



Cover photo: Indian Banyan tree (*Ficus benghalensis*), an Exceptional Tree providing a nice, shady area at Ala Moana Beach Park, Honolulu.

This tree has an interesting lineage. It was grown from a cutting taken from an enormous banyan that once stood at the corner of King and Keeaumoku Streets. That tree had been planted using a cutting that came from the famous Waikiki banyan that once stood at 'Ainahau, and was cherished by Princess Ka'iulani. This stately banyan is a third generation of that tree, a wonderful link to Hawai'i's past.



The Outdoor Circle

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THE OUTDOOR CIRCLE ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023

President's Message



As my first year as President comes to a close, I wanted to reflect on what we love about Hawai'i, what keeps us here, what brings us back. Is it Hawai'i's natural beauty, its balmy weather, the smell of flowers or the ocean in the breeze? Is it the 'aloha spirit', or the sense of community and 'ohana and history that binds us? There are myriads of reasons we call Hawai'i 'home' and why Hawai'i holds such a special place in our hearts, even though we may no longer live here.

Over my lifetime, Hawai'i has certainly changed in many ways, as have most areas around the globe, but its spectacular natural beauty will never diminish and the lush greenery we see around us only enhances our appreciation of the beauty of nature and the uniqueness of our islands.

I am so grateful for our early Outdoor Circle members who were responsible for planting many of the trees that grace our streets and parks today, and for promoting and fostering a sense of community stewardship of the flora surrounding us as well as the protection and preservation of our islands' fragile natural and cultural resources. This stewardship of our 'aina, instilled by our founders, has carried on for generations now, and is evidenced by the remarkable work of our central office and our branches and members across the state.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve an organization that has had such a lasting impact on the Hawai'i we all know and love. I look forward to the years ahead, as The Outdoor Circle continues to champion causes that preserve and protect the beauty of Hawai'i and improve the quality of life for all of Hawai'i's residents and visitors.

Aloha and Mahalo,

Diane Harding
President, The Outdoor Circle

110 Years of Keeping Hawai'i Clean, Green and Beautiful!

The Outdoor Circle celebrated its 110th anniversary with events throughout the year including a historical performance at the Hawaiian Mission Houses; proclamations from Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi, and Hawai'i Island Mayor Mitch Roth, who both declared November as Hawai'i Arbor Month; and statewide tree giveaways (see page 5).

Hawaiian Mission Houses ~ *Footprints on the Land*



Karen Valasek,
portraying Cherilla
Lowrey, first President
of The Outdoor Circle.

In October 2022, The Outdoor Circle sponsored a performance of *Footprints on the Land*, that featured historical vignettes created by Hawaiian Mission Houses. The theme of the evening were four luminaries of Hawai'i's natural history.

Cherilla Lowrey, The Outdoor Circle's first President, talked about how the organization was formed and her role in guiding it, and was portrayed by Karen Valasek. Joseph Rock, the famed botanist, who authored the first book on native trees in Hawai'i, was portrayed by Keven Keaveney; Annie Alexander, a botanist and paleontologist, considered the mother of modern museum education was portrayed by Rasa Fournier; and Charles Judd, an early Territorial forester who pioneered conservation techniques with tree planting was portrayed by Adam LeFebvre.

We were honored that descendants of Annie Alexander, Charles Judd, and Cherilla Lowrey were in attendance at the evening's performance.

November is Now Hawai'i Arbor Month

Hawai'i Arbor Day, which is traditionally celebrated the first week in November, will now be celebrated as Hawai'i Arbor Month. The Outdoor Circle accepted a Proclamation from Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi, who made the declaration in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Shade Tree Commission, established in 1922 with help of The Outdoor Circle.

The first group appointed to the commission included the President of The Outdoor Circle, the City and County Engineer, the Superintendent of the City and County of Honolulu Parks and Playgrounds, the Superintendent of Forestry of the Territory of Hawai'i, and a nominee from the public utility corporation. The Shade Tree Commission eventually became the City Division of Urban Forestry (DUF) that plants, maintains and preserves trees in parks and on city streets.



Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi
with TOC representatives:
Executive Director, Winston
Welch; Steve Mechler, Tree
Committee; Board Members
Mimi Bornhorst Gaddis and
Diane Harding; and Programs
Director, Myles Ritchie.

Revitalizing Hawai'i's Exceptional Tree Program

Exceptional Tree Map



Hawai'i's exceptional tree program was enacted in 1975 and within the first few years of its existence, several of Hawai'i's most iconic trees were awarded this designation. However, after this time, few trees were nominated for exceptional status, with even fewer being approved by the Arborist Advisory Committee (AAC) of each county. Combine this lack of nominations with an aging exceptional tree population and it becomes clear that the program was in a state of decline until the mid-2010s. In 2014, The Outdoor Circle began its Exceptional Tree Initiative with the goal of revitalizing this iconic statewide conservation program.

In the years since, an interactive exceptional tree map has been produced that features the GPS location, height, diameter, crown spread, health, images and other components for each tree when possible. Within the past year, the map has undergone another significant update which provides the approximate age and selection criteria for each exceptional tree on Oahu, based on the content provided in their original nomination forms. The goal is to work with AACs from Kauai, Maui and Hawai'i counties in order to obtain their exceptional tree nomination forms to determine the approximate ages and selection criteria for their exceptional trees, which will be subsequently added to the exceptional tree map.

City and County of Honolulu Arborist Advisory Committee Updates

Over the past year, The City and County of Honolulu's Mayor appointed Arborist Advisory Committee (AAC) has reviewed dozens of exceptional tree nominations that had accumulated throughout the pandemic. The result has been the approval of three new exceptional trees to Oahu's registry, which will now be reviewed and voted on by the Honolulu City Council in the coming months.

However, the committee has accomplished far more than this. There have been several permitted interaction groups created to identify solutions to persistent problems affecting the exceptional tree program on Oahu, all of which are making progress. These committees are identified as: 1) Exceptional Tree Selection Criteria, Definitions, and Thresholds; 2) Carrots vs Sticks (Incentives vs Penalties); and 3) Public Education and Outreach.

During many of these discussions, it has become ever more apparent that public buy-in, support and recommendations for Hawai'i's exceptional tree program needs to be cultivated. To assist with this, The Outdoor Circle will be holding an *Exceptional Tree Workshop Series* combining presentations and workshops. The presentations will detail the history of the program, how it works and desired improvements, followed by workshops where interested Outdoor Circle members can come together and share their preferences as to how the program could be improved for topics such as selection criteria, legal protections, incentives and penalties, funding, public outreach/education, next generation of exceptional trees, etc. The findings from the workshop will be presented to the Honolulu AAC, with the intent of potentially using the results to improve this program which has not been updated since its inception in 1975.



Outdoor Circle Branches Gave Away Trees Across the State

As a part of the 110th anniversary of The Outdoor Circle, seven branches held Arbor Day events with tree giveaways and family-friendly activities in November 2022. Fruit and flowering trees, as well as plants and free seed packets were distributed.



Waimea Branch



East Hawaii Branch



Waikoloa Village Branch

The East Hawaii, Waimea and Waikoloa Village Outdoor Circle branches hosted concurrent Arbor Day tree giveaways on November 5, 2022. 1,015 fruit and food trees comprised of 27 species were given away to the Hawai'i Island communities with 775, 155, and 105 provided in East Hawaii, Waimea, and Waikoloa Village respectively. As with the previous four iterations of the East Hawaii tree giveaways, this event was once again sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with State Farm.



