



NEWS FROM LKOC

Volume 2025 Issue 2

October 2025

Aloha LKOC Members and Supporters,

As we move into our 78th year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the following...

We are truly blessed to call Kailua home - where both residents and businesses alike share a sense of community pride and identity and are committed to helping Kailua thrive.

Much of this sense of community pride and identity can be credited to the early efforts of organizations like the Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle, which began making impactful contributions to Kailua almost eight decades ago! From organizing neighborhood cleanups and planting thousands of trees, to involving local schools in beautification and anti-litter initiatives, our LKOC volunteers have long been at the heart of positive changes for Kailua. We have championed the protection of Kailua's wetlands and natural scenic beauty, while cultivating a strong sense of stewardship throughout our growing town. Today, our work in beautification, education, and advocacy continues with the same passion - and we can all take pride in the role we've played, and continue to play, in shaping the Kailua we know and love.

Community pride and identity is also nurtured through our much-anticipated annual "I Love Kailua" Town Party, which we have been privileged to host for the past 30-plus years as our way of giving back to the community that supports us. While it brings residents and visitors together to celebrate all that Kailua has to offer, it is more than just a celebration. It is a time for neighbors to connect, exchange ideas, explore shared goals, and learn about the wide variety of activities and services available that help keep Kailua such a vibrant community.

The Town Party has also been generously supported by many local Kailua businesses over the years, demonstrating how dedicated community-minded organizations and the local business sector can build meaningful, long-lasting partnerships and relationships to achieve shared goals. Similarly, LKOC's decades-long collaboration with city and state entities and other community organizations continues to play a significant role in enhancing the livability and sustainability of our town.

We owe immense gratitude to our founding members from the late 1940s for their vision, dedication, and unwavering commitment, not only to pursuing their goals and seeing them realized, but also for inspiring generations to continue this work. To all those who have followed in their footsteps - and continue to follow - we offer our heartfelt thanks. Your steadfast support over the years has allowed LKOC to further its enduring mission of keeping Kailua clean, green, and beautiful!

Mahalo from all of us at LKOC!

Diane Harding,
LKOC President

P.S. You are warmly welcomed to join our hour-long monthly Board meetings, held via Zoom at 9:30 AM on the second Monday of each month. Everyone is welcome (not just our board members), and we would love to have you attend to get a first-hand look at what we do and how we work to fulfill our mission! Just email us at lani-kailua@outdoorcircle.org, and we'll make sure you receive a meeting notice and zoom login details.



“I Love Kailua” Town Party

On April 27, LKOC hosted its 30th “I Love Kailua” Town Party, which, as always, was a wonderful opportunity to enjoy shopping, entertainment, family activities, and of course, delicious food!

LKOC is proud to present this annual event celebrating Kailua, where all profits from proceeds go towards our beautification projects in Kailua.

This year, the Town Party was dedicated to one of our long-time LKOC leaders, Paula Ress, who was a guiding force for us for so many years, and whose recent passing touched us all.

A huge mahalo to our hundreds of dedicated volunteers who make it all happen and to our generous sponsors this year: Alexander & Baldwin, Adventist Health Castle, Hardware Hawaii, Buzz’s, The Food Company, Kailua Condos LLC, Pacific Pool & Spa, Lanikai Brewing Company, and Classic Waves Boutique.

Special thanks to First Hawaiian Bank, Aloha Junk Man, Salvation Army, and Bank of Hawaii, whose help and support on the day of the event is so appreciated.

SAVE THE DATE! Next year’s Town Party: Sunday, April 26, 2026!

CALL FOR ARTISTS! LKOC is seeking submissions for the 2026 event’s signature artwork.

Visit our **Town Party** webpage for details: www.lkoc.org/Town-Party.html



Beautiful monstera and red heliconia center stage decoration by Gail Hutchinson



New Trees Beautify Keolu Drive

Following the April Town Party (which raises funds to beautify Kailua), and in keeping with its promise to the community, LKOC completed a new tree planting project on Keolu Drive in Enchanted Lake. On May 9, 2025, ten beautiful milo and silver trumpet trees were planted along an unshaded stretch of this busy thoroughfare.

