. Little did Lisa know, I did my research on her back then. It turns out we went to all the same schools growing up: Āina Haina Elementary, Niu Valley Intermediate, Kalani High, and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I had no idea that more than two decades later, I'd get to finally meet THE Lisa Baxa, have the amazing opportunity to work with her, and call her a dear friend.

Since *Island Scene* has one of the largest circulations of any publication in the state, many people are familiar with Lisa's name. "On my first day, I couldn't believe that Lisa, the publisher of *Island Scene*, the person whose column I've read and loved since childhood, was training me and giving me hints about how to navigate life at HMSA," says Courtney Takabayashi, supervisor, online editor for islandscene.com. "It's been an honor to work alongside Lisa and I'll be forever grateful for her editing and writing skills, kind and generous heart, and mentorship."



Cover and masthead of premiere issue



At Lisa's UH graduation in 1984



From a 1988 HMSA writing team photo



Lisa receiving her Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association certificate for 40 years of service from Dr. Mark Mugiishi (HMSA president and CEO) and Janna Nakagawa (executive vice president, chief administrative and strategy officer).

Lisa started at HMSA in 1984 as a communications and training aide in the Community Health Services department. "This was in the earliest days of the internet," Lisa says. "Research was done at the library and through other sources." Lisa was promoted many times in her career, and she now manages the writing team, serves as a mentor, and oversees the magazine.

Of all the writers, Craig DeSilva has worked with Lisa the longest. "I've learned a lot from her eagle eye editing. Although many things have changed over the years, her precision to making words better has always been constant."

"When I first became CEO of HMSA, I was asked if I wanted to move our communication style into the 21st century by making *Island Scene* a purely online publication," said HMSA President and CEO Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S. "Are you kidding?," Dr. Mugiishi responded. "Online in addition, not instead of. Why would I stifle one of the best and most popular assets HMSA has ever had as a communication tool for our members? The success of *Island Scene* has a lot to do with Lisa's tireless efforts and I can't thank her enough for her dedication and years of service."

To me, and to so many others, Lisa is a living legacy. She is down-to-earth and reliable, quiet and quirky; a dedicated, hard-working writing wizard with a wicked sense of humor. Since she can retire whenever she wants at this point, I am grateful for every day she chooses to continue working at HMSA.

"I've worked with Lisa for more than 20 years, and she is exactly how you hope an editor would be," says Creative Director Lawrence Esperanza. "She's very easy-going, thoughtful, and measured. She chooses her words carefully, always adding value and explaining things in the most meaningful way."




From left: Kristen Nemoto Jay, Summer Nakaishi, Craig DeSilva, David Frickman, Keely Kalama-Lakey, Lisa, Michelle Liu, and Courtney Takabayashi

I really wanted to know, so I asked Lisa, "What made you stay at HMSA for 40 years?" She smiled and said, "The people at HMSA make every day worthwhile. While the work never ends and change is constant, it's our co-workers who help us through."

Lisa epitomizes the heart of HMSA and what makes it a special place to work. "I have not had a better mentor than Lisa in my writing career," says David Frickman, senior content writer/editor. "She's always willing to correct and teach, but never in a negative way. More important than her mentorship, though, is her friendship."

She helps everyone grow and has great care for our community. "Simply put, Lisa is a treasure," says Anna Koethe Pavao, director of strategic communications. "She's committed to doing the right thing." Lisa loves sharing stories that educate and inspire, and she especially loves hearing from readers.

When asked what advice she has for everyone, Lisa replied, "Keep working hard, keep laughing, keep being there for each other." 

Christine Hirasa is HMSA's vice president of Communications and loves pandas and dark chocolate.



Lisa (right) with Christine Hirasa



ask the expert: on- and off- market drugs

words David Lato, Kristen Nemoto Jay, and Lynn Shibuya

art Garry Ono

For centuries, recreational and medicinal drugs have evolved and adapted to the times. The invention of morphine's hypodermic syringe in the mid-19th century helped as a pain reliever for soldiers in the American Civil War. LSD was widely distributed among health professionals in the early 1950s then linked heavily to counter-culture music of the '60s. Crack cocaine, a cheaper version of powdered cocaine, became easily accessible and prevalent in working-class and low-income neighborhoods, further marginalizing communities from each other and creating a fervor of a war on drugs in the U.S.



Jeremy Roberts, M.D.

Today, we hear about popular drugs like fentanyl and Ozempic a lot – for differing reasons, but similar to the fact that they've become a byproduct of our current decade. Recreational drugs such as marijuana and alcohol have been in existence for many years, and their popularity continues – mainly due to their acceptance in current social and cultural norms. Though Hawai'i's current marijuana law only allows its usage for medicinal purposes, those who possess marijuana will not be prosecuted for possessing certain small amounts.

Jeremy Roberts, M.D., of Advanced Psychiatric Therapeutics in Honolulu, helped explain prescription and recreational drugs used in Hawai'i and signs of abuse to watch for.

Fentanyl

What is fentanyl and how did it become so popular?

When the medical community over-prescribed opioid pills such as oxycodone in the 2000s, primarily to help manage pain, a population of opioid dependence was created and started to grow. Many looked to street sources, where a wave of cheap, easily synthesized fentanyl came on the market. As fentanyl is particularly potent but has a very short half-life (effects start and end very quickly), dealers can cut their normal opiate with fentanyl to provide what is perceived by the opiate use disorder patient as effective, but costs the dealer less than the normal, unadulterated opiate would cost. The problem is, a small miscalculation can quickly lead to an overdose for the consumer.



What are the major pros and cons of fentanyl?

In the outpatient setting, it is almost all cons, with very few pros. In a clinical setting, when given or prescribed by a doctor or other provider, fentanyl kicks in very quickly to alleviate pain. Though fentanyl can be very effective in the operating room, its short half-life makes almost any outpatient application largely useless, except when prescribed at the end of life, such as for terminal cancer. Fentanyl patches transmit fentanyl in a very controlled fashion through the skin for up to three days and are sometimes used for chronic pain. This route, however, is increasingly controversial, except in very specific circumstances, in light of the opiate epidemic.

What can people in Hawai'i do to prevent more people from dying of fentanyl overdoses?

If I had a whiff of concern about problematic opiate use, I would immediately obtain a naloxone nasal spray (available over the counter or on Amazon).

If you see a loved one experiencing an overdose, there's not much you can do at that point. The use at first causes the patient to relax, then look like they're sleeping, then they become increasingly unresponsive or very intermittently responsive. Finally, their breathing slows down or becomes erratic, then progresses to a point where they stop breathing. That's the part that kills them.

You can call 911. You can give them support breathing if you're trained in it. Those help a little. And while naloxone can be life-saving (it almost immediately reverses the opiate), you have to have it available immediately.

Ozempic

What is Ozempic and its side effects?

Ozempic is a medication that helps lower blood sugar in people with type 2 diabetes or hyperglycemia. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, although Ozempic is designed for diabetes management, it has become a popular off-label option for weight management.

Ozempic may cause serious side effects including inflammation of your pancreas, changes in vision, and kidney problems. Wegovy contains the same active ingredient as Ozempic (semaglutide) and is marketed and sold specifically for weight loss. There are also other drugs in the same family, such as Mounjaro and Zepbound.

Be careful about shopping for weight loss drugs online and always work with your doctor and a licensed pharmacy. Some weight loss medications, such as compounded Ozempic, have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for quality and safety and can be dangerous. Also, remember to check if your health plan benefits include these medications and understand what your out-of-pocket cost will be.

How do you feel about patients using it as a weight-loss supplement?

If we have options that can effectively treat obesity with fewer risks than the obesity itself, we should use them. In patients who take Ozempic only for diabetes, which is of course, perfectly acceptable. If it also helps them lose weight in the process, that's awesome.

Recreational drugs

What are some of the recreational drugs that have been used here in Hawai'i and what are their pros and cons?

People may be surprised to hear that the socially acceptable drugs are the largest problems. For every methamphetamine use disorder patient I see, I see five to 10 nicotine, alcohol, or marijuana use disorder patients.

Their use is given a pass, both by society and themselves, as they can rationalize that this is "normal." But if you find yourself needing the substance on a daily basis, if you're spending time and money that you don't have to obtain it, or if you find that not having it is troublesome for you, I would encourage some introspection.


Psilocybin (the active chemical in "magic mushrooms") is also popular and can grow in the wild in Hawai'i. When not used for their hallucinogenic properties, I've seen magic mushrooms treat depression. Its unregulated use, however, has several drawbacks such as dose consistency, as one mushroom may have a lot more psilocybin per gram than another.

More problematic is that during the time of use, the individual can be distinctly vulnerable and not able to make reasonable decisions or protect themselves. This can be minimized with supervision, but often an addict is attempting to avoid others knowing about the use, leading to a situation where they have no supervision during this vulnerable time.

Ketamine and esketamine have also recently become popular in Hawai'i. These are anesthetic and dissociative agents that can cause prominent sedation, but can be misused in a recreational manner. Ultimately, the largest danger from ketamine is the same as psilocybin; unsupervised use can lead to unexpectedly dangerous situations.

Actor Matthew Perry died of a ketamine overdose. He was using very high doses of ketamine that resulted in him not being alert enough to simply sit up as he drowned in his hot tub.

In general, signs of drug abuse may or may not be obvious to the patients themselves so it's vital to remain connected with loved ones and humble enough to receive feedback from them. The initial phases of addiction aren't as obvious to outsiders (such as increasing use, cravings, or being unable to cut down). The more noticeable symptoms include difficulties at work, home, or school; engaging in dangerous situations as a result of use; or developing tolerance or withdrawal.

