



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING

News Release

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HAWAI'I HONORS SENIOR VOLUNTEERS THIS 'OLDER AMERICANS MONTH'

HONOLULU -- As part of Older Americans Month in May, the Hawai'i State Executive Office on Aging has joined with county Area Agencies on Aging and communities around the state to recognize eight outstanding senior citizen volunteers. They are: Marjorie Mrasek and Joseph Ah Choy of Hawai'i County; Myrtle Nanbara and Ed Hayashi of Honolulu County; Nancy Fiertes Fuller and David Walker of Kaua'i County; and Michelle Paularena and Matthew Napier of Maui County. (More information on each of the honorees is attached.) These volunteers represent the thousands of seniors who support their families, friends and communities every day.

"The diversity and vitality of today's older Americans spans three generations and is well deserving of our respect and admiration," said Wesley Lum, executive director of the Executive Office on Aging. They have lived through wars and hard times, as well as periods of unprecedented prosperity. They pioneered new technologies in medicine, communications and industry while spearheading a cultural revolution that won equal rights for minorities, women and Americans with disabilities.

"These remarkable achievements demonstrate the strength and character of older Americans and underscore the debt of gratitude we owe to the generations that have given our society so much."

Older Americans are a core component of service delivery to seniors – they volunteer at group meal sites and deliver food to homebound seniors; they act as escorts and provide

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transportation for older adults who cannot drive; they help seniors with home repair, shopping and errands; and they provide vital counseling, information and referral services. Their energy and commitment reminds all Americans – not just senior citizens and their caregivers – to do their part to enhance the quality of life for older generations.

Older Americans are living longer and are more active than ever before. With the aging of the baby boomer generation – the largest in our nation's history – America's senior population is expected to number 71.5 million by 2030.

In Hawai'i, seniors are also living longer and more active lives. There were more than 195,000 people age 65 years or older in 2010, about 14 percent of the total state population. This percentage is anticipated to increase to a remarkable 25 percent in year 2035 while the proportion of those who are 85 years of age and older is expected to double. Our life expectancy in Hawai'i of 80.5 years or age is higher than the U.S. overall life expectancy, which is 76.8 years.

More than 76 percent of Hawai'i seniors report that they engage in leisure time physical activity, and this year's Older Americans Month theme – *Never Too Old to Play!* – puts a spotlight on the important role older adults play in sharing their experience, wisdom, and understanding; as well as passing on that knowledge to other generations in a variety of significant ways. These celebrations will recognize the value that older adults continue to bring to Hawai'i communities through spirited participation in social and faith groups, service organizations, and other activities.

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

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