

URBAN CONCEPTS



Happy Holidays!

We hope you've had a safe and enjoyable holiday season so far!

Although, many of us are still adjusting and getting used to this "new norm" of smaller gatherings and "virtual hugs" with loved ones, we hope you all are still able to find ways to celebrate the holidays and this time with friends and family.

In this edition, we share with you an article on giving back to local charitable organizations, an interesting Q&A with the owner of Aloha Whisky, David Tsujimoto and a fun holiday "get to know us" feature with the Brett Hill Team.

We hope you enjoy our Holiday issue of Urban Concepts and please have a happy and safe Holiday Season!

Warmest Wishes,
Brett Hill Construction, Inc.



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The Season of Kōkua

The Holiday Season is a festive time of the year for everyone to enjoy time with family and friends, but for some who are saddled with an overwhelming financial or health-related burden, or are going through a difficult personal crisis, the Holiday Season could actually amplify the stresses they are currently going through. Fortunately, there are organizations in our community that reaches out and provides assistance to those who are in need.

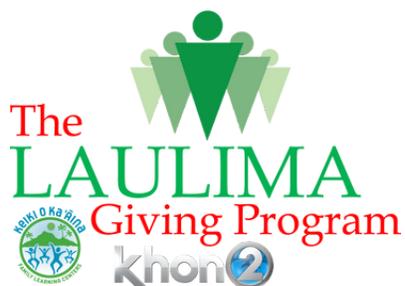
The Salvation Army is a very noticeable charitable organization during the Holiday Season mainly because of the well-known history of the **Red Kettle Campaign**, but there is a lot more The Salvation Army does for the community throughout the year. They offer a broad array of social services that range from providing food for the hungry, relief for disaster victims, assistance for the disabled, outreach to the elderly and ill, clothing and shelter to the homeless, drug and alcohol addiction rehabilitation programs and opportunities for underprivileged children. For more information, please visit their website at www.hawaii.salvationarmy.org.



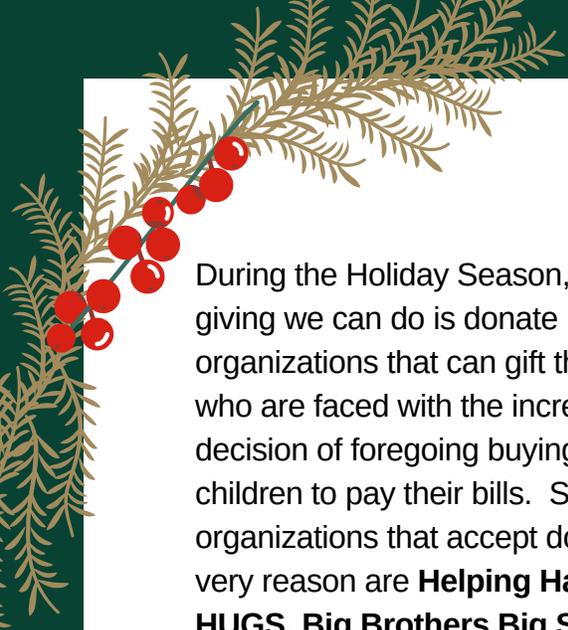
HAWAII



The Hawaii Foodbank in partnership with the food industry and community serves as a link between charities and those in need of food assistance. Throughout the year, many in Hawaii are faced with the difficult decision of prioritizing where to spend their limited resources, oftentimes sacrificing their basic needs such as food and utilities to pay other bills. **The Hawaii Foodbank** provides much needed food assistance to those who are in this situation. For more information, please visit their website at www.hawaiifoodbank.org.



The Laulima Giving Program is a unique partnership between **KHON2** and the non-profit organization **Keiki O Ka Aina Family Learning Centers**. This organization assists those who are faced with a life crisis or emergency situations beyond their control. With the support of generous donations from individuals and business organizations, the **Laulima Giving Program** makes an impactful difference in people's lives with the **Adopt-A-Family Program** during the Holiday Season and the **Back to School Drive** that provides important school supplies for the new school year. For more information, please visit their website at www.laulimagivingprogram.org.