The community event was held in coordination with the city Division of Urban Forestry (DUF), through whom City Council Resolution 25-064 was approved to accept the trees as a gift from LKOC to the city.

At the event, DUF Community Forestry Program Manager Navin Tagore described the process involved with this undertaking, and how community organizations such as LKOC can get involved with projects like this one. Others in attendance spoke about planting projects and initiatives being undertaken by the Outdoor Circle, the Citizen Forester Program, and Smart Trees Pacific. The city will water the trees twice a week for two years to ensure they will thrive.

Special thanks to LKOC Beautification Chair, Steve Mechler, for pursuing this project since first envisioned back in 2023.

To view a slideshow video of the Keolu Drive tree planting event, visit our **Beautification Projects** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/Beautification-Projects.html#project-updates

To view an entertaining and informative YouTube video of an earlier LKOC tree installation on Mokapu Road in 2007, which exemplifies how LKOC collaborates with city entities to achieve its tree planting goals, visit our **What’s New** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/Whats-New.html.

Or you can view the video on the Outdoor Circle YouTube channel at: https://youtu.be/nsCmcOMO2yE?si=3ZVW6ACuodnWI_S0



Some of our enthusiastic tree planters (Left to right): Diane Harding, Wai Lee, Bob Ress, Alex Ress, and Clare Connors



Spring General Membership Meeting & Luncheon

On May 14, 2025, LKOC held its annual General Membership Meeting and Luncheon at Banyans Craft Kitchen in Kailua, where we elected our new Board of Directors for 2025-2026, our 78th year!

Guests were treated to a lovely fashion show hosted by Classic Waves Boutique, a delicious chef-curated meal from award winning Chef Sidney Wilcox, and an informative talk by guest speaker Roxanne Adams, Division of Urban Forestry Administrator, who gave her insights about the division’s oversight of the planting and maintenance of Oahu’s city trees in our parks, on our streets, and at city facilities.

To view a slideshow video of the event, including the fashion show, visit our **Activities and Events** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/activities-and-events.html#GMM



Lei Garden to Enhance “Learning to Grow” Program

We are happy to announce that a newly refurbished lei garden will soon be operational within our “Learning to Grow” (LTG) program at the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC).



Newly Refurbished Lei Garden



Learning Plant Propagation

The lei garden, next to the LTG Nursery, was originally established by the Garden Club of Honolulu (GCH) several decades ago. However, in recent years, GCH left the area in LKOC’s care. Since then, while it had been kept free of overgrowth, it had not been operational.

Now, with recent grant funding from GCH and other donors, new irrigation has been installed, and we look forward to a flourishing garden for our students to learn about tropical and native flowers and plants suitable for lei

making, as well as their care and propagation. New varieties have already been planted and are being lovingly cared for by the LTG students.

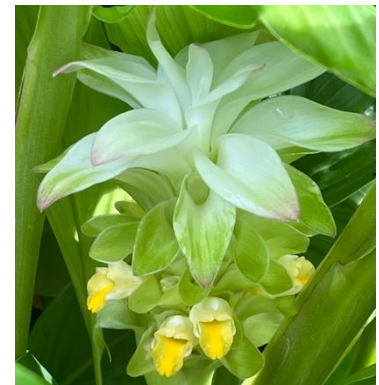
Other LTG News

A recent August visit to the LTG Nursery by Hawaii Senator Mazie Hirono’s staff and Garden Club of Honolulu members was an exciting event for our students and volunteers and may lead to future collaboration and possible financial program support. Warden Guillonta met with the group to welcome them before the nursery visit, where students and LTG Nursery Manager Jamie Toraason led garden tours.

The students take such pride in the work they are doing, including providing nutritious fruits (lilikoi, avocado, ulu and more) and fresh vegetables (eggplant, sweet potato, lettuce, fresh spices, and more) for the facility cafeteria. They have created a thriving spice garden from which they will soon be drying and grinding spices!

