

# Ohana Happenings

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## *Makana Pono Recipient Irene Horodecki*



*IRENE HORODECKI*

**Volunteer Coordinator,  
Islands Hospice Town**

NONPROFIT:  
**ACCESSURF**

*From Left to Right: Irene Horodecki and Cara Short*

While at the beach one day, Irene Horodecki saw firsthand the impact that nonprofit AccesSurf has on the lives of children and adults with disabilities.

**“It warmed my heart to see the children with cognitive disabilities get excited as they were brought into the water to learn to surf,” she recalled.**

Irene has admired AccesSurf’s unique programs and services for the past couple of years, but this is her first time supporting the nonprofit. Islands Hospice’s Makana Pono program allows her to provide AccesSurf with a \$5,000 donation so it can carry on its mission to provide ocean access to anyone with a disability.

One of AccesSurf’s most popular programs is Day at the Beach, held the first Saturday of every month at White Plains Beach Park. Participants with physical or cognitive disabilities can experience an “ocean of possibilities” through assisted swimming, floating and surfing made possible with the help of trained volunteers and specialized equipment.

“I’ve seen how they carry a paraplegic or amputee out into the ocean and help them get on a surfboard,” said Irene. “That’s something they might not have been able to do without the help of AccesSurf.”

As a volunteer coordinator, Irene sends out condolence cards and letters to bereaved family members, works with volunteers and helps maintain their files and hourly reports. Islands Hospice is proud to recognize her excellent work as this month’s Makana Pono recipient. Congratulations, Irene!





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## ***Hospice Hero West Oahu***

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DALE KIM, RN

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***Growing up in Hawaii, Dale Kim always dreamed of traveling and seeing new places. At 18, he joined the U.S. Air Force, which allowed him to visit many parts of the mainland and countries overseas.***

Dale eventually found his way back to the states and is now working as a weekend registered nurse out of Islands Hospice's West Oahu office. For the past seven years, Dale has been helping with triage and patient care in homes or in Islands Hospice facilities. A typical day consists of admitting new patients, conducting visits for symptoms management and working triage at night.

Early in his career, Dale worked in the emergency room and the medical surgical ward. He became interested in the field of palliative medicine and hospice after losing his father to cancer. "When I initially applied at Islands Hospice, I gave myself a

year to gain as much experience as I possibly could in the field of hospice medicine. Well, that was seven years ago. I am still very passionate about my job and have no signs of slowing down."

Dale's job allows him to provide assistance when people need it most. He remembers helping an elderly spouse of a patient move furniture at their home to make room for new medical equipment. She was extremely thankful for the help but felt bad for calling after his shift had ended. "She gave me a hug and broke down crying due to being overwhelmed, dealing with her husband's terminal disease and so many things that were happening around her," Dale remembered.

"As much as I have this passion for this job, it can still become very stressful at times," Dale said.

**"It is vital to find a balance — that could include talking things over with your friends, co-workers, chaplains, management, etc. If you ever find yourself getting burned out, do not go at it alone, open up and talk things over to people around you, people who you love and trust."**



# Maui Corner



LAUREN HEMA

Weekend Triage/PRN nurse

## How long have you worked at Islands Hospice?

Since May 2016.

## What do you do at Islands Hospice?

I am the weekend triage nurse. Mon/Tues PRN nurse. I am responsible for taking care of our Hospice families, triaging over the weekends/after-hours. When calls come in, I better be ready to put my roller skates on.

## What is a typical workday like?

There are no typical workdays in my honest opinion, especially on the weekends. It greatly depends on the census and acuity of our patients and families. There are few laid back weekends with several to no calls, then there are the weekends that are non-stop phone calls, visits, emergencies. Boom, boom, boom! No two days are ever the same.

## Have you held any other positions here?

When I started my journey with Islands Hospice, I was originally hired as a PRN RN.

## What is your favorite part about working at Islands Hospice?

Gosh there are so many! My favorite part about working at Islands Hospice is being able to be a part of this grand scheme called End-of-Life. Death can be such a beautiful thing and the gift of being present with these families is so rewarding. I also appreciate the diversity, flexibility, and autonomy. I encounter so many families from all walks of life and they all have a story to tell, memories to share, tears that fall and hands to hold. There's always something, even if it is small and insignificant that happens in each day. It's apparently enough to stay inspired.

## Do you have any special memories from your time working here?

I have more than a handful of special memories. I can't just choose one. I'll just say, that there are many families that have impacted my life and have helped me realize that I am exactly where I need to be in this moment in time.