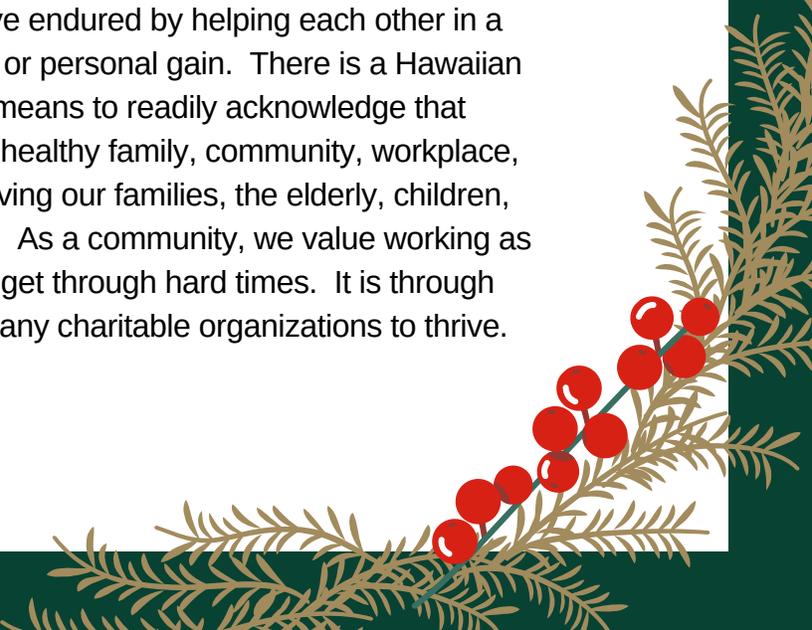
During the Holiday Season, one of the best giving we can do is donate new toys to organizations that can gift them to families who are faced with the incredibly tough decision of foregoing buying gifts for their children to pay their bills. Some of the organizations that accept donations for this very reason are **Helping Hands Hawaii**, **HUGS**, **Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii**, the **Institute for Human Services**, **Goodwill Hawaii**, **The Salvation Army Family Store** and **Toys for Tots**.



Blood Bank of Hawaii

Finally, one organization that accepts a much-needed donation of a different kind throughout the year is the **Blood Bank of Hawaii**. Giving blood is such an important responsibility for all of us and for good reason. Often described as the "Gift of life", there's always a need for blood of all types. Throughout the month of December, whenever someone donates blood, the **Blood Bank of Hawaii** will provide a meal for the hungry through the Hawaii Foodbank. For more information, please visit their website at www.bbh.org.

Throughout Hawaiian history, communities have endured by helping each other in a sacrificial way, without any intent of repayment or personal gain. There is a Hawaiian word for this which is *kōkua*. The word *kōkua* means to readily acknowledge that assistance is sometimes needed to maintain a healthy family, community, workplace, business, or school. We practice *kōkua* by serving our families, the elderly, children, and anyone in our community in times of need. As a community, we value working as a team, collaboratively to achieve goals and to get through hard times. It is through this cultural practice that Hawaii has allowed many charitable organizations to thrive.



Q&A w/ David Tsujimoto ~ Aloha Whisky

We were lucky enough to be able to do a short Q&A with Hawaii boy and owner of Aloha Whisky, David Tsujimoto. David opened up Aloha Whisky in Tokyo back in September of 2019 and has already been nominated as the 2020 winner of Whisky Magazine Icons of Whisky, Bar and Bar Manager of the Year awards. We are excited to have been able to learn more about him and his love of whisky and hope to feature more articles on whisky by David in the new year!

Q: Tell us a little about yourself and how you became interested in whisky.

A: I was born and raised in Hawaii and lived there till 2013, when I moved to Japan with my girlfriend at the time, she was from there. After a few months we broke up, but by this time I had already fallen in love with Japan and teaching English, so I stayed. While teaching at a college in Kawasaki, a friend of mine asked me to find him a bottle of Hibiki 17, but they were nowhere to be found. I became fixated on this quest but ultimately failed as he changed his request to Hakushu 12. After weeks of searching, I found one. But instead of giving it to my friend, I decided to open it and taste what all the hype was about. That taste was how I got into whisky.

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Q: What made you decide to open a whisky bar in Japan?

A: After that first taste, every waking moment outside the classroom, I was searching for, buying, selling, drinking and trading whisky. In a little over a year I amassed a collection of nearly 1,000 bottles. Up to this point, I loved teaching and planned for it to be my career; but then I realized I now loved whisky more and decided to open a bar.

Q: Was it difficult opening a new bar, in Japan, just a few months before the pandemic hit? What were some of your greatest challenges and how did you overcome them?

A: Yes, it was very difficult opening a bar in Japan as there's a stigma attached to American owned drinking establishments. The landlords visualize roudy and loud customers with the occasional chair flying through plate glass windows. And once I overcame this hurdle there was a catch 22, to get a business visa I needed a business location; and to rent a business location, I needed a business visa. Funny enough, I was able to overcome all these issues by getting help from other bar owners. That was the strangest and most heartwarming thing about this all, my so-called competition went out of their way to help me become established in their neighborhood.