LTG students are also caring for plants that will be given away at our Arbor Day Tree Giveaway to be held on November 8.

For more information on our programs at WCCC, visit our **LKOC/WCCC Partnership** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/lkocwccc-partnership.html



Turmeric Blossom in the LTG spice garden, whose roots will soon be harvested, dried, and ground.



Everybody Loves a Parade!

The theme for the 2025 Kailua Fourth of July Parade, hosted by the Kailua Chamber of Commerce, was “Waves of Aloha”. In keeping with that theme, our beautiful float this year was a depiction of LKOC’s “Green Wave of Aloha” for Kailua”, symbolizing our enduring 77-year mission of keeping Kailua clean, green, and beautiful since 1948!

Our parade entry - featuring a large wave made of greenery with flag-waving surfers riding the flowered foam - was creatively designed and built by Jason and Katherine Hills. Our dedicated volunteers Lori Lloyd, Leslie Fleming, and Beth Grainger made lei and brought greenery to beautifully decorate the truck that pulled the float. Our marchers included three generations from LKOC’s wonderful Connors and Ress ohanas ... including our mascots Mr. Mynah and Anti- Litter and our Statue of Liber-Tree!

To view a slideshow video of the event, visit our **Activities and Events** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/Activities-and-Events.html#Fourth2025



LKOC’s “Green Wave of Aloha” 4th of July parade float



Statue of Liber-Tree, Anti-Litter, and Mr. Mynah



Excerpts from “The Windward News”, July 8, 1949

First Kailua Fourth of July Parade Is Outstanding Success

A crowd of 4000 thronged the streets on Oneawa and Kuulei to witness Kailua’s first Fourth of July parade sponsored by the RA Watson Post No. 31 of the American Legion and some 20 community organizations who participated.....The parade with its participants and on lookers was a visible tribute to Americanism, so proudly cherished by all races here in Hawaii.

To pick a winning float would be a hard problem. Comments coming from bystander conceded the Outdoor Circle, Lanikai Association, Koolaupoko Lions and RA Watson Post 31 floats as outstanding.

...and in a related article from the same Windward News edition:

A member of the Kaneohe Branch of the Outdoor Circle, who was a spectator at the Fourth of July parade, commented on the beautiful float that the Lani-Kailua Circle entered. The motto of the float “Let’s make Kailua a Garden City” impressed her greatly as well as the sight of the new covered garbage can, and the old, uncovered one camouflaged by greenery.

[Editor’s note: LKOC is proud to have had an entry in the Kailua Fourth of July Parade since 1949!]



Niu Sanctuary Established to Save our Coconuts from CRB

As a followup to our Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Community Workshop held last February 2025 (detailed in our April 2025 Newsletter), workshop co-sponsor, Wai Lee, from Smart Trees Pacific, has established a “Niu Sanctuary” at the Women’s Community Correctional Center, to grow and protect our foundational coconuts (niu).

We have received several donated trees and currently have eight keiki niu in 3–5 gallon pots and will wait until they get larger before planting in the ground and netting them to protect from CRB infestation.

If you are interested in donating niu, please contact us at lani-kailua@outdoorcircle.org. We will provide pickup/transfer to the sanctuary.



Our “Niu Sanctuary” Keiki



Visiting With the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards

In June, LKOC was asked to give a presentation to 5th and 6th graders in the summer program at the Windward Boys and Girls Club in Kailua, as part of their “Twisted Vines and Crazy Plants Week”.

LKOC Education Chair, Betsy Connors, and President, Diane Harding, presented them with an engaging talk about the importance of trees and protecting our environment and wetlands, which elicited lively interest and discussion from the group of eager listeners. The children are also planting and tending raised beds and gardens fronting the clubhouse, which are quite impressive to see.



