

Hawai'i's National Philanthropy Day 2025

Celebrating those who make Hawai'i a better place. Meet the 2024 AFP Aloha Chapter Honorees.

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For years, the AFP Aloha Chapter has worked to strengthen Hawai'i's non-profit sector by equipping fundraising professionals with the tools to advance their missions. Now more than ever, the organization is dedicated to supporting our communities, which is why we're proud to announce our annual National Philanthropy Day event on Friday, November 14th. The event is a chance for all of us to recognize and celebrate the individuals, businesses, and foundations whose generous contributions of time, talent, and resources are making a real difference across the islands.

National Philanthropy Day, established in 1986 by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), is a global day of observance that

recognizes the profound impact of giving. It's an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the unsung heroes who work tirelessly to improve our communities. This year's celebration will be an all-day conference and awards luncheon for philanthropic leaders, held at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel.

The conference is designed to empower community leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the dynamic environment of philanthropy.

The day's events will also include our annual awards luncheon, celebrating this year's exceptional awardees who truly exemplify the spirit of aloha and the transformative power of giving.

This year, we are proud to welcome these awardees to our distinguished group of community leaders:

PAULETTE V. MAEHARA OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD:

Eric Co, Harold K.L. Castle Foundation

PAULETTE V. MAEHARA OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD:

**Nanci Kreidman, (Ret.),
Domestic Violence Action Center**

OUTSTANDING FOUNDATION AWARD:

Stupski Foundation

OUTSTANDING CORPORATION IN PHILANTHROPY:

Mauna Kea Resort

OUTSTANDING PHILANTHROPIST AWARD IN MEMORIAM:

Catherine "Kitty" Yannone

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISER AWARD:

Jung Song, East-West Center

OUTSTANDING SMALL BUSINESS AWARD:

Diamond Bakery

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISER IN PHILANTHROPY AWARD:

Alma Grocki, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

PAULETTE V. MAEHARA OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Eric Co

CEO, HAROLD K.L. CASTLE FOUNDATION



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/b/s/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero25.jpg>)

For more than 25 years, Eric Co has been committed to marine science, conservation and climate resilience in Hawai'i, the Pacific Islands and the Caribbean.

Co is passionate about building partnerships for co-management of ocean resources and focusing on innovative ways to open doors to new supporters. He's been a marine program coordinator at The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i and a Pacific region restoration specialist for NOAA.

Since 2011, Co has run the ocean programs at the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, leading all environmental grantmaking efforts, 'āina-based education and climate initiatives. In July, the foundation named him its new CEO.

Co also currently serves as the president of the board of directors of Sust'ainable Molokai, and is known as a generous mentor and community builder.

"He asks very smart questions that inspire improvement and innovation," says Peter Hayashida, senior consultant and principal at Marts&Lundy, a fundraising and philanthropic consulting firm. "What I find most striking is his humility and desire to lift up others, which can distract from his very real and tangible impacts on the projects

with which he's affiliated. There's a selflessness to his service."

PAULETTE V. MAEHARA OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Nanci Kreidman

(RET.), DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACTION CENTER



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/r/w/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero26.jpg>)

When Nanci Kreidman moved to Hawai'i in the 1970s, there was only one shelter for domestic violence survivors on O'ahu, and no programs in the state to help them.

Drawing on her background working at a community action program in New Jersey, Kreidman founded the Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC) and spent the next nearly 40 years supporting and advocating for women, children and, at times, men in abusive relationships.

"Clients often share how DVAC quite literally saved their lives. This would never have been possible were it not for the exceptional leadership of Nanci Kreidman," says Lani Moore, DVAC's marketing and development manager.

Although retired, Kreidman continues to mentor many of her former colleagues at the center, and has been instrumental in Commit to Keiki, a statewide collaborative for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families.

"She continues to serve as an inspiration for many people," Moore says.

Kreidman has also taken a leadership role in Allies in Resistance, which supports diversity, equity and inclusion in Hawai'i, and took part in the Hawai'i True Costs Coalition to address severe and chronic government underfunding for nonprofits.

OUTSTANDING FOUNDATION AWARD



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/m/a/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero27.jpg>)

To date, the Stupski Foundation has invested \$225 million in communities in Hawai'i and San Francisco to aid with postsecondary education, health care and food justice.

The organization is now spending down its \$365 million in assets to community partners by 2029 because “change can't wait,” and people working directly in communities can make the best decisions about where funding can make real change, says Cheri Souza, pictured above, the Hawai'i postsecondary success program officer at the Stupski Foundation.

“We commit to trust-based philanthropic practices, shifting decision-making power dynamics and breaking self-imposed rules to create systems that serve our communities equitably,” she says.

Larry and Joyce Stupski founded their organization in 1996, donating \$723 million to individual nonprofits and the Stupski Foundation.

Since then, the foundation has invested more than \$11.7 million in University of Hawai'i programs. In 2024, its food justice grantmaking totaled more than \$8 million in the state.

This year, \$4.5 million was invested in rural Hawai'i to expand youth access to education and cultural programs, and \$6.4 million to community-based organizations working to expand access to health education, family support, and essential care services across the Islands.