Q: Opening right before the pandemic, in September of 2019 and already becoming the 2020 winner of Whisky Magazine Icons of Whisky, Bar & Bar Manager of the Year awards, how were you able to establish yourself and Aloha Whisky so quickly?

A: Most local bars here open, have support from family and friends, then get on social media to expand their business. I did everything opposite. I started the IG account "Aloha Whisky" and documented my whisky hunting, bar drinking, life challenges and finally the building of my business. Thus, it felt like a team effort when I finally opened my doors. And it was this team that voted me to the top of both of these awards.



Q: What is high-end whisky that is worth the price?

A: Though it's probably not obtainable at the MSRP of \$1100, Hakushu 25 is such a treat. It offers a misty stroll in a Japanese pine forest in every sip. To me high-end whisky should offer an experience in addition to profound flavor. Your best bet to purchase this bottle is the \$2500 duty free special edition when leaving Japan.

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Q: Most underrated whisky that would make a good holiday gift?

A: I'm gonna go right back to Clynelish 14. It may get overlooked due to its wide availability and low price, but it's a universal whisky. It can be enjoyed in many ways by the many different types of drinkers. Another good one is Nikka From the Barrel, even if it isn't 100% Japanese whisky, it offers a classy bottle, 51.4%abv and pleasant neutral flavor.

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Q: Do you have any plans of expanding Aloha Whisky? Thoughts on opening a bar here in Hawaii?

A: I've actually already expanded a bit. I started bottling Aloha Whisky branded whisky and opened a small shop in which to sell it. I would love to expand further and open a bar in Hawaii, but the liquor regulations are too strict. I wouldn't be allowed to furnish the back bar with my collection. But who knows, it's still the dream.

Is there anything else?

Not really, except feel free to contact me if you have questions about whisky, whisky bars and/or distilleries in Japan. You can find me via DM on **Instagram @alohawhisky** So until next time, Kanpai!

Q: What is your favorite type of whisky and why?

A: My favorite category of whisky is Japanese because it's what lead me to this world, not to mention it being delicious. And because I opened a few years after the Japanese whisky boom, I now have one of the largest selections of Japanese whisky in the country. As for a special brand, I love Ben Nevis because even though it's from Scotland and owned by Nikka, it has a tropical character that reminds me of Hawaii.

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Q: What is a good quality whisky that you would recommend to someone on a budget?

A: A good budget daily drinker is Clynelish 14. It's around \$50 and has the perfect amount of body and fruitiness while being versatile, neat, on the rocks, in a highball, it's all good. Here's a funny story. During the pandemic I fulfilled my dream and stayed at the Park Hyatt and went to the New York Bar. The plan was to have a relaxing Suntory time, but it quickly changed to Clynelish 14 time after seeing the price of Hibiki 17.



★ GET TO KNOW THE BRETT
HILL TEAM ★
(HOLIDAY EDITION) ★

Since we decided to do a short Holiday Newsletter this year, we thought it would be fun to do a little "get to know us" section. Micah, the newest edition to the Brett Hill Team, took it upon himself to ask some of us in the office, fun holiday questions to share with our UC readers, we hope you enjoy!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY TRADITION?

Conrad: "Annual Family Ski Trip at Big White Ski Resort in British Columbia"

Asha: "This year was my first time putting up Christmas lights outside my house as well as a Christmas tree where the ornaments are polaroids of my friends and family."

Cara: "When we were young, we used to be able to open one present on Christmas Eve."