WCCC Exceptional Monkeypods Pruning

In September/October, LKOC will once again fund tree maintenance of three spectacular Exceptional Monkeypod Trees at the Women’s Community Correctional Center (WCCC). LKOC nominated these trees to the ET Registry in 2000 and has been providing for their pruning and care every few years since 2002. We have been pleased to have Abner and Alvin Undan from “Trees of Hawaii, Inc.” perform this work for us. In addition, Arborist Steve Nimz recently performed pest treatment for us on one of the trees. Visit our **Tree Preservation** webpage for information on these iconic trees at: www.lkoc.org/tree-preservation.html#exceptional-trees.



Help us save a tree and money! Think about viewing your newsletter via email, where you can view it in color and have access to online hyperlinks. If you would like to receive it via email rather than postal mail, simply email us at lani-kailua@outdoorcircle.org.



Membership Renewal Reminder: Your membership term expiration date is shown above your address label. We hope you will consider renewing if you are near or past that date. To renew, send in the form on the last page of this newsletter or visit our **Join the Circle** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/join-the-circle.html
Emailed newsletter recipients will be informed of membership term expiration date.



Arbor Day Tree Giveaway: LKOC will host its Arbor Day Tree Giveaway on Saturday, November 8. For details on how to sign up to receive a free tree, visit our **Activities and Events** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/Activities-and-Events.html#ArborDay.



Volunteers! If you are interested in volunteer opportunities with LKOC, visit our **Volunteer Opportunities** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/volunteer-opportunities.html



Aloha ‘Oe & A Hui Hou

LKOC is so grateful for the commitment and support of its leaders who have had such a meaningful impact on our lives and our efforts over the years – and we will always remember them fondly.

LKOC was deeply saddened by the recent loss of one of its most dear and dedicated members, **Lyn Turner**, who served as past LKOC board president, as well as its Town Party Chair for a remarkable 15 years. Her decades of leadership, mentorship, and her undaunting spirit, were a guiding force for the Branch, and she leaves a lasting memory that will stay in our hearts Aloha ‘Oe, dear Lyn.



We lost a beloved friend and mentor with the recent passing of **Paula Ressa**, who contributed so much to the well-being of our Kailua community in so many ways. Her stalwart devotion to the mission of the Outdoor Circle for over four decades is a legacy that will not soon be forgotten, and a testament to her abiding spirit! All of our lives are more beautiful and richer for having known her A Hui Hou, dear Paula.

A “Paula’s Garden” memorial fund has been set up in her memory, to be used for Kailua beautification projects like those she fostered for decades. To donate, visit our **Mahalo and A Hui Hou** webpage at: www.lkoc.org/Mahalo.html#PaulasGarden.



Special Thanks

We bid a fond Aloha and special Mahalo to outgoing LKOC Board Member, **Teddi Baumgartner**, who has served us so well over the past 10 years, as our past Vice President, Recording Secretary, and as our outstanding LKOC Newsletter Editor and Communications Chair. We wish her the best and are so grateful for all that she has done for us. We will miss you, Teddi Mahalo from all of us at LKOC!



LKOC Holiday Meeting & Luncheon

We will be hosting our annual Holiday Meeting & Luncheon on December 5. Invitations will be sent out soon, including details on how to RSVP online, but you may reserve your seat early by mailing in this form.

Join us for Holiday Cheer!
Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle
Holiday Meeting & Luncheon
 Lanikai Park Pavilion ~ 126 Kaiolena Drive ~ Kailua
 Friday, December 5, 2025, 11:00-2:00

Guest Speaker Hawaii State House Representative Lisa Marten
 Plant Raffle and more!