Lani-Kailua Branch



Manoa Branch

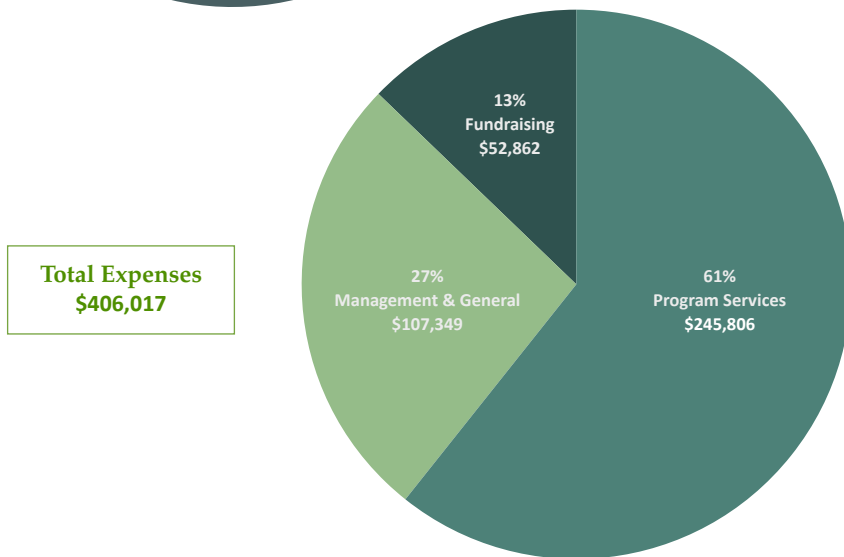
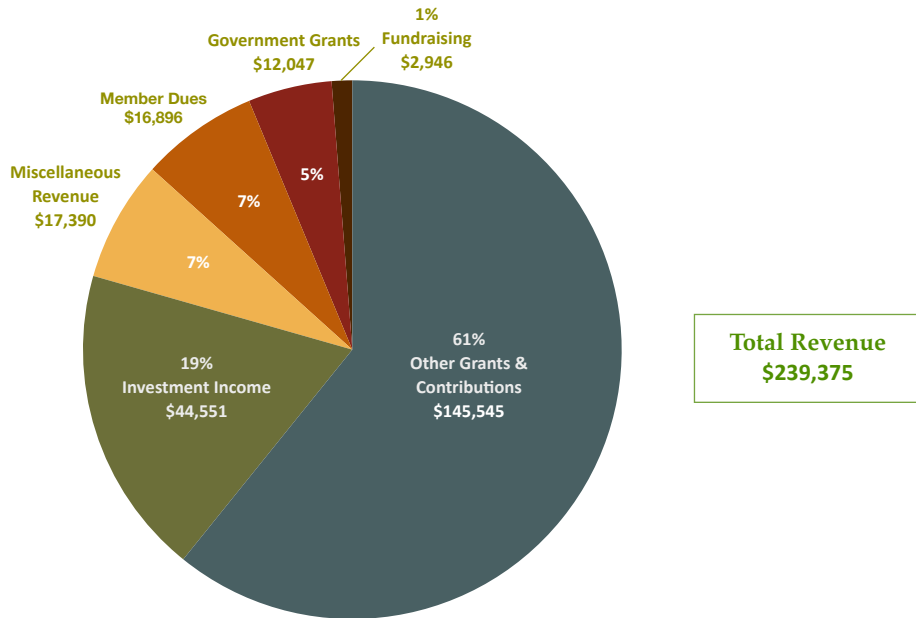


North Shore Branch

On Oahu, the Lani-Kailua (LKOC), Manoa, and North Shore Outdoor Circle branches held events of their own. LKOC gave away over 25 different varieties of trees and shrubs purchased from local nursery that were adopted by over 30 communities on Oahu. Tree trimmers were on hand to demonstrate climbing techniques, allowing attendees to participate. The Manoa Branch spent well over a year tending trees and plants, many from seedlings and cuttings, for the 1,000-Tree Giveaway. The line of attendees snaked around the block and participants were able to confer with several arborists who volunteered to answer questions. The Manoa Branch generously shared their trees and plants with the North Shore Branch and, with the Waimea Valley botanical staff adding plant donations of their own, enabled them to hold a very successful event. The Kauai Branch held their giveaway, partnering with the Kauai Landscape Industry Council, for the 18th annual Arbor Day event where they offered fruit trees to attendees on the Garden Island.

