

## ROTARY CLUB OF HONOLULU

### MINUTES

MAY 24, 2022 MEETING

After a brief pre-meeting Zoom social session which turned quite serious due to the events in Texas, **Past President Paul Saito** called the May 24, 2022, meeting of the Rotary Club of Honolulu to order at 12 noon. He welcomed all those in attendance and announced the Rotary participants. **Rick Tabor's** inspiration consisted of a Sunday morning pastor/golf joke, a day brightener. **Jessica Lani Rich** led the Pledge of Allegiance and **Lee LaBrash** the singing of the National Anthem. Meeting visitors included Danielle Haviland and Kevin Parr from the UK. **Martha** gave **Reese Liggett's** announcement about the zoo painting party on Saturday, June 11, from 8 AM to noon; lunch to be provided. It was pointed out the parade that day would be ending at the park, creating chaos. So heads up for possible updated news about the project. **PP Paul** sent the group into breakout sessions to discuss what they binge watched during the pandemic.

**Rick Tabor** introduced the speaker, Derrick Ariyoshi, who is the County Executive for the Elderly Affairs Division which is in the designated Area Agency on Aging for the City & County of Honolulu. For his efforts during the pandemic, Mazie Hirono presented him with the 'Ilima Award for Governing Leadership the Hawaii Pacific Gerontological Society and distinction as an 'Ohana Hero. Mr. Ariyoshi presented his comments around four topics or themes.

First, the uniqueness of Oahu's population: There has been a 60% increase in the number of kupuna, while other age groups have diminished increases. Kupuna now make up 28% of Oahu's population. 36% of the kupuna are on disability. 19% live alone. 14 % have no Internet. 30-40% struggle financially.

Second, the purpose of his division. His agency on aging is supported by federal and state funds to help those kupuna staying in their homes (make arrangements to provide meals and in home services), support senior and adult day care centers, and provide counseling and mental support. These services are not designed for kupuna who have resources or kupuna who are eligible for Medicaid.

Third, he spoke inspirationally about the work done by his agency and other community agencies when the pandemic struck our shores. The media's well-advertised empty grocery store shelves due to hoarding, gave rise to the desperation of how to help in-home kupuna get food. Initially his agency, the Aloha United Way and AARP worked together on the problem, reaching out to other community agencies, which eventually resulted in the 50-organization Kupuna Food Coalition. They initially had no government funding and did a telethon to raise funds from local businesses. Many kupuna could not get to the drive-through locations handing out food. The coalition worked with restaurateurs and St. Francis to distribute meals. Similarly to the food problem, getting mental health and social services to kupuna at home was an issue. They developed wrap-around services supplied by those delivering the food (e.g., wellness checks, social contact, counseling). Then vaccines came into being. Using a similar playbook help was given to kupuna to break the language and Internet barriers. The AUW and St. Francis created a vaccine registration telephone line, which kupuna DO know how to use, with translator support for the many languages of our kupuna. Housing projects presented special challenges. Kaiser and other stood up to get vaccines to those areas. Mr. Ariyoshi said in

times of desperation, great inspiration is brought forward. That is what happened during this time. In the two pandemic years 1.2 million kupuna were vaccinated, \$7.8 million was raised, 200 people a day received vaccinations.

Fourth, Mr. Ariyoshi spoke about how the mission of Rotary resonates with what his agencies did during the pandemic. Rotary can partner. The pandemic presented opportunities for inspiration. And instead of coming top down from government officials, the inspiration and support were empowered by the community, from bottom up. **PP Paul** thanked Mr. Ariyoshi for his talk and opened the meeting for Q&A. After the singing of Hawaii Aloha, he adjourned the meeting.

**Nancy White**, Scribe