Shared Vision

Blind Vendors Ohana, Inc. Quarterly Newsletter

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Second Anniversary

Memorable and joyous are two words that best describe Blind Vendors Ohana's second anniversary dinner. This special gathering was held on Friday, May 31, 1996 at the Pearl Harbor Yacht Club. In all, about 140 employees and their guests were in attendance.

Everyone was treated to an outstanding selection of food. The main entrees included steaks, oysters, chicken, and mahimahi. Much mahalo goes to Garret Suzuki, Victor Ortiz, and all others who went to the Yacht Club earlier that day to set up and grill the steaks, oysters, and chicken. The rest of the food was catered by Ohana. For desert, two big cakes were cut and served to everyone.





Not only was the food wonderful, but the entertainment was even better! Wayne Borje played the keyboard and also sang for the huge crowd at the party. Other Ohana employees and their guests also participated that evening, including Lorna Kipilii, Jim Kahue, Kendrick Ching, Paz Cuyno, Alfrey Pacada, Carl Oshiro, Erlinda Betonio, Paul Fuchigami, and of course our President and CEO, Filo Tu.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the bonus-checks by Filo Tu. This was indeed a surprise to all the employees! Thank you Ohana for the generous bonus, and a fantastic evening!

A Wedding to Remember

April 22, 1996 was indeed a special day for Ohana's own Erlinda Villa. Not only was it her birthday, but it was also the day she was married to Josiah Betonio.

A beautiful ceremony was held in the hills of Makiki at the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Erlinda's bridal party included a few Ohana employees: Evelyn Racpan, Paulette Beck, and Melanie Higgins. The ceremony was performed by John Ishikawa, the son of one of Ohana's owners, Walter Ishikawa.

After the ceremony, family and friends gathered in the adjoining hall for the reception. All in attendance were privileged to hear the voices and talents of many talented performers, including Tiny Uta (husband of employee Carmen Uta), Lorna Kipilii (former Ohana employee who now runs her own vending concession), and Jim Kahue (Ohana's Human Resources Manager). Everyone was treated to lots of delicious foods, including some donated by Ohana. The day truly ended up being an event to remember.



President's Message

May 31, 1996 marked the end of the second year of operation for Blind Vendors Ohana, Inc. In observance of this momentous occasion, a special dinner party for all BVO employees and their guests was held on Friday, May 31, 1996 at the Pearl Harbor Yacht Club (see story above).

Our second year of operation has produced an increase in sales, and resulted in a better line of products in our stores. Employees in our stores and in the warehouse are working harder, our office has become more efficient, and the management team has become more confident. Overall, BVO has made great strides, even though the State's economy has continued to sputter. Many thanks to each of you for doing your part in advancing the cause of BVO.

During a recent trip in May, I was privileged to visit the Iowa Department for the Blind in Des Moines, Iowa. This facility is probably the top ranked rehabilitation center for the blind in the United States. The key success factor at this facility is their overwhelmingly positive attitude promoted by all administrators and teachers. This "I Can" attitude is one message I want to propagate here at BVO.

A SPECIAL YOUNG LADY

Blind Vendors Ohana is happy to have as part of its sales staff a versatile and talented young lady, Leilani Banas. Leilani graduated with honors from Waipahu High School on Sunday, June 2, 1996. She plans to attend Leeward Community College, then later transfer to the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Leilani loves to write, and has chosen to major in Journalism.



During an awards assembly for Waipahu High School students, Leilani received two scholarships. This presentation was held on Wednesday, May 22, 1996 at Leeward Community College Auditorium. The first scholarship was from Blind Vendors Ohana, and was presented to her by Filo Tu and Garret Suzuki. The second scholarship was given by Cane Tassel, the newspaper of Waipahu High School.

Leilani co-authored an award winning article about the first Filipino infantry in World War II. This article was declared a winner from the leeward district in the Hawaii Newspaper Agency writing competition. All the authors believed that these people were truly unsung heroes.

This gifted young lady will also be participating in the National History Day competition held in Maryland. Along with some of her classmates, Leilani will be leaving on Friday June 7, 1996 to be part of the delegation representing Hawaii in this competition. Her group wrote and produced a play about King Kamehameha III and his sister, entitled "Nahi'ena'ena", which means the raging fire of Hawaiiana. Good Luck Leilani!