Every person and case is different so it's important to reach out to your primary care provider if you have any questions or concerns. 





fighting fires and leukemia

words David Frickman

photos courtesy of Jason Mohica

It was a routine visit to the doctor for Jason Mohica of 'Aiea. The annual checkup was one of the tools the veteran firefighter used to stay healthy for his demanding job.

But the day after an August 2021 doctor visit was not routine. His life would suddenly change and upend the lives of his wife and two sons.

"I had to do a routine blood test and I didn't think much else about it," says Mohica. "The very next morning, on a Saturday, I got a call telling me to report to the emergency room as soon as possible. At first, I thought something happened to my family. But the doctor on the phone said, 'No. It's regarding the blood test you took yesterday.'"

The test revealed a high amount of immature blood cells, known as blast. Mohica told the doctor he'd go on Monday, but "the doctor was pretty adamant. She said this couldn't wait until Monday."

It was leukemia, an aggressive cancer usually starting in the bone marrow. The blast cells were a tipoff that something was wrong.

"I didn't feel bad or sick. It didn't make any sense to me at all," Mohica says. "It took a while to fully understand what was really happening."

Within a couple of weeks of that ER visit, Mohica began chemotherapy at Straub Benioff Medical Center. By February 2022, he had completed his fifth and final round of chemo. He still needed frequent checkups and more blood transfusions, which were done at Pali Momi Medical Center, before he could return to work.

Mohica says two important lessons emerged from his leukemia diagnosis and recovery. One is the importance of regular checkups with your doctor.

"That's how it was discovered. It's absolutely huge. I recently lost a co-worker to cancer. He was in his 40s. So everyone in our department is trying to figure out a way to get everybody screened earlier for these things."

The second lesson is the ongoing need for blood donations. Mohica says his leukemia treatment came during the pandemic, so the Blood Bank of Hawaii was extremely short on donations.



From left, sons Sage and Aiden with Ivy and Jason Mohica.

"I didn't feel bad or sick.


It didn't make any sense to me at all. It took a while to fully understand what was really happening."

: Jason Mohica

"There was actually a time when my blood came a little late. It took a little longer than normal," he says. "When the blood did come in, the nurse told me it came from Arizona. I'm thankful that strangers from out of state helped save my life, but we need to have enough donors here."

A regular blood donor for years, Mohica says he never knew anyone who needed blood. "I never even knew that my blood was being used. I just knew that it was good to do. Now that I was on the other side of this, I kind of understood because now I needed the blood. And that's when I felt proud of myself for doing that."

Now a firefighter for 20 years, Mohica says there was one other important facet to his recovery - the love and support of those around him.

"I had a huge support system. My family, the doctors, my friends, my church, and the fire department, my co-workers. Since my wife was going to stay at the hospital with me the whole month, the guys were cooking meals and delivering them to my boys at home. The fire department really came together as a family and my boys got a little spoiled, actually." 

To learn more about donating blood, see page 43. To reach the Blood Bank of Hawaii, visit bbh.org/become-donor or call (808) 848-4745.

hmsa

KAIMANA AWARDS

& SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM ◆◆◆

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!



In honor of this milestone anniversary, we're giving out 20 scholarships worth \$5,000 each.

We're looking for students who are exceptional in the classroom, exemplify sportsmanship, and give back to the community. If you check all the boxes below, fill out your application today.



- ✓ **Hawaii high school senior, class of 2025.**
- ✓ **2.75+ GPA.**
- ✓ **Played a sport in high school.**
- ✓ **Active in the community.**
- ✓ **Headed for higher education.**



Apply for an HMSA Kaimana Scholarship! You could receive \$5,000 to cover higher education expenses.

Give yourself plenty of time and plan ahead! The application deadline is **Friday, Feb. 21, 2025, at 4 p.m.**



To apply or for more information, visit hmsa.com/kaimana or scan the QR code.





Cadets and professional firefighters (from left) Jonathan Akaka, Kia'i Ramos, Noah Feato, and Tanner Wright

ho'omau fire academy: mentoring for the future

words Courtney Takabayashi

photos courtesy of Ho'omau Fire Academy

When federal firefighters Reid Shimabukuro and Dale Alejandro aren't battling blazes, providing emergency services, and saving lives, they're in a classroom mentoring the next generation of first responders. Welcome to Ho'omau Fire Academy.

Recruit, retain, retire

To address the high turnover rate in fire departments, federal firefighter captain and union secretary Douglas Barbieto envisioned a program for young people ages 16 to 24 to get experience and mentorship from active and retired firefighters. "He wanted to invest in local kids by giving those interested in pursuing a career as a firefighter exposure to the expectations and rigor of the job," Shimabukuro says. "That way, we'd retain more people. And that's the goal: Recruit, retain, retire."



Saving lives takes strength and skill. Left: Cadets from Class 012 on Maui learn early CPR. Right: An HFA cadet drags a dummy that weighs 180 pounds.

They formed an executive board with members Sheldon Sunada, Harry Lyons, and Dennis Nardo and launched the academy in 2022, just months after Barbieto passed away from prostate cancer. “We wanted to get the program up and running in his memory,” Alejandro says.

Since Shimabukuro coached football at Palama Settlement, he knew it would be a great place to hold classes. They recruited volunteer instructors from the military, Honolulu Fire Department, and Federal Fire Department. “These volunteers want to take an active role in mentoring potential firefighters,” says Shimabukuro. “The success of the academy lies in their willingness to give back.” Classes have expanded to the Neighbor Islands.



Reid Shimabukuro

From cadets to fire department candidates

The academy’s success is also due to the participants, or cadets. Once accepted into the six-week program, they participate in physical, agility, and hands-on training; develop public speaking skills; and learn what it’s like to be a firefighter. Every morning, they’re expected to complete morning duty: making their bed, shining their boots, and completing 40 burpees. “We ask them to push themselves, and they do,” Alejandro says. “When we offer life lessons, they take what we say to heart.”

If a cadet realizes that fire service may not be right for them, they’re able to pivot. “They can learn more about a career in ocean safety, emergency medical services, even the police department,” Alejandro says.



Dale Alejandro



From classroom to the field. Clockwise from left: A cadet practices the tire pull to help increase strength and agility. HFA instructor Dale Alejandro and alumni cadet Roi Katigbak coach a cadet through the mock agility test. Alumni cadet John Kalani giving back to the academy.

"The life of a firefighter is as tough as it is rewarding and it's not for everyone. So, we give our cadets options."

Graduates with gratitude

Once cadets graduate from the program, they're not guaranteed a job. But they do know what to expect during the application process and have an expanded support network thanks to the academy. "They've made connections with their instructors and fellow cadets," Shimabukuro says. "We do our best to prepare them, but it's up to them to use the skills they learned."

In just two years, the academy has produced an impressive number of success stories. "So far, we've had 33 cadets hired as firefighters, EMTs, lifeguards and into the military," Shimabukuro says. "We're so proud of them."

Sometimes, alumni will return to give talks to current cadets to share their experience. "They believe in the mission and want to help others achieve their goals," says Alejandro. "They continually show up for each other."

Bright future

When the board started the academy, there was no roadmap to follow. "We led from our hearts and learned from our mistakes," Alejandro says. They hope to expand the program and hire staff to help increase their budget. "Whenever we hear a cadet has been hired, it validates the work we do," Shimabukuro says. "It's rewarding to know that we're making a difference." [is](#)

Learn more about Ho'omau Fire Academy and how to get involved at hoomaufireacademy.org, find them on Instagram @hfa_808, email reid@hoomaufireacademy.org, or call (808) 255-9253.



Visit islandscene.com/more and read about a firefighter who started his training at Ho'omau Fire Academy.



The whole-body benefit of a healthy smile

A nice smile not only improves your confidence – it can also help you stay healthy. Brushing and flossing, along with regular dental visits, can keep harmful bacteria under control and prevent cavities, tooth loss, gum disease, and infection. Your dentist is a valuable partner when it comes to helping you maintain good total health.

HMSA dental plans cover two exams and cleanings each year at little to no cost. We make it easy for you to keep smiling confidently and staying healthy.



Find a dentist and get tips for better oral health at hmsadental.com or call (808) 948-6440 or 1 (800) 792-4672.



island scene self-care tips

compiled Kristen Nemoto Jay

illustrations Garry Ono

As you might imagine, *Island Scene* team members try to be consistent with our own self-care routines. We're not perfect, of course, but if I may brag a bit about our staff, we keep each other accountable for taking care of ourselves. To help inspire your own self-care routine, here is what's been working for us lately:



Give back

"The whole family chooses 10 things each to donate once a week. We put the items in a box out of sight and when we fill up several boxes, we donate them."

- Courtney Takabayashi, supervisor and online editor, islandscene.com

Listen to music

"Music always puts me in a good mood and often connects me with memories of people, places, and things that make me smile."

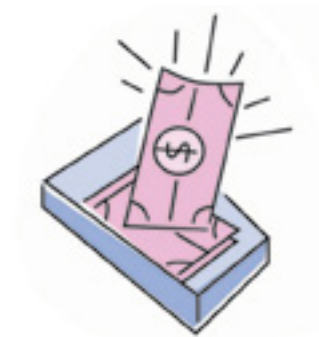
- Kathy Chang, HMSA director of Communications

Walk, listen, and sun

"I enjoy taking a break to walk around the block and listen to an audiobook or podcast, while getting a quick dose of vitamin D."