Light Buffet Luncheon ~ \$40

Guest Name(s) _____
 Guest Name(s) _____
 Email _____

Enclosed is \$ _____

Mail to: LKOC, P.O. Box 261, Kailua, HI 96734
 Please RSVP by November 25, 2025



Special Circle Events

Shower Tree Festival

In the mid to late 1990s, The Outdoor Circle would host a yearly “Shower Tree Festival” to celebrate these beautiful trees that are in full bloom in mid-summer. On June 28, in commemoration of those events, and in partnership with The Friends of Honolulu’s Botanical Gardens, TOC co-hosted a guided tour of the hundreds of shower trees on the UH Manoa campus, which run the lengths of the central medians of both East West Drive and Maile Way, and elsewhere on campus



Queen’s White Shower Trees
East West Drive

Roxanne Adams, from the Division of Urban Forestry, and Myles Ritchie, TOC Programs Director, led the tours, giving fascinating insights into these trees, which were in spectacular bloom and lovely to see.

Exceptional Tree 50th Anniversary Celebration

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the passage of Hawaii Exceptional Tree Act, which was largely spearheaded by The Outdoor Circle. To honor that milestone, a celebration took place at Foster Botanical Gardens on May 31. TOC’s Myles Ritchie, who is also Chair of the Oahu County Mayor’s Arborist Advisory Committee, charged with managing the Exceptional Tree program on Oahu, gave a presentation on the ET Program and the nomination process, as well as a guided tour of the gardens, home to twenty Exceptional Trees. View a short video by Myles about the ET program at: <https://www.outdoorcircle.org/exceptional-trees.html>

In October, in honor of this 50th year, City & County of Honolulu Councilmember Tyler Dos Santos-Tam will recognize The Outdoor Circle with a Council Honorary Certificate for the work it has continued to provide in protecting our trees.

Maui Tree Giveaway

On the two-year anniversary of the deadly wildfires in Lahaina, the Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with United Airlines, launched efforts to help replant lost tree canopy. More than 580 trees were distributed through its local planting partner The Outdoor Circle, in collaboration with Treecovery Hawaii and The Royal Lahaina Resort & Bungalows. Tree recipients were able to take home their trees or leave them at Treecovery’s tree hub to be cared for until their properties are ready to receive them. The event was also designed to help address local food insecurity, where, as part of the effort to increase the availability of fresh healthy food, 94% of the trees distributed were fruit or food producing trees.

“We’re proud to work alongside the passionate advocates at The Outdoor Circle to help regrow a flourishing community canopy,” said Dan Lambe, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation.

Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle Board of Directors Roster 2025-2026

Officers:

President: Diane Harding
Vice President: Ken Curtis
Treasurer: Kathleen Bryan
Asst. Treasurer: Francine Mendes
Recording Secretary: Katherine Hills
Corresponding Secretary: Nani Vermillion
Advisors: Betsy Connors, Margaret Brezel,
Claudia Webster
Website: www.lkoc.org
Email: Lani-kailua@outdoorcircle.org

Committee Chairs:

Beautification: Steve Mechler
Education: Betsy Connors
Historian: Diane Harding
Membership: Barbara Krasniewski
Programs/Events: Pam Ross
Scholarship: Betsy Connors
Signs: Bobbie Romero
Town Party: Diane Harding
Volunteers: Barbara Krasniewski
WCCC Partnership: Betsy Connors



Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle
 P.O. Box 261
 Kailua, HI 96734



New Renewal
 Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

MEMBERSHIP DUES: [per person annually unless otherwise noted]

- \$25 \$50 \$100
- \$150 \$250 \$500
- \$1,000 \$2,500 one-time life pledge
- Other: _____
- Donations \$ _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____
 (Tax Deductible)

You may also go online (lkoc.org) to pay your dues (Join the Circle).

Your membership alone is a very worthwhile contribution. If you wish to take a more active role in any of the categories listed, please check below and return this sheet with your remittance.

- Workday Projects
- I Love Kailua Town Party
- Learning to Grow (WCCC)
- Lettuce Delivery to Foodland
- Beautification
- Public Affairs
- Luncheons
- Sign Control
- Publicity/Newsletter
- Clerical

On occasion, can you supply?

- Flowers Greens

Other: _____

Email me the newsletter instead of mailing through the US Postal Service.

Membership

LKOC
P.O. Box 261
Kailua, HI 96734

