

A Legacy of Aloha for Living Treasures

The month of September holds special significance for seniors, caregivers, and those who provide support and care to seniors throughout the country.

On September 27, 1983, the third week of September was proclaimed National Adult Day Services Week by President Ronald Regan and continues to be celebrated annually. The opportunity to raise awareness of Adult Day Programs, it also highlights services that are positively impacting and enhancing the lives of seniors. Additionally, the Sunday following Labor Day is National Grandparents Day - dedicated to Grandparents and the special influence and connection they have with their families and children. Both celebrations are an opportunity to acknowledge the joy, wisdom, love, and guidance that seniors bring to our lives.

At Ohana Pacific Health, we have the honor and privilege of spending quality time with seniors who have led



Arline Matsunaga

a life of service to others and utilized their special gifts and talents for the greater good. Such is the story for retired Nurse Arline Matsunaga and retired Teacher Merle Honjiyo.

Arline Matsunaga is often referred to as kind, nurturing, and always seeking an opportunity to help others throughout both her personal and professional endeavors. Arline attended Queen's Nursing School and eventually served at Wilcox and Kauai Veterans Memorial Hospitals where she retired in 1990 after 25 years of dedicated service. She attributes her desire to become a nurse to her mother Kikuno. "She (Kikuno) taught me to be independent. She was always active, never about herself, taught us it's never a good idea to be selfish



Merle Honjiyo

– she was a sweet woman." Described as a "go-getter" by her family, Arline

was an avid tennis player, enjoyed sewing and was very artistic – often collecting foliage for creating unique holiday wreaths and ornaments. On her most vivid memories as a nurse, “Anything you do for someone, they appreciate it and it made me feel good. I became a nurse because I wanted to help somebody who needed help. Everyone I helped was always so grateful.”

Merle Honjiyo’s kind-hearted demeanor are felt by all who attend the Kaua’i Adult Day Health Program. A graduate of the University of Hawaii Manoa in 1959, Merle was also the recipient of the Dole Award for Home Economics. Her first teaching job was at Nanaikopono Elementary School followed by several other schools throughout Oahu. Merle moved to Kaua’i and became a Family Development teacher at Waimea High School and then taught Home Economics for 10 years at Kaua’i High School where she retired after 20 years of teaching. Merle’s desire to serve continued well beyond her retirement. She became a volunteer at Wilcox Hospital’s information desk while also enjoying Japanese Traditional Dance Odori, taught to her by her dear friend Aiko Nakaya. “I’ve always wanted to teach, support, and be around children. My best advice for children



(From L-R) Rochelle Mendoza, Kaulana Mossman, Mayor Derek Kawakami, Janet Agni, Connie Vidal, Juvie Bercasio

Mayor Derek Kawakami presenting proclamation for National Adult Day Services Week

today, is to learn how to give back, not only receive. Be thankful for anything you receive, love one another, and remember that life is limited and short, might as well make the most of what you have.”

Arline Matsunaga and Merle Honjiyo’s contributions, passion for helping others, and legacy of service throughout their lifetime, is the epitome of service with Aloha. Let us remember to count our blessings, be grateful for what we have, and never forget those that came before us – the role models and mentors that blazed a trail and a foundation for leading with a servant’s heart. After all, as a very wise Kupuna once said, “It doesn’t cost anything to be kind, so be kind to one another.” 🌿