- Summer Nakaishi, content writer and editor





Tip well

"My job requires me to eat out or on-the-run a lot. I carry small bills to tip servers, food-runners, clerks, baristas, etc. because it makes the world a happier place, which is good for the soul. You'll be surprised how good it can make you feel."

- Mark M. Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S., HMSA president and CEO

Quiet time

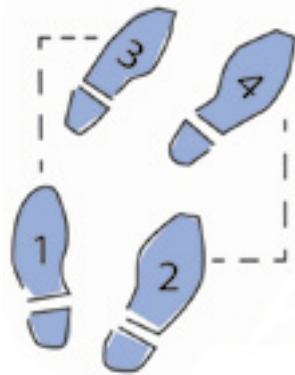
"Sometimes, I just need to get away from everything: people, pets, TV, noise. I meditate, read a book, put on some light music, or just sit and enjoy the quiet."

- David Frickman, content writer and editor

Dance party of one

"I'm not a great dancer, but that doesn't stop me from dancing around my room! I love learning choreographed routines on YouTube, but it's also a lot of fun to let loose and bust out my own moves."

- Michelle Liu, content writer and editor, islandscene.com



Get physical

"I make sure to stand while working and have some type of physical movement throughout the day, in addition to aiming for 75-150 minutes of exercise each week. It's a must for my mental, bone, and muscle health."

- Keely Kalama-Lakey, content writer and editor



Exercise with my daughter

"I run with my daughter, while she rides her bike, around Kapi'olani Park on the weekends. It is important to me that she learns how important exercise is for well-being and that we are consistent in this activity."

- Dr. Stefanie Park, HMSA vice president and chief medical officer

Meal plan

"Buy and prep my own food and plan my meals so I can control what I'm eating. It's healthier and can save time and money."

- Craig DeSilva, content writer and editor

Pamper yourself

"I listen to music all the time, and I love to get massages, manicures and pedicures, and facials."

- Christine Hirasa, HMSA vice president of Communications



Therapy

"If there was one thing I'd recommend everyone in this world do in order to fully take care of themselves, it would be to seek therapy. Seeing a therapist has transformed my life completely for the better, and I'm a much more capable, open, and happy person because of it."

- Kristen Nemoto Jay, *Island Scene* associate editor

Spend time with the people you love

"Life is short and time is precious. Take the time to be with those who bring joy, happiness, and meaning to your life."

- Anna Koethe Pavao, HMSA director of Strategic Communications



Schedule time for fun

"Don't let your calendar be overrun by work, school, errands, appointments, and caring for others. Let's play!"

- Lisa Baxa, *Island Scene* publisher and editor



For more tips from the *Island Scene* team, visit islandscene.com/more.



Break a Sweat Without Breaking the Bank™

Thousands of Fitness Options

- Choose from **12,700+** standard gyms for just **\$28/mo.**¹
- Plus, **8,700+** premium exercise studios with **20%-70% discounts** at most locations.¹

Flexible & Affordable

- **No long-term contracts.** Switch gyms and cancel with ease.
- Join multiple gyms and get a **\$5 monthly discount** on each additional membership.²

Go Beyond the Gym

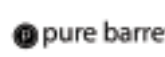
- **1:1 well-being coaching** to help you reach your health goals, at no additional cost.
- Get Fit at Home™ for free with **12,000+ on-demand workout videos** before you enroll.



Standard Fitness Network



Premium Fitness Network



Get Started: hmsa.com

¹ Monthly fees are subject to applicable enrollment fees and taxes. Costs for premium exercise studios exceed \$28/mo. plus applicable enrollment fees and taxes. Fees vary based on premium fitness studios selected.

² Members may purchase multiple standard and premium gym memberships with a \$5 discount off the monthly fee for each membership purchased after their first.

The Active&Fit Direct™ program is provided by American Specialty Health Fitness Inc., a subsidiary of American Specialty Health Inc. American Specialty Health is an independent company providing chiropractic, acupuncture, fitness programs, and/or massage therapy services on behalf of HMSA.

M966-752B-HMSA 09/24 © 2024 American Specialty Health Incorporated (ASH). All rights reserved. The Active&Fit Direct program is provided by American Specialty Health Fitness, Inc., a subsidiary of ASH. Active&Fit Direct, Fit at Home, Break a Sweat Without Breaking the Bank, and the Active&Fit Direct logos are trademarks of ASH. Other names or logos may be trademarks of their respective owners. Standard fitness center and premium studio participation varies by location and is subject to change. Other restrictions may apply based on the location of your selected fitness center. On-demand workout videos are subject to change. ASH reserves the right to modify any aspect of the Program (including, without limitation, the Enrollment Fee(s), the Monthly Fee(s), any future Annual Maintenance fees, and/or the Introductory Period) at any time per the terms and conditions. If we modify a fee or make a material change to the Program, we will provide you with no less than 30 days' notice prior to the effective date of the change. We may discontinue the Program at any time upon advance written notice.

ice baths: to plunge or not to plunge?

words Summer Nakaishi



Though ice baths are a hot social media trend, it's not a newfangled wellness technique. Cryotherapy, or the application of cold for therapeutic purposes, has been around for centuries. In fourth century B.C., Hippocrates, credited as the grandfather of cryotherapy, suggested that ice and snow could alleviate pain.

Cold water immersion involves submerging in sub-60-degree water for anywhere from 30 seconds to several minutes. Some studies suggest that ice baths are linked to a range of physiological responses that boost overall health.

What happens?

Plunging into cold water reduces body temperature, making blood vessels contract. When emerging from the water, blood vessels expand and pump more oxygen and nutrients back into your tissues, potentially reducing inflammation, swelling, pain, and muscle soreness.

Cold exposure activates the body's stress response, releasing dopamine and endorphins, which may boost mood and release stress while increasing alertness. Cold plunging may also stimulate the body's cells that lower glucose and increase immunity over the long term.

Scientific research on cold water immersion health benefits is still emerging.

Ice baths, also known as cold water immersion or cold water therapy, are considered complementary and

alternative medicine (CAM). CAM is a broad term for medical practices and products that are not part of standard medical care. CAM therapies can be used in addition to standard medical treatments (complementary medicine) or instead of standard medical treatments (alternative medicine), says Stefanie Park, M.D., HMSA vice president and chief medical officer. "Patients sometimes prefer the CAM approach due to the holistic nature of the treatment despite the lack of scientific evidence that is generally required of mainstream Western medical practices."

Possible negative effects

Potential risks of ice baths include hypothermia, cardiovascular or respiratory stress, fainting, or dizziness. Those with medical conditions may want to avoid ice baths.

Before starting a new treatment, always consult with your health care provider and check your health plan benefits.

Other ways to cool down

If you don't have access to an ice bath or would prefer to ease into full-body immersion, try cold showers, ice bath facials, or ice packs on an isolated body part.

It's up to you (and your doctor) to decide whether to take the plunge on this icy trend or turn a cold shoulder.

This article is the first in a series of articles about complementary and alternative medicine.



a champion's hidden battles

words David Frickman

art Garry Ono

In January, the Wai'ala'e Country Club welcomes more than 150 PGA Tour professionals for the first full-field tournament of 2025 – the Sony Open in Hawai'i.

One golfer who won't be there is the tournament's defending champion. And the tragic story of Grayson Murray's absence has important lessons.

Murray battled depression and alcoholism for much of his professional career. That all seemed to be behind him when he won the 2024 Sony Open in a three-way playoff. He addressed those battles right after the tournament, appearing to have put his mental health struggles behind him. He had found faith. He was planning his future with his new fiancée.

Then, the unexpected happened. In late May, during the second round of a tournament in Texas, Murray withdrew with two holes to play, citing illness. The next morning Murray was found unresponsive. He had taken his own life.

"We don't know the whole story. That's the most important thing to keep in mind," says Caroline Carney, M.D., president of behavioral health and chief medical officer at Magellan Health. "But in general, we do know that individuals who complete suicide more likely than not have had predisposing factors like mental illness, substance use, and even genetic contributions. We can never really know what the inciting points are for those who die by suicide. The answer is typically a triggering factor along with a predisposing factor."

While mental health issues are very likely to be present in those who take their life, Dr. Carney says there isn't always a mental health diagnosis associated with these individuals because some haven't reached out for professional help and, therefore, were never diagnosed or treated.

Dr. Carney says those close to someone who is showing signs of mental distress can help them by using QPR:


- Question. Ask them how they're feeling and whether they've had thoughts of taking their own life. "Research shows that asking is not going to cause a person to die by suicide. Asking gives them an opportunity to open up," says Dr. Carney. "Be present and listen. Although this can be hard, it may reduce the risk."
- Persuade. Convince them of the importance of reaching out for help, and take the steps needed to keep them safe. In persuading, we can tell them that they matter and identify and mitigate the means that they plan on using to kill themselves.
- Refer. Make a referral to the 988 suicide helpline, their behavioral health provider, their primary care provider, or an emergency room. If necessary, make the call with them or drive them to their doctor.

Dr. Carney notes that Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are at a higher risk of suicide than they have been in the past compared to other demographic groups. "In 2022, data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed Hawai'i at 16.6/100,000 persons, compared to the national average of 14.2/100,000. Rates in teens have been increasing as well."

To help overcome this, Dr. Carney says the topic needs to be a larger part of regular discussion with family and friends, and in the community. Those conversations can begin at home and extend into the community. Hawai'i has important resources, including work being done by the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Task Force, the EMS suicide prevention coordinator, and the Hawai'i Cares and 988 hotlines to mention a few.



