



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING

**News Release**

**NEIL ABERCROMBIE**  
GOVERNOR

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**STATE HONORS HAWAII COUNTY OUTSTANDING OLDER  
AMERICAN AWARDEE SHIRLEY ITO**

*Governor Traveling Statewide to Congratulate Honorees in Each County*

HONOLULU – While in Hilo this Friday, July 19, Gov. Neil Abercrombie will honor Older Americans Month Hawaii County (East Hawaii) awardee Shirley Ito in a ceremony held in the Hilo State Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.

Every year, eight kupuna -- one male and one female from each county -- are selected as Older American volunteer honorees for the exemplary work they do to aid and support their individual communities.

After proclaiming May as “Older Americans Month” in Hawaii on May 3, the Governor recognized honorees from Honolulu, Betty Goya and John McGuire; Kauai County, Dr. Lucy Miller and William Neil Rapozo, Sr.; and Hawaii County (West Hawaii), Peter Hoffmann, at events on their respective islands. Honorees from Maui County, Diane Logsdon and Richard Endsley, will be meeting with the Governor in a ceremony on Maui later this month.

Ito, a Hilo resident, was nominated for the award by Hui Okinawa. Ito has volunteered with Hui Okinawa for the past 10 years, serving on its Board of Directors since January 2011. Ito assists in organizing Hui Okinawa’s annual summer five-day Cultural Day

(more)

Camp for children by helping teachers with crafts and other projects and accompanying the students on field trips.

“It’s folks like Shirley Ito that build the social fabric of a community and make it strong,” stated Hui Okinawa in the nomination letter. “In any organization or club you need members who are willing to actively participate and lead activities if the group is to continue to be a vibrant contributor to community life. That’s Shirley!”

At the youthful age of 74, Ito has received Hui Okinawa’s Hatarachaa Award (2003) and Chibayaa Award (2009) for her dedication and diligent service.

In addition to her outstanding dedication to Hui Okinawa, Ito has dedicated her time to volunteer for ARC of Hilo cleanups, serve as chair on the ARC’s Vision and Hearing Programs, and serve as president and regional chair for the Lions Club.

“Older Americans Month celebrations acknowledge the value that older adults continue to bring to our communities by applauding recent achievements of local kupuna and inviting them to share the activities they do to unleash the power of age,” said Wes Lum, director of the Executive Office on Aging.

This year’s Older Americans Month theme – “Unleash the Power of Age” – emphasizes the important role of our kupuna. Seniors across the nation are being recognized as productive, active, and influential members of society.

For more information and to find ongoing opportunities to celebrate and support older Americans, contact the Executive Office on Aging at (808) 586-0100 or local Area Agency on Aging by visiting the Aging and Disability Resource Center at [www.hawaiiadrc.org](http://www.hawaiiadrc.org) or (808) 643-2372.

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