Helping the Blind in Hawaii

Blind Vendors Ohana and the Hawaii Association of the Blind strongly believe in empowering as many people as possible in matters concerning the blind. By empowering people, we can create a united front, and together we all can help the blind of Hawaii build better lives for themselves and their families. For this reason, BOV and HAB have both sent people away to learn what others across the country are doing for their blind citizens.

Oh Wedensday, March 27, 1996, Walter Ishikawa and Tom Morikami were sent by BVO to attend the Sagebrush Conference in Reno, Nevada. This conference dealt with issues, concerns, and problems facing blind vendors in the United States. Many of the speakers at this conference were lawyers who have presented to Congress various issues concerning blind vendors. These lawyers also talked about state problems, and gave hints and advice on dealing with mediation. After the discussion, everyone was able to voice their concerns during round table discussions.

Walter and Tom both agree that this conference was very enlightening, and very motivating. They both met a lot of people, and they learned that by working together as a unit, we all can accomplish more than acting alone.



Another group of people was sent to Des Moines, Iowa to tour Iowa's Department for the Blind. Filo Tu was sent by BVO, and Myles Tamashiro was sent by HAB. Warren and Julia Toyama, along with Jeanette Tu, financed their own way in order to join them on this informative tour.

The Iowa Department for the Blind is rated tops in the U.S., if not in the world, as a rehabilitation center for the blind. According to Creig Slayton, the Director, they are "an attitude factory", whose philosophy is based on the "I Can" concept. Creig and his staff wholly believe in this philosophy, and put into practice in their dealings with each other and the clients they service.

The program's goal is to build the self confidence of their blind clients. By doing this, these blind citizens will go out into society with their head held up high, and will have confidence that they will succeed in life. The entire staff is very supportive of their clients. In addition to all the classroom work, clients are taken on varied activities, such as water skiing, cross country skiing, camping, and traveling to other states. This was indeed a most inspiring and moving trip for all who toured this facility.

Pa'ahana Award Winners



One of this quarter's recipients works in the warehouse. *Marc Morikami* is a very personable young man who enjoys shooting pool, diving, fishing, and just hanging-out with his friends. Marc graduated from Castle High School a few years ago. While in school, he played the trumpet in the school band, and he was even selected to play in the University of Hawaii Ambassador Band. As one of the selected members, Marc was able to tour Europe while giving concerts with this band. Marc's family is made up of his parents and his sister.



Another recipient of this quarter's Pa'ahana Award works at the Inter-Island Terminal. This energetic, caring, and generous woman is none other than *Marguerite Ogawa*. She served in the United States Army as a nurse, and she even worked at Tripler Army Hospital in Honolulu. After her retirement, Marguerite worked for the Department of Education as a Teacher's Aid in Special Education. Besides working part-time at Ohana, Marguerite spends her spare time in her yard raising flowers, which she uses to create various kinds of leis, including haku leis. Marguerite is married and is a mother to three sons. She feels very happy to be working at Ohana.



This next recipient of the Pa'ahana Award can be found working during the morning shift at the International Terminal at the Airport. Can you guess who this charming and friendly young woman is? You guessed it, she's *Evelyn Racpan*. Evelyn loves to go shopping, and loves to shop for just about anything, especially clothes. She also enjoys cooking and eating all types of foods, with Chinese and Filipino food being her favorites. You are likely to find Evelyn out with her friends at the movies, or going karaoke singing. Her family includes her parents, two brothers, and two sisters.



The International Terminal is where you will also find our next Pa'ahana Award recipient. She is a very friendly and consciences woman, who can always be seen helping her customers. *Pat Sherbert* loves to go bowling, and is a member of the Aloha Makakina Bowling League. You can find her every Saturday afternoon knocking all the pins down at Kalihi Bowl. Pat also has a great love for animals. If you went to her house, you would be able to see all ten of her birds. Pat has two girls and one boy. She is a devoted mother, and spend all her free time with her kids, who are the center of her life.



Welcome Aboard!

Here are the new employees who have recently joined the Ohana family: **Sales** - Glen Yamate, Marlene John, Mai Samuelu, Ester Guevarra, Lee Anne Stephen, Elizabeth Suliven, Sandi Sherbert, Julia Kapesi-Tu, and Sonia Haynes; **Warehouse** - Stuart McKinley.