Grayson Murray with his championship trophy at 2024 Sony Open

"We can't hide behind the stigma of mental illness and suicide. Make prevention something that we talk about at that very important Friday night high school football game or in our own social and community groups," she says. "Make it something that's not hidden in the shadows. All of our kids are at risk so let's talk about what those symptoms might be and take action." 

Magellan Hawai'i is HMSA's new behavioral health partner. You can learn about Magellan Hawai'i on page 49 and at magellanhealth.com.



Explore your health plan

Discover everything you need to know at hmsa.com.

At hmsa.com you'll find:

- My Account, HMSA's member portal (click My Account Login).
- Your *Guide to Benefits*.
- How to get care after-hours, during an emergency, or when you're away from home.
- Your member rights and responsibilities.
- Procedures for complaints, appeals, and external reviews by an independent review organization.
- How new technology is evaluated.
- HMSA's philosophy of care, quality improvement report, and practice guidelines.



Go to hmsa.com or use the QR code to find this information and more.
Or call (808) 948-6079 or 1 (800) 776-4672; TTY 711.





Here are the newest additions to our provider network – more choices to meet your needs.



Hawaii Island

Rahul Bhaskar
Ashlynne R. Brown
Alex J. Carlos
Joann M. Casenas
Castanares
Michelle A. Dihoff
Jasmine S. Fujimoto
Kit F. Hill
Lynda A. Hirakami
Tamara M. Krimm
Sarah M. Laninga
Natalie C. Lum
Edgardo Ortiz Flores
Erin Rose
Sean M. Siebert
Barbara J. Sparrow
Krista D. Walker
Tonya J. Waters
Amanda M. Webster
Craig L. Wilkerson

Kauai

Kimberly B. Gelder
Ashley J. James
Lani K.N. McKenna
Susan M. Minnich
Katrina M. Von Kriegenbergh
Craig L. Wilkerson

Lanai

Joseph B. Ahlborn

Maui

Christa N. Cook
Kate H. Elson
Jonathan-James T. Eno
Brooke Hayes
Tracey B. Marr
Thomas Trischman
Craig L. Wilkerson

Molokai

Daisy-Kristina A. Wong

Oahu

Ayman Abdul-Ghani
Maria L.J. Akagi
Kevin M.C.D. Akiyama
Kourt Bacon
Patricio A.R. Battani
Rahul Bhaskar
Samara A. Birer
Alexandra Britt
Elijah J. Burton
Alex J. Carlos
Meghan A. Chin
Christopher D. Chur
Patrick O. Curtin
Jamielu U. Dominguez
Pamela R. Dusza
Allison N. Evans
Geraldine Faivre
Rissa Fedora
Maya G. Florsheim

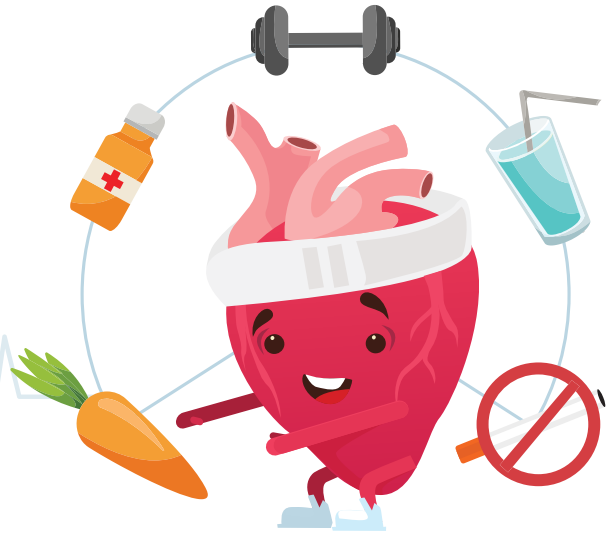
Aaron Y. Fong
La-Tisha B. Frazier
Jasmine S. Fujimoto
Cheyanne A. Genovese
Jonathan S. Griffin
Ian E. Guerrero
Shiho Hamano
Amber M. Higashi
Samantha K.G.E. Higgins
Sherrie W.Y.D. Hirota
Philip W. Ho
Juliet Hoinkis
Agnela T. Isaias
Emily R. Jordan
Jaclyn E. Kagihara
Alyson A. Kau
Joy S. Kawamura
Jennifer Kelii
Judy Ko
Liana T. Kobayashi
Kellie M. Kurasaki
Brianne Kusaka
Eric K.W. Lee
Jin Song Lee
Laura A. Lipscomb
Venecia A. Lopez
Kara T. Luong
Olivia H. Manayan
Emma R. Metz
Ryan T. Moore
Amruta Nair
Kalamaoka'aina K.S. Niheu

Jenna S. Park
Ashley M. Porter
Pattara Rattanawong
Duarxy R. Sainvilien
U'ilani O.N. Schnackenberg
Carrie H. Shklov
Jacob T. Shreve
Sean M. Siebert
Marife C. Solomon
Ashley M. Springer
Keala Swafford
Rizelle Talon
Katrina M. Von Kriegenbergh
Kimberly Vu
Amanda M.L. Wasko
Craig L. Wilkerson
Kelli C. Williams
Daisy-Kristina A. Wong
Geoffrey Yee

These providers joined HMSA's network between June 21 and Sept. 20, 2024.

For a complete list of HMSA participating providers, contact information, and plans accepted, visit Find a Doctor on hmsa.com.

expanded cardiac rehabilitation benefit




words Kevin Allen

Recovering from a traumatic cardiac experience, such as a heart attack or heart surgery, can be a lengthy process. Even after the initial care, patients need to take steps to prevent further cardiovascular damage or even a hospital readmission. Fortunately, HMSA is here to help.

With our new, expanded cardiac rehabilitation benefit, effective Jan. 1, 2025, for all HMSA commercial plans, members can improve their cardiovascular health by learning about healthy habits and therapeutic lifestyle changes. This can help prevent cardiac conditions from worsening and help members increase their overall quality of life for the long term. Cardiac rehab is already a benefit for HMSA QUEST and Medicare plans.

“Cardiac rehab will teach our members about what physical activity can be tolerated during recovery and create good habits for future health,” says HMSA Vice President and Chief Medical Officer Stefanie Park, M.D. “Education about healthy living, including how to eat healthy, take medicine as prescribed, and quit smoking, are other topics that are commonly covered in a cardiac rehab program.” A session may also include supervised exercise, nutritional and lifestyle education, and one-on-one counseling with a cardiologist.

Studies show that cardiac rehab programs are working. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, individuals who attend 36 sessions of cardiac rehab have a 47% lower risk of death and a 31% lower risk of heart attack than those who attend only one session.

In addition to reducing the rate of hospital admissions, those who participate in cardiac rehab programs will set themselves up for a healthier future and could lower their annual medical expenses. 

For more information on HMSA’s cardiac rehab benefit, talk to your primary care provider or cardiologist, or call HMSA at (808) 948-6079 or 1 (800) 776-4672.

For a video about cardiac rehab,
please go to
islandscene.com/newsroom
or scan this QR code.



Your Feedback Matters!

At HMSA, we care about you, your family, and your experiences with us and your doctors.

In the next few months, you may receive a survey in the mail called CAHPS® (Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) from Press Ganey (a company approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services). If you are randomly selected to receive this survey, please take the time to complete it.

Your responses are confidential and provide valuable insight about the quality of care and services you receive. You get to tell us what we're doing right and how we can improve.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for choosing HMSA. Caring for our families, friends, and neighbors is our privilege.



bath safety for keiki

words Courtney Takabayashi



Since bathing is part of our everyday routine, it's easy to forget how important bath safety is, especially for keiki. According to American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), drowning is the single-leading cause of death among children age 1-4, with most infants drowning in bathtubs. In observance of National Bath Safety Month in January, see if you can tell fact from fiction.

Myth or reality? Since I'm bathing my child, we don't need nonslip grips in the tub.

Myth. The National Drowning Prevention Alliance recommends nonslip grips or mats inside the tub and a nonslip rug or mat outside the tub. Having both can help reduce the risk of slips and falls. And to avoid injury, don't let toddlers stand in the tub.

Yes or no? A child can drown in as little as 2 inches of water.

Yes. This scary fact is true so it's important to never leave a child alone in the tub. The AAP recommends not turning your back even for a moment or leaving babies in the care of another child. In addition, your presence is important as there are many things in the bathroom that could be harmful for keiki to touch or swallow. To be safe, always stay within arm's reach of your child when they're in the tub.

True or false? Hot baths are best for getting rid of germs.

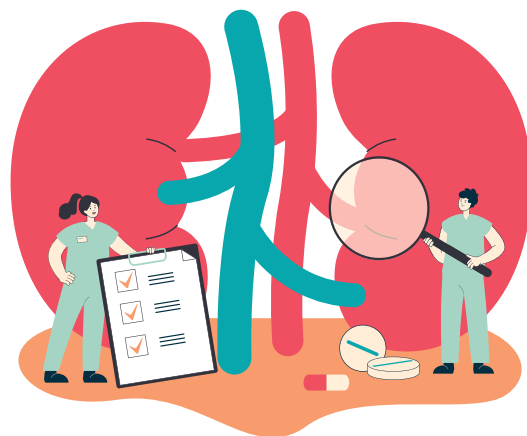
False. Since babies have sensitive skin, it's important to regulate the temperature of their bath water. According to the AAP, bath water should be warm, around 100 degrees F, and never more than 120 degrees F. Always check the temperature with the back of your hand, or use a thermometer, before your child goes into the water.