## Where did you grow up? What is your background?

Born and raised in Pukalani, Maui. I grew up in the same family home for all of my life. Went to Pukalani Elementary, then Kalama, then Maui High. Dropped out of high school as a "repeat sophomore". Had a few babies by then, decided to get my GED 1997. Life and more babies happened. Decided to try the "school" thing again after my last child was born. Did nursing school and passed. It was unbelievably tough but totally worth it. My parents are still around doing well, I still have all of my siblings. I am grateful.

## What inspired you to work at Islands Hospice?

I had a friend that kept telling me to apply. I wasn't ready for that, let alone ready to begin my RN career at the EOL stage. It was scary, I was not mentally prepared for it, and I didn't "choose" to do it, but I am here now.

## What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love to sleep when I can and do absolutely nothing. I help take care of my Grand-daughter Kimi when I have time off during the weekdays. I love being at the ocean and getting sunburnt, but that hasn't happened in a while.

## Is there anything else you want to share with your fellow colleagues?

Big shout out to my fellow hospice colleagues! Each one of you has played a significant role and is part of who I am as a hospice nurse and person. I've taken bits and pieces of each of you and tucked them away in my files, so thank you for sharing your experiences and knowledge.





## Hospice Hero Town

LAVIE RAYMOND, PATIENT CARE COORDINATOR

*After almost 25 years of working in hospice care, one patient stands out the most to patient care coordinator Lavie Raymond. This patient was unapproachable, stubborn and didn't let anyone close to him, including his own family.*

After a lot of patience, Lavie finally broke down his tough exterior. She discovered a man who just wanted companionship, someone to tell life stories to and someone to talk with about his photography.

The two became close, and Lavie was the only one he would listen to. When he was near death, the patient's daughters called Lavie, but she was out of town. "I told him, 'I'm on my way home, but don't wait for me.'" She gave him the time she was landing in Honolulu and said she would call him the minute we touch ground.

When Lavie called, the patient's daughter told her that as soon as the phone rang, he took his last breath. "This was back around 1998 and it still brings tears to my eyes every now and then when he pops in my mind."

Lavie's long career in hospice has allowed her to help many patients in varying roles. A jack-of-all-trades, she has provided patient care as a CNA, covered intake, billing and DCSA for Team F. She has served as a back-up receptionist, managed electronics and assisted IT, helped HR with new hires and QAPI with auditing reports. She even served on the company planning committee, where she helped plan parties and picnics for Islands Hospice employees.

Family is most important to Lavie, and she cherishes every moment with her husband, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She also regularly attends church, looking forward to the uplifting messages that help her feel rejuvenated for work week after week.

"I love every minute of every struggle and every experience I've had while doing hospice," Lavie explains. "Hospice has given me a new set of eyes and allowed me to grow and see things and have a better outlook on life."

## Volunteer Spotlight



MONA GUSHIKEN

Retiree Mona Gushiken gladly spends three hours of her week providing administrative support at Islands Hospice. It's her way of giving back to an organization that supported her during her time of need.



**"Islands Hospice helped my family and I care for my father in his final days, and I wanted to give them my time in appreciation," she said.**



Mona has been volunteering at Islands Hospice's Town location for about one year. She does data entry and other administrative activities, which include entering the volunteer activity note forms into the system, filing, collating and stuffing letters for mailing.

Her favorite part about Islands Hospice is the team she gets to spend time with. "I enjoy working with the people," she said.



# ASK THE EXPERT



LEILA WILLIAMS  
RN, QAPI Director

## *Creating an environment for quality care*

*When it comes to health care, and especially hospice care, the importance of quality may seem obvious. When we provide our patients with high-quality care, it makes a difference in their level of comfort, helps them manage the pain and symptoms of their disease, and allows them to have a better quality of life.*

The federal Conditions of Participation (COPs) require that every hospice provider must develop, implement and maintain a QAPI program in their organization. By following these federal quality care guidelines, it not only allows our organization to continue operating as a hospice and receive federal funding, but also achieve the highest level of patient care.

That's where QAPI comes in. QAPI stands for Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement. QA is a process that creates standards of service excellence. It's a retrospective attempt to analyze service and process failures. PI is a preemptive analysis of processes and procedures to prevent or decrease recurrence of identified challenges. It evaluates and continuously monitors effectiveness of new interventions implemented. It's our organization's system of checks and balances. It enables and ensures every employee performs quality work which impacts our patients' quality of life.

Islands Hospice's QAPI program touches every department and employee. Just like the name says, not only do we assure quality through audits, but we help improve performance through education and training.

**We ensure all our processes, from administrative to staffing to clinical care, follow best practices in the industry. In doing so, we create an environment that consistently provides high quality care and allows for continuous improvement in our work.**

QAPI is data driven and focuses on outcomes. It starts with all of us. By involving every level of our team, we can effectively identify root causes leading to a greater impact in patient care.