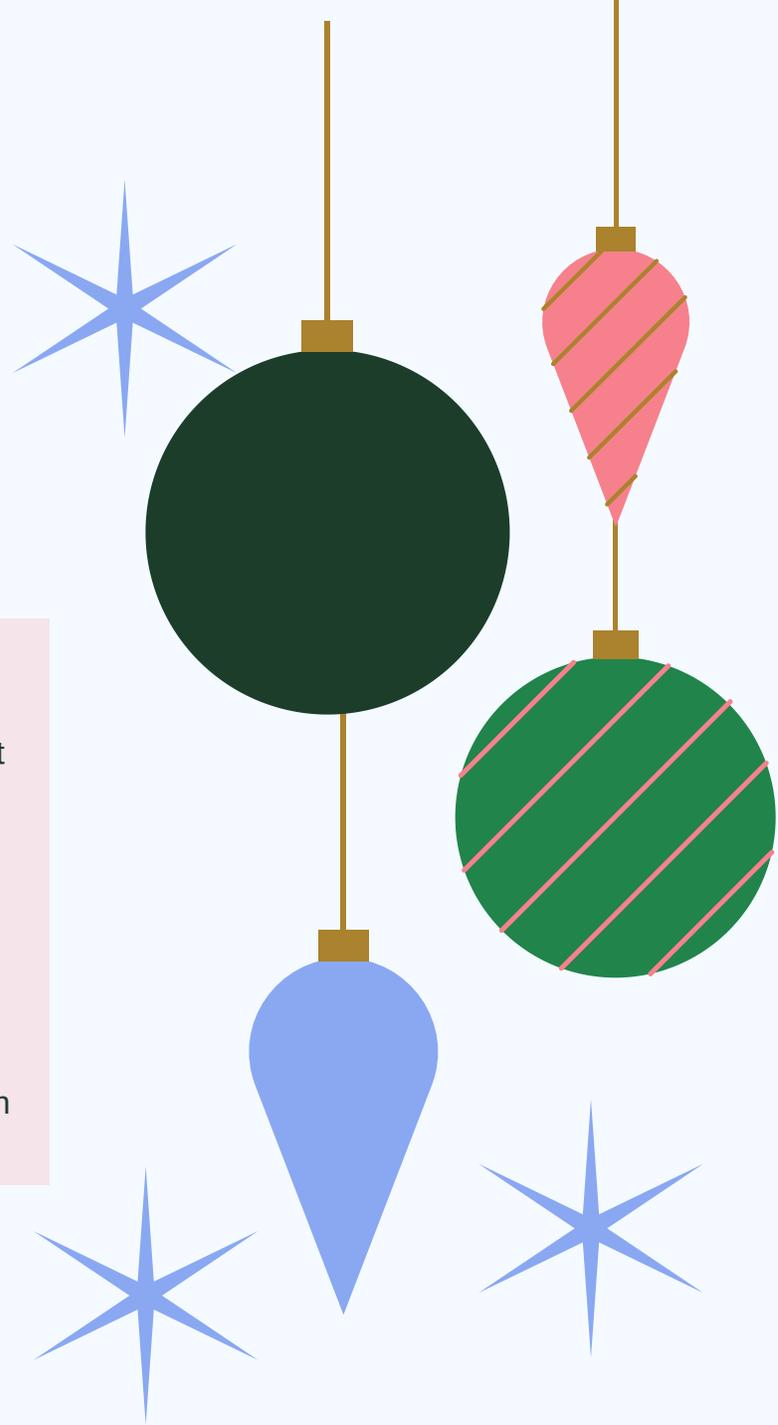


WHAT IS THE BEST CHRISTMAS GIFT YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

Robert: "Schwin stingray bike with banana seat and butterfly handlebars in gold"

Gregg: "Schwin stingray bike with banana seat butterfly handlebars in Lemon Peeler"

Conrad: "Schwin stingray bike with banana seat butterfly handlebars in Grape Crate"



FAVORITE CHRISTMAS SONG?

Jacky: "The Christmas Song by Nat King Cole"

Micah: "Warm and Fuzzy by Billy Gillman and Jingle Bell Rock by Na Leo"

Yoji: "Merry Christmas to You by Henry Kapono"

FAVORITE CHRISTMAS MOVIE?

Asha: "Home Alone 2"

Yoji: "Home Alone"

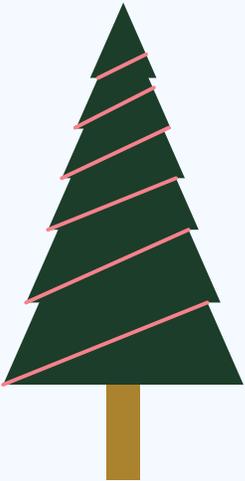
Micah: "I mean, I don't want to give a basic answer so.....Home Alone"

PLANS OR SOMETHING YOU'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE NEW YEAR?

Robert: "Traveling to see family in Casper Wyoming"

Bryan: "Getting out and spending more time in the ocean."

Jacky: "Going on vacation!"



ANY NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS

Gregg: "Give back more and be more charitable"

Cara: "Grow and better manage my small business."

Bryan: "Live life by my 6 important core values:

- i. Family first
- ii. Build trusting relationships
- iii. Never compromise of honesty
- iv. Give back to the community
- v. Represent your work very well
- vi. Enjoy what you do all the time