Fact or fiction? Since the water is warm, the rest of the room can be any temperature.

Fiction. According to the Mayo Clinic, a wet baby can get cold quickly so be sure the temperature of the room is comfortable, too. An ideal bathroom temperature is between 70 and 80 degrees F. And remember to dry your child right away!

protect your kidneys from ckd

words Keely Kalama-Lakey



Dr. Jared Sugihara is a nephrologist, HMSA medical director, and the founder of Malama Kidney Center.

Experts say about 90% of people with chronic kidney disease (CKD) don't know they have it. Symptoms usually appear during the later disease stages when dialysis and kidney transplants are needed. It's important to know how to protect your kidneys, especially if you have high blood pressure or diabetes.

What is CKD?

Kidneys filter your blood 24 hours a day and remove waste and excess fluid from your body through urine. "Under normal circumstances, no one pays much attention to the kidneys because they work in the background," says nephrologist Jared Sugihara, M.D. "If kidneys stop functioning, you slowly lose the ability to get rid of waste products and extra fluid." This can cause serious health problems, including heart disease and stroke. Kidney disease is considered chronic when kidneys don't function properly for three months or more.

What are the symptoms?

Usually, the progression of CKD happens slowly, with no signs of problems until the condition is serious. At that point, you may feel weak and tired and have swelling due to fluid buildup in your face or feet.

Who's at risk?

The most common causes of kidney disease are diabetes and high blood pressure. Both conditions damage blood vessels in the kidneys. "More than 60% of people on dialysis in Hawai'i have diabetes," says Dr. Sugihara. Those with a family history of kidney disease also have a higher risk for CKD. Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders have a high rate of CKD, representing about 35% of people on dialysis in Hawai'i.

How to prevent CKD

- **Manage chronic health conditions.** If you have high blood pressure or diabetes, follow your doctor's treatment plan. Take your medications as prescribed, keep up with doctor visits, and make healthy lifestyle changes. Monitor your blood glucose and blood pressure at home as directed. Make sure your blood pressure stays in the range your doctor recommends; too high or too low can cause kidney problems.
- **Monitor kidney function.** Regular doctor visits help monitor your kidneys and find problems early. Your doctor will order blood and urine tests to check your kidney function. Depending on the results, your doctor may refer you to a specialist; an educational program, such as the Aloha Kidney program by Ramona Wong, M.D.; or to a clinical support program like Dr. Sugihara's Malama Kidney Center.
- **Maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle.** Certain foods, drinks, and medicines make kidneys work harder and cause damage over time. Limit salt, sugar, alcohol, and highly processed foods. Adequate hydration is also important to flush out toxins. Get regular exercise, don't smoke, and avoid taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as Advil.

Dr. Sugihara says progressive kidney disease can be slowed with medication and lifestyle changes if found earlier. If you need assistance or support, talk with your doctor or call HMSA's Health and Well-being Support, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1 (855) 329-5461, option 1.



health matters



Tips to help reach your health goals for 2025

Creating health goals can be daunting, especially if it's for an entire year. But success is possible, if you set up specific and actionable steps:

- **Pick one.** Pick one or two goals to focus on. Having too many goals can feel overwhelming.
- **Baby steps.** Start with mini goals that work up to your bigger goal. For example, instead of running a marathon, start with walking 2 miles or a 10K.
- **Support system.** Achieving goals can be easier when done with others. Find a buddy or a community with similar goals to help support your journey.
- **Journal.** Writing in a journal can help you keep your eye on the prize. Track the foods you eat or check in on how you're doing throughout the year to help keep you motivated.
- **No pressure.** Give yourself a break if you missed a workout or gave into your craving for ice cream. Remember to be proud of how far you've come so far and get back on track.

Give Blood

January is National Blood Donor Awareness Month. Here are some tips from Blood Bank of Hawaii (BBH) if you're interested in donating blood for the first time:

- Donors must be at least 18 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds, and have a photo ID with your birth date. Those age 16 and 17 may donate with a signed parent/legal guardian BBH consent form.
- BBH has a donor center and several virtual donor centers. For more information, go to bbh.org/about/faq-contact.
- Before donating, drink eight to 10 glasses of water within the 24 hours before your appointment, eat a healthy and hearty meal, and get a good night's sleep.
- After donating, drink plenty of fluids, refrain from strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for 24 hours, and eat a healthy, hearty meal. And, of course, be proud of yourself.
- Every donation makes a difference. One donation can help save up to three lives.

For more information, go to bbh.org or call (808) 848-4770.

resources for life's journey:
we're here with you



words Michelle Liu

It's not always easy to take care of your health and well-being.

Sometimes all the medications, tests, and doctor appointments can feel overwhelming. We can provide you with resources to help.

From nutrition and physical activity to preventive care and managing chronic illness, HMSA has services and programs that provide you with tools to improve and maintain your well-being.

On our health and well-being page at hmsa.com, you'll find lots of valuable information, including tips on dealing with these medical conditions:

Asthma

HMSA can help you manage your asthma, so you can stay active and live well. Browse resources on how to use an inhaler, monitor your asthma, and treat changing symptoms or attacks.

Congestive heart failure

We have the tools, health tips, and food ideas you need to gain a better understanding of congestive heart failure and live a healthier life.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

In the U.S., 16 million people have been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, while millions more suffer from it, but haven't been diagnosed and aren't being treated. Get tips to learn more or help you manage your condition.

Coronary artery disease

The first sign of coronary artery disease is often a heart attack. We have information that can help you and your health care team reduce your risk for coronary artery disease, or CAD.

Diabetes

Are you at risk for diabetes? Take a test to see where you stand and learn more about the warning signs. We also have the tools and tips you need to live with diabetes.

High blood pressure

Hypertension (or high blood pressure) affects the body's arteries. If left untreated, it can increase the risk of a heart attack. Learn about blood pressure and how to monitor and control it.

Or call us and we can:

- Answer your questions about medications, diet, exercise, or other health issues.
- Discuss ways you can better manage your health.
- Remind you about preventive screenings and exams.
- Help you find a doctor or health coach.

Scan this code for easy access to the health and well-being page at hmsa.com/well-being:

Or call us at 1 (855) 329-5461, option 1, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.



understanding a colonoscopy



Dr. Kristi Lopez examines a patient.

For many people approaching their mid-40s, a colonoscopy is a dreaded but important medical procedure. Understanding what a colonoscopy is and why it's crucial can help relieve some concerns.

Though colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S., with improved screening methods, many cases can be prevented or treated if detected early.

words Earl Yoshii



Dr. Kristi Lopez of Aloha Gastroenterology

Kristi Lopez, M.D., of Aloha Gastroenterology says understanding the process of a colonoscopy can help significantly reduce anxiety among patients. Here is a brief overview of the procedure:

Consultation: Your provider will review your medical history and may suggest adjustments to your medications. Your diet will need some modifications, so make sure to review your instructions one week before your procedure.

Prep day: For most patients, you'll follow a clear liquid diet and take a bowel prep solution to cleanse your colon thoroughly the day before your colonoscopy. Although this preparation isn't pleasant, it's essential for an effective procedure.

Procedure day: You'll be sedated, so you'll likely feel minimal discomfort. The procedure itself usually takes 20 to 45 minutes, depending on if the doctor needs to remove any polyps, which are small growths on the colon or rectal lining.

Post-procedure: After the colonoscopy, you can go home the same day, although you'll need someone to drive you due to the sedation. Mild bloating or cramping may occur but generally resolves quickly.

There are several myths about colonoscopies:

Colonoscopies are painful. Thanks to modern sedation techniques, most patients experience little to no discomfort during the procedure.

Only men need colonoscopies. Colon cancer affects both men and women, so screening is important for everyone.

I'm too young for a colonoscopy. Screening is generally recommended starting at age 45, but if you have risk factors, such as a family history of colon cancer, you might need to begin earlier.

Taking control of your health is crucial. Cathy Kaplan, a patient of Dr. Lopez's, highlights the importance of not delaying the procedure: "Two days of inconvenience with the prep and the procedure is a small price to pay compared to the risk of cancer. My dad died from colon cancer, and I believe early detection can prevent it."

Discuss your screening options with your doctor, schedule your colonoscopy, and take proactive steps for your health today.



Cathy Kaplan

Scan this code to see a video to learn more about colonoscopies with Dr. Kristi Lopez and why you should get checked out.



for your benefit



Take HMSA wherever you go

Your HMSA membership gives you peace of mind when you're out of state. HMSA's BlueCard Program provides members with coverage no matter where they are. Whether you're a college student covered by your parent's plan while abroad or a retiree who receives medical coverage from a Hawai'i employer, HMSA's BlueCard Program has you covered.

HMSA is part of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) network, giving HMSA members access to 1.7 million doctors and hospitals nationwide

and in 170 countries and territories worldwide. BCBS members who are enrolled in plans that participate in the BlueCard program are easily identified by the three-character prefix at the start of their member ID number. HMSA member IDs are displayed on membership cards beginning with XL or HFP. Also, BlueCard member IDs have the suitcase logo displayed on the card.

Looking for a doctor or hospital while traveling? Go to bcbs.com or call 1 (800) 810-BLUE (2583) for the names

of participating doctors and hospitals in the area you'll be visiting. Make sure you have your HMSA membership card with you to help providers file your claims.

When you need services outside the U.S. for non-emergency in-patient medical care, call the BlueCard Worldwide Service Center at 1 (804) 673-1177 or GeoBlue at (610) 254-5830.