We thank the East Hawaii Branch, Kauai Branch, Lani-Kailua Branch, Manoa Branch, North Shore Branch, Waikoloa Village Branch, and the Waimea Branch, for participating and giving away thousands of free trees, plants and shrubs to communities across the state.

Financials for Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2022 Revenue & Expenses



Net Assets at Year End \$1.78

Mahalo to Our Donors & Supporters



The Outdoor Circle's event at Hawaiian Mission Houses:
Footprints on the Land.

The Outdoor Circle relies on the generosity of individuals like you. From in-kind gifts and services to bequests and grants, our donors are the backbone of our organization. We are thankful for the consistent support of people like you, through which we are able to accomplish amazing things.

This Year's Exceptional Donors [donors who gave \$500 or more in 2022-2023]

Individuals

Matthew Binder
Arlene & Ken Block
Peter Drewliner
Mimi Bornhorst Gaddis
Kevin Eckert
Paula Elarionoff
Rosemary Fazio & David Randell
Carol Golembeski
Joan Gossett
Diane Harding
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Corporations, Foundations and Other Entities

Adventist Health Castle
Alexander & Baldwin, Waikoloa
Alexander & Baldwin Properties, Kailua
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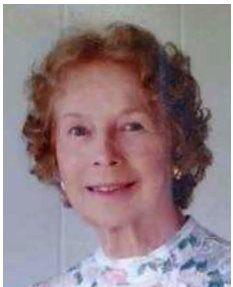
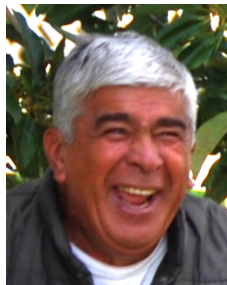
A Hui Hou

The Outdoor Circle's members and supporters are an integral part of our organization. We honor the memory of a few who have passed away over the last year, grateful for their devotion and commitment to our mission.



Virginia Lowrey Brown was a devoted patron of The Outdoor Circle, following the path of her paternal grandmother, Cherilla Storrs Lowrey, who helped start the organization and was TOC's first President. Virginia continued her grandmother's passion for preservation and beauty, just one of her many interests as she was an active member of many local organizations. Passing away at 102, she lived a long, energetic life with good humor, making each day a productive one. We appreciate Virginia's long connection with and generous support of The Outdoor Circle and bid her a fond a hui hou.

Leningrad Elarionoff - Waimea Outdoor Circle lost a true friend and volunteer with the passing of Leningrad. He was a gifted and talented propagator, who provided so many of the beautiful 'Ohia Lehua trees gracing Waimea Nature Park. Because of him, we have the largest variety of colors of blossoms in the state. Leningrad was a teacher and story teller of Hawaiian legends, who entertained all who listened. We will miss his big voice, happy smile and the mischievous twinkle in his eyes.



Luci Creps Pfaltzgraff was a driving force for the Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle, as its President in the 1960s, and as The Outdoor Circle's President in the 1970s. Her commitment to our mission was unparalleled, as she led our organization and fostered its mission of keeping Hawai'i clean, green and beautiful. In the early 1960s, when siting for the H3 tunnels was proposed near the Pali Tunnels, Luci was instrumental in seeing them routed through Haiku instead, stating "We will not tolerate any further desecration or scarring of the Pali area." Luci received Letters of Commendation from both the Governor and the Mayor when Diamond Head was named a National Natural Landmark in 1968, protecting it from future development. When you now see the unspoiled, green slopes of the Windward Koolaus and Diamond Head you are seeing Luci's vision. A hui hou Luci.

Our Mission



Winston Welch, TOC Executive Director attending a Lani-Kailua Outdoor Circle luncheon meeting.

To keep Hawai'i clean, green, beautiful, livable and sustainable by preserving, protecting, and enhancing our environment for future generations.



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