Say “hello” to our new partner

Starting Jan. 1, HMSA welcomes Magellan Hawai'i as our new behavioral health partner. With over 50 years of experience, Magellan Hawai'i is ready to address your behavioral health needs from feeling better emotionally to handling substance use challenges.

As we transition, rest assured your access to care will remain the same. You'll continue using the same phone and fax numbers for your behavioral health needs. Plus, your familiar network of trusted behavioral health providers will remain unchanged, so you can keep seeing the providers you know and trust.

For more information about the transition and what it means for you, visit hmsa.com/well-being/mental-health-resources/.



Your benefits: What does it all mean?

At HMSA, we want to make sure you understand your health benefits so you can take full advantage of them. But that can be difficult when you read your plan and see words and phrases that don't make sense.

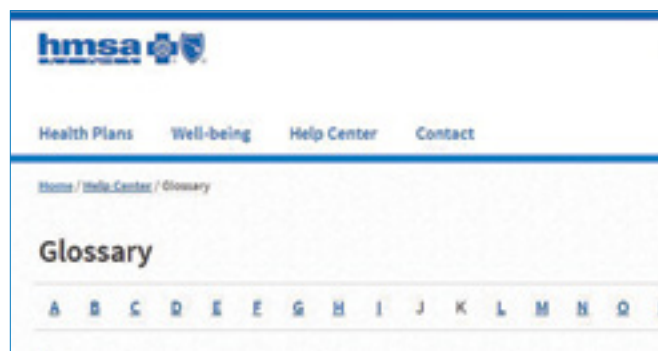
We've all been there. To help you out, here are some key words you may find in your benefit materials and what they mean:

- **Copayment:** The dollar amount you pay out of pocket for medical services and products that are benefits of your health plan. Let's say your plan has a \$20 copayment for doctor visits. If a visit costs \$100, you'll pay \$20 and your plan pays the remaining \$80.
- **Coinsurance:** The percentage you pay out of pocket for medical services and products that are benefits of your plan. Let's say your plan has a 20% coinsurance for prescription drugs. If a prescription costs \$100, you'll pay 20% and your plan pays the remaining 80%.
- **Stop-loss (also known as the copayment maximum, maximum out-of-pocket, or MOOP):** The total of your copayments and coinsurance amounts for the designated period (e.g., calendar year, plan year, etc.). Let's say your plan has a \$2,000 stop-loss. When the total of the copayment and deductible amounts you pay throughout the year reaches your plan's stop-loss,

you're no longer responsible for paying for copayments or deductibles unless specified by your plan.

- **Deductible:** A fixed dollar amount that you must pay out of pocket before your plan benefits will begin. Let's say your plan has a \$100 deductible for doctor visits. If you haven't met the deductible and a visit costs \$80, you'll pay \$80 and your plan will pay \$0 until the \$100 deductible is met. Once the \$100 deductible is met, your normal plan benefits will apply.

For more definitions to help you understand your plan, visit our glossary of terms at hmsa.com/help-center/glossary or scan this QR code.





rocky olmos: from famous to fulfilling career

words Courtney Takabayashi

art Garry Ono

While most kids were learning about world history, Rocky Olmos was touring the world with his family's band. Once they disbanded, Olmos knew it was time to focus on his education. However, as a young adult who'd been homeschooled between gigs, he didn't have a high school diploma. So, he made a plan and eventually reached his educational goals.

All in the family

Born in Utah, Olmos was one of seven children. His mother noticed her kids' natural talent for playing musical instruments and nurtured their interest in music. "And as soon as us younger kids got older and could hold an instrument, we had the opportunity to learn, too," Olmos says.

The family started learning songs together and added singing to their repertoire. By this time, they were living overseas, performing everything from Guns N' Roses to The Judds.

"I'll never forget climbing the stairs of the Eiffel Tower in Paris or enjoying hotteok (Korean pancakes) from a street vendor in Korea," he says.



Life on tour

A typical day for Olmos included waking up at 4 a.m., practicing songs, exercising, and doing schoolwork. Then, the family had band practice from 6 to 10 p.m. "It was exhausting, but it was all we knew," Olmos says. "Our hard work paid off when we'd get up on stage and the crowd went wild."

When they lived in Korea and Panama, their band went by the name The Dropouts, and later, in France, they changed it to Skarekro. "We primarily played for the United Service Organizations," he says. "I'll never forget playing for a crowd of 2,000 one Fourth of July."

A new journey

Eventually, the kids grew up and the group disbanded. Though he was homeschooled, Olmos felt he lagged behind his peers academically. "I didn't learn multiplication and division until I was 18," he says. "And I failed the GED multiple times. It was humiliating but also deeply motivating."

So, at 23, Olmos started his journey toward a degree. "College gave me the opportunity to create meaningful bonds with people from different backgrounds," he says. "While I was learning math and science, I was also figuring out how to connect with others."



Overcoming challenges

Pursuing higher education was both rewarding and challenging. Olmos often found himself struggling to catch up. He also endured setbacks such as breaking his back and smashing his zygomatic arch (the bar of bone that runs horizontally along the side of the face). "I was going to school and working full time, and I needed reconstructive surgery on my face," he says. "I was frustrated and discouraged and close to giving up. But I knew it was a matter of long-term self-sustainability." So, Olmos persisted.




A rewarding career

After eight years, Olmos graduated with a fine arts and business degree. He celebrated this milestone by getting a job. "My partner was recruited by a company in Hawai'i, so we relocated," he says.



"The values instilled by my mother gave me the desire to pursue a career helping to elevate others," Olmos says. When he saw a job posting for a project manager at HMSA, he looked at the company's mission and purpose, which aligned with his own.

"I wanted to be a part of a company that cares about the people of Hawai'i and does something about it," he says. "If I can help improve the health of Hawai'i, the long journey it took to get here was worth it." 

Olmos' sister, Natalia, is still a musician. Scan the QR code to hear some of her music on YouTube.com.





E komo mai

In Hawaii, we take care of ohana. As an HMSA member, you're family to us. When you come to an HMSA Center, make yourself at home. And know that we'll take care of your health plan needs.

We'll help you:

- Answer questions and explain your health plan benefits and claims.
- Find a doctor.
- Pay your HMSA bill.
- And more.

Visit us at an HMSA Center in Honolulu, Pearl City, Hilo, Kahului, and Lihue.



Local, convenient locations and hours of operation at hmsa.com/centers or scan the QR code.

Come in. No appointment needed.
Open to non-HMSA members, too!

We're here with you.



Find your next Health Education Workshop

Free HMSA health education workshops.

Workshop dates and times are
subject to change.



Workstation Wellness: Work from Home Edition

Spending hours at a makeshift home workstation could lead to increased risk of repetitive motion disorders, poor posture, eyestrain, and a sedentary lifestyle. Learn how to stay healthy while working from home.

Online at hmsa.com
March 18, noon–1 p.m.

Forever Fit

Join us to focus on mobility and agility. Though geared toward seniors, all ages 18 and older are welcome.

HMSA Center in Honolulu
Jan. 23, 10–11 a.m.

HMSA Center in Pearl City
Jan. 27, 10–11 a.m.

HMSA Center in Kahului
Feb. 22, 11 a.m.–noon

HMSA Center in Hilo
March 8, 11 a.m.–noon

Hearty Advice

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. Get strategies for living better and learn how physical activity, smart nutritional choices, and relaxation can lower your risk.

HMSA Center in Kahului
Feb. 22, noon–1 p.m.

HMSA Center in Honolulu
Feb. 24, 10–11 a.m.

HMSA Center in Pearl City
Feb. 28, 10–11 a.m.

HMSA Center in Hilo
March 8, noon–1 p.m.

Online at hmsa.com
March 20, noon–1 p.m.

Visit hmsa.com/HealthEducation
or scan the QR code below.

Or call

1 (855) 329-5461,
option 1, to register.



stress less

words Summer Nakaishi



In a time when it's easy to get caught up in doing everything all at once, sometimes we need a reminder that it's OK to sit back, relax, and reflect. Start the new year inspired – curl up with any of these books and treat yourself to some well-deserved down time.

The Little Book of Lykke

By Meik Wiking

As the CEO of the Happiness Research Institute (yes, it's a real place!), Wiking has dedicated his life's work to study the concept of happiness, or *lykke* in Danish. He explains the recipe for happiness (trust, togetherness, money, health, freedom, and kindness) that contributes to our overall well-being and encourages readers to make positive changes to their daily routine.

Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less

By Greg McKeown

After accepting a business meeting on the day his daughter was born, McKeown learned that if you don't prioritize your life, someone else will. That led him on a journey to discover why people make questionable personal and professional choices. McKeown emphasizes that "the way of the essentialist" is not about getting less done, but about getting only the right things done. Every choice we make should be an action toward our most important life goal.

Do Nothing: How to Break Away from Overworking, Overdoing, and Underliving

By Celeste Headlee

Part labor relations history lesson, part practical advice, this book is for those addicted to being at optimal productivity levels at all times. Headlee encourages readers to prioritize relationships and shift our mindset from busyness to intentional rest for long-term mental, emotional, and physical benefits.

Breathe Like a Bear

By Kira Willey, illustrated by Anni Betts

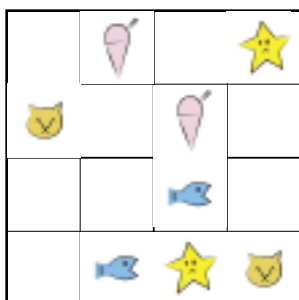
Incorporating mindfulness can be tough at any age, so how do we teach it to kids? This book, filled with 30 game-like exercises, is a great place to start. Kids can imagine they're blowing cups of hot chocolate, clapping like a thunderstorm, and you guessed it – exhaling grumpy energy like a bear.

keiki corner

Let's sudoku!

Did you know playing sudoku can make you smarter? Solving a sudoku puzzle helps you develop logic and problem-solving skills, look for and recognize patterns, and pay attention to details! What's not to love?

See if you can solve these sudoku puzzles:



7				3		2		
3		5						
	2	1	8			6		3
1			7				6	5
				5		7		
		2	3			1		
	3							
6	1		5			9		
2	5	4		1			8	

Pun times

A pun is a play on words, or a joke about words that may sound alike but have different meanings. Here are some puns to entertain your family and friends

What happens when a snowman throws a tantrum?

He has a meltdown.



What do you call an angry carrot?

A steamed veggie



What do you call a bear with no teeth?

A gummy bear!



What does corn say when it gets a compliment?

Aw, shucks!



What do you call a pig that practices karate?

A pork chop!



What does a spy do when they're cold?

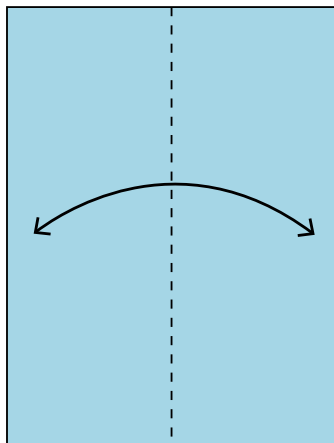
Go undercover.



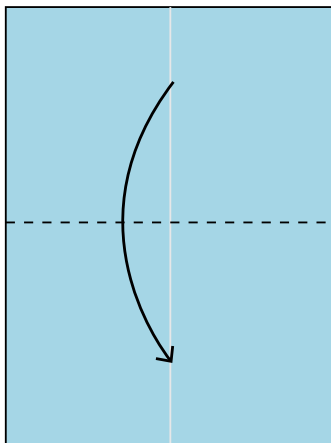
Easy origami hat

The Japanese art of paper folding isn't an ancient secret. With a little patience and a lot of paper, you'll be folding up a storm. Start with this easy hat you can decorate and wear yourself or give away as a gift.

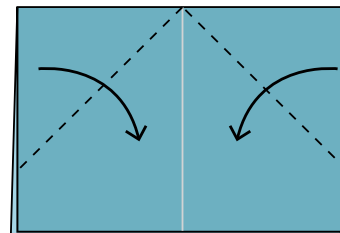
All you need is a rectangular piece of paper. Then:



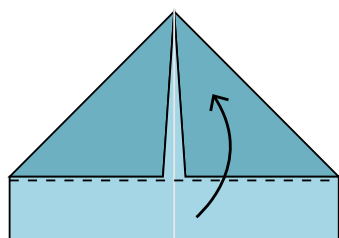
Step 1: Fold paper in half lengthwise (hot dog fold) then unfold.



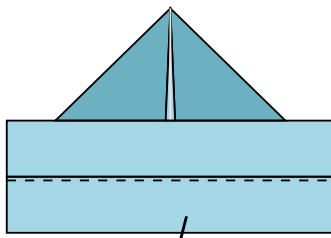
Step 2: Fold paper in half again, from top to bottom (hamburger fold) then unfold.



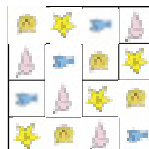
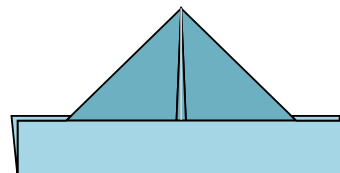
Step 3: Fold the left and right corners down to the center to form a triangle.



Step 4: Fold up the bottom flap along the base of the triangle.



Step 5: Repeat on the other side. You're done!



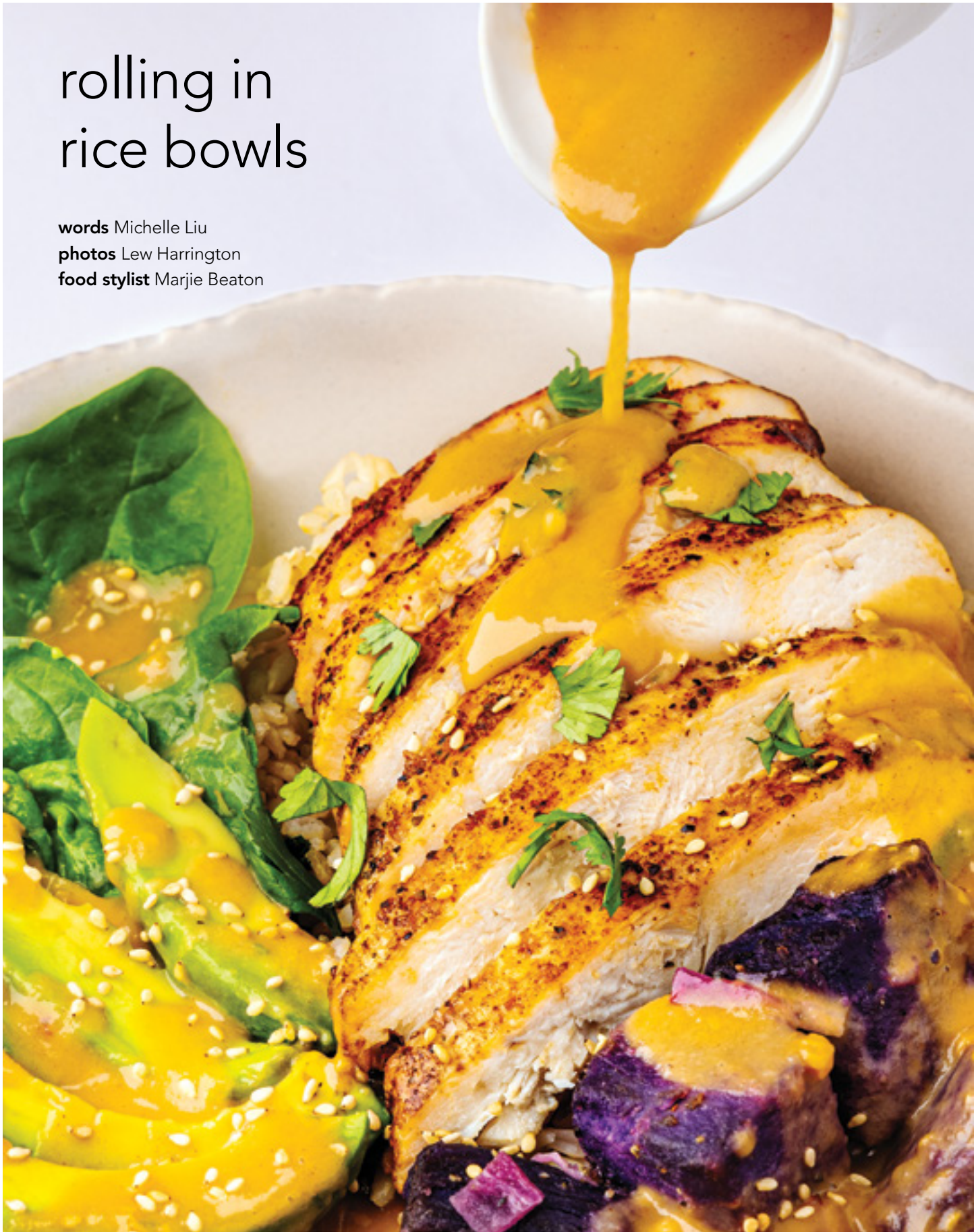
2	5	4	9	1	7	3	8	6
6	1	7	5	8	3	9	2	4
8	3	9	4	6	2	5	7	1
5	7	2	3	4	6	1	9	8
4	9	6	1	5	8	7	3	2
1	8	3	7	2	9	4	6	5
9	2	1	8	7	5	6	4	3
3	6	5	2	9	4	8	1	7
7	4	8	6	3	1	2	5	9

rolling in rice bowls

words Michelle Liu

photos Lew Harrington

food stylist Marjie Beaton





Roll into 2025 with these rice bowls that are lunch-friendly and perfect to take to the office. These colorful bowls are filled with fresh ingredients that will keep you filled and focused.

Chicken Rice Bowls

- 1 large Okinawan sweet potato, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 large red onion, diced
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- 1 garlic glove, minced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 2 Tbsp. creamy peanut butter
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. shoyu
- 1 Tbsp. sesame oil
- 2 cups brown rice, cooked
- 1 avocado, thinly sliced
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 1 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame seeds

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. On a baking sheet, toss potatoes and onion with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Bake until tender, 20 minutes.

In a large skillet, add 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium-high heat. Season chicken with garlic powder, ginger, salt, and pepper. Cook chicken until no longer pink, about 8 minutes each side. Let rest 10 minutes on a cutting board, then thinly slice.

In a small bowl, combine minced garlic, lime juice, peanut butter, honey, and shoyu. Whisk in sesame oil and remaining olive oil until smooth.

Divide rice among 6 bowls. Top with potato mixture, chicken, avocado, spinach, cilantro, and sesame seeds. Drizzle with dressing. Makes 6 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving: 590 calories, 19 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 55 mg cholesterol, 250 mg sodium, 78 g carbohydrate, 10 g fiber, 11 g sugar, 27 g protein

Salmon Bites Bowl

1 lb. skinless salmon fillet,
cut into 1-inch cubes
½ tsp. garlic powder
¼ tsp. ground ginger
Kosher salt
Freshly ground pepper
¼ cup shoyu
3 Tbsp. honey
1 tsp. sesame oil
1 tsp. rice wine vinegar
Oil spray
2 cups brown rice, cooked

Suggested toppings

Avocado
Edamame
Shredded carrots
Green onions
Sesame seeds

Season salmon with garlic powder, ground ginger, salt, and pepper. In a small bowl, whisk together shoyu, honey, and sesame oil. Pour half over the salmon. Toss to coat and marinate 20-30 minutes. Add vinegar to remaining sauce and set aside.

Preheat oven to 415 degrees F. Place seasoned salmon bites on baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Spray salmon with oil spray. Bake for 10 minutes until salmon is crispy and golden, flipping halfway through.

Drizzle reserved sauce over salmon bites. Assemble bowls by adding rice, salmon, and toppings. Makes 4 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (not including Kosher salt and suggested toppings): 680 calories, 22 g fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 1,000 mg sodium, 88 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 13 g sugar, 33 g protein



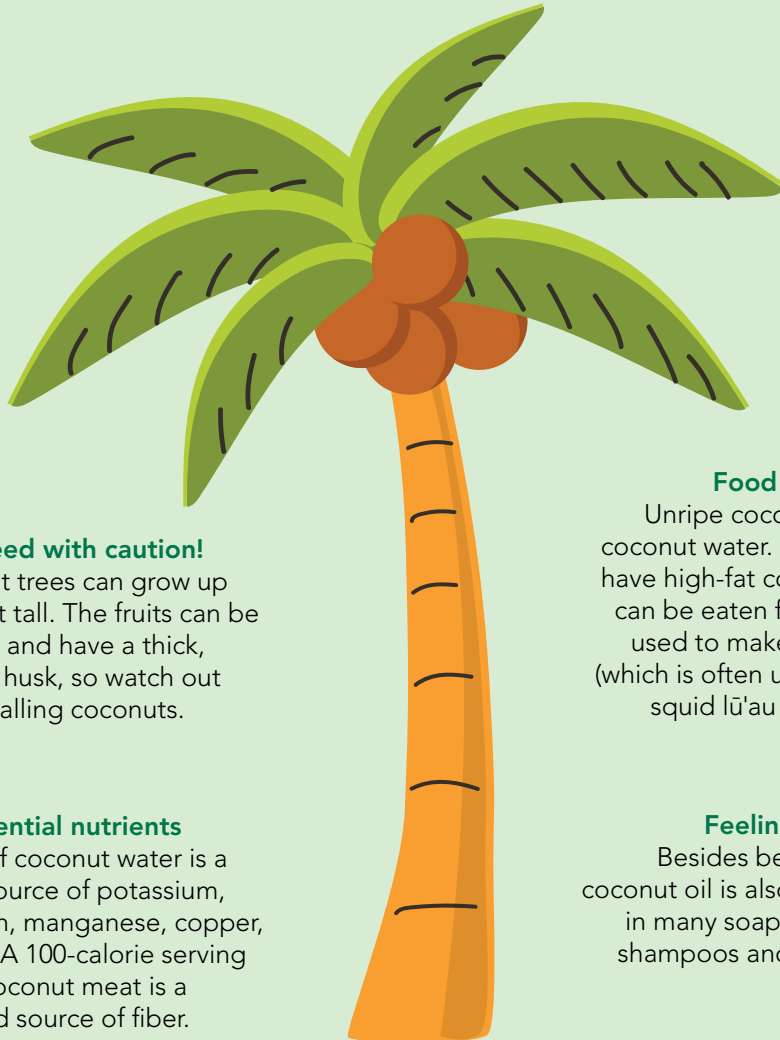
For a great cauliflower rice bowl recipe and ideas on what to do with leftover rice, visit islandscene.com/more.



the tree of life

words Michelle Liu

Coconut is key in Native Hawaiian culture. From carving the trunk to make a pahu (drum) to weaving its fronds into baskets and using husk fibers to build canoes, almost every part of the coconut tree can be used. Here are some fun facts about the coconut palm and its fruit.



Proceed with caution!

Coconut trees can grow up to 100-feet tall. The fruits can be heavy and have a thick, fibrous husk, so watch out for falling coconuts.

Essential nutrients

A cup of coconut water is a good source of potassium, magnesium, manganese, copper, and iron. A 100-calorie serving of coconut meat is a good source of fiber.

Food source

Unripe coconuts provide coconut water. Mature coconuts have high-fat coconut meat that can be eaten fresh or dried or used to make coconut milk (which is often used in dishes like squid lū'au and haupia).

Feeling fresh

Besides being edible, coconut oil is also a key ingredient in many soaps, lotions, and shampoos and conditioners.

Tropical import

Coconuts aren't native to Hawai'i. Early Polynesian settlers planted the first coconut grove here hundreds of years ago.





green smoothies

words Kristen Nemoto Jay

photos Rae Huo

food styling Cedric Fujita

I'm constantly on the hunt to save time. As a busy mom of two kids under 4, mornings are especially hectic to get them both ready, fed, and scooted on to daycare and preschool. Therefore, eating breakfast becomes an afterthought for myself and my husband. We're lucky if we get to sit down for a moment, let alone enjoy a morning meal together.

Plan ahead

To help manage the morning chaos while ensuring we have breakfasts on hand, I make smoothies on Sundays that we can enjoy during the week. This has worked wonders for our family – it's also an easy meal to take with us when we're on the go.

Why green?

"Green" smoothies are usually packed with mostly leafy greens such as kale, spinach, and even bok choy. The greens have little to no flavor once they're blended with other yummy ingredients. It's also an easy way to incorporate more greens into our diet.

Here are my top three green smoothie recipes, which can be consumed right away or stored in your freezer. Tip: If you're storing the smoothies in the freezer, opt for a wide-mouth glass mason jar and leave an inch of space between the smoothie and the lid, as the smoothie will expand when frozen. And always remember to wash fresh produce under clean, running water before blending to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.

Stars align green smoothie

Actor Reese Witherspoon got this recipe from fellow actor Kerry Washington after she sat next to her at an awards show and couldn't help but notice her glowing skin. When Witherspoon asked what her secret was, Washington then revealed her secret weapon: her fave green smoothie recipe. Witherspoon willingly shared this recipe on her Instagram page, which I tried and tested. It's delicious!

- 1 head of romaine lettuce
- ½ cup spinach
- 1 banana
- 1 apple, core removed and quartered
- 1 pear, core removed and quartered
- 1 lemon, rind removed
- 1 celery stalk, cut into chunks
- 3-4 cups coconut water

Chop the romaine lettuce and wash thoroughly along with the spinach. Next, pack the greens on the bottom of the blender. Add the banana, apple, pear, lemon, and celery. Pour in coconut water. Seal and blend. Makes 3-4 servings.

Note: Witherspoon uses two heads of romaine lettuce and ½ cup of coconut water.

Since we're always looking to save time, I found that taking out the extra head of lettuce and adding more coconut water helps it blend faster.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (based on 4 cups coconut water): 170 calories, 1 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 100 mg sodium, 41 g carbohydrate, 9 g fiber, 26 g sugar, 4 g protein



Tropical green protein smoothie

This green smoothie reminds me of lounging by the pool or beach. The mixture of the tangy and sweet pineapple, with the creaminess of the banana, almond butter, and coconut milk churns this recipe into a luscious treat that tastes more like a milkshake than greens in a glass.

- 1 cup or handful of kale (frozen or fresh)
- 2 cups or handfuls of spinach (frozen or fresh)
- 1 banana
- 1 cup frozen pineapple
- 2 tablespoons almond butter
- 3 cups coconut milk

Fill the blender first with the kale and spinach. Then add the banana, frozen pineapple, and almond butter. Pour in the coconut milk, seal the blender with its cover, blend thoroughly (about 1-1½ minutes, 1½ minutes if most of the produce is frozen). Makes 4 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving: 440 calories, 41 g fat, 33 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 55 mg sodium, 21 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 6 g sugar, 6 g protein

'Ōma'o Man's green smoothie

Troy Yasuda, aka the 'Ōma'o man, is the inventor of the "green smoothie," which is popular at Kailua Town Farmer's Market on Sunday mornings. My cousin treated me to the nutritious meal in a jar one Sunday and I was immediately hooked. Thankfully, Yasuda is so adamant on helping people get healthier that he lists all of the ingredients of his popular drink right in front of his smoothie truck. I added amounts here and there and this is our version.

- 1 cup kale
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 1 head romaine lettuce, chopped
- 1 head baby bok choy
- 1 sprig mint leaves
- 1 banana (frozen or fresh)
- 1 cup mango (frozen or fresh)
- 3-4 cups water (original recipe calls for apple juice)

Pack the greens in the blender and then add mint leaves, banana, mango, and water. Use more or less water to taste. Makes 3-4 servings.

Approximate nutrient analysis per serving (based on 4 servings with water): 80 calories, 1 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium, 17 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 10 g sugar, 6 g protein



Kāpeku ka leo o ke kai, o ho'oilo ka malama.

*When the voice of the sea is harsh,
the winter months have come.*



Island Scene
PO Box 3850
Honolulu HI 96812-3850
islandscene.com



Keeping you healthy no matter where you are in life.

We're here with you – from when you're just starting out,
growing your family, or enjoying retirement.

Your health is in good hands with access to quality care,
freedom of choice, and the peace of mind HMSA provides.

For the good times. For the tough times.
For lifetimes.

Learn more at hmsa.com or scan the QR code.



1010-1091500