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/w/t/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero29.jpg>)

The resort has a sustained commitment to the environment with donations averaging \$500,000 annually to organizations like the Hawai'i Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy, and more than \$300,000 to the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative.

Specifically, it has donated over \$290,000 toward Hawai'i Land Trust's effort to purchase, protect and revitalize Māhukona, a 642-acre parcel on the Kohala Coast. That money helps ensure that 4 miles of coastline and hundreds of cultural and historic sites and recreational spaces will be maintained for the benefit of the public.

The resort also partners with the National Park Service to provide upkeep on a portion of the 175-mile Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail that traverses its property.

"What sets Mauna Kea Resort apart is their unwavering dedication to environmental sustainability and their innovative approach to offsetting the carbon footprint of their guests' stays," says Susanne Kurisu, executive director of the Hawaiian Legacy Reforestation Initiative. "They have proven to be instrumental in our journey toward a sustainable future."

OUTSTANDING PHILANTHROPIST AWARD IN MEMORIAM

Catherine “Kitty” Yannone

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COMMPAC



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/u/e/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero30.jpg>)

Catherine “Kitty” Yannone dedicated herself to advancing philanthropy and corporate social responsibility and ensuring her investments in nonprofit organizations made a meaningful difference.

Yannone was owner and CEO of public relations firm Communications-Pacific, where she mentored thousands of students through her internship program that included learning about volunteerism and the importance of giving back.

Yannone spent countless hours serving on boards within the community and sharing her public relations expertise. She donated funds and her time to the Red Cross, American Heart Association, Girl Scouts of America, YWCA and other nonprofit organizations. She also worked with Kapi’olani Medical Center to create Hawai’i’s first Ronald McDonald House on O’ahu.

She passed in 2023.

Close to Yannone’s heart was the nonprofit school Assets, Hawai’i’s only school specializing in educating children who are gifted, dyslexic, or have other language-based learning differences. She served as chair of Assets’ board of trustees, personally donated to the school and supported its tuition assistance fund.

“Kitty was a passionate person and when she believed in the mission of an organization, she went all out,” says Linda Jameson Myers, vice president of institutional advancement at Assets.

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL FUNDRAISER AWARD

Jung Song

CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, EAST-WEST CENTER



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/i/v/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero31.jpg>)

Earlier this year, in the midst of uncertainty regarding federal funding, Jung Song and her team secured over \$530,000—in just one month—in commitments from East-West Center alums and donors to support student scholarships.

Song joined the EWC in 2022, leading the office of development. During her tenure, the center's fundraising increased from \$668,000 in 2022 to \$2.82 million in 2024, a 322% increase.

"Jung's strong listening skills and direct communication style are assets in connecting with donors and understanding what motivates their philanthropic investments," says AJ Halagao, president of the Hawai'i Leadership Forum. "She deftly balances the funding priorities of the organization with individual donors' interests and passions."

Song began her career with community service and international relief organizations, and has worked as a fundraising professional for over 23 years.

She spent 20 years at the University of Hawai'i Foundation, where her efforts strongly contributed to the organization's annual fundraising growth, from \$11.5 million in 2002 to \$165 million in 2022.

Song also serves as vice president of the EWC Foundation and has mentored numerous fundraising professionals and students throughout her career.

OUTSTANDING YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY AWARD



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/u/y/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero32.jpg>)

While a sophomore at Punahou School, Kyla Nakashima noticed that many public high schools provided mentorship programs for public elementary schools. Not many private schools did, however.

To bridge that divide, Nakashima and a few friends started a mentoring program for students at Lincoln Elementary School. A year later, she had grown the program to 24 mentors, and this past year there were 44.

Nakashima provided training for the high school mentors and paired them with elementary students. During her time there, the mentors and younger students would meet once a week after school for conversation, activities and games.

And while Nakashima graduated with Punahou's Class of 2025, the program, funded entirely through donations, will continue. Before moving on, Nakashima trained a couple of mentors to take over the program this school year.

"This program could definitely be used as a template for other schools to do more outreach and bridge gaps within our community," says Wendy Chang, senior director of development at Punahou School.

Now in college, Nakashima says she'll remain active in her community through various service projects and will continue her work with youth.

OUTSTANDING SMALL BUSINESS AWARD

Diamond Bakery



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/e/s/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero33.jpg>)

In 2023, Diamond Bakery was inspired to transform the traditional clear wrapper of its iconic cookie boxes to feature Kalley-Mae Yee, that year's Kapi'olani Medical Center Children's Miracle Network Champion.

Yee, now 4, beat the odds after being born at 23 weeks and barely weighing over 1 pound.

The bakery donated 25 cents per box, raising over \$15,000 for the hospital, and donated over \$20,000 to Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and CMN's fundraising program.

"They don't just give—they collaborate, innovate and activate. Their leadership, especially under Butch Galdeira, pictured above, demonstrates the powerful role local businesses can play in elevating nonprofit missions," says Amanda Price, director of philanthropy, Hawai'i Pacific Health and the Kapi'olani Health Foundation.

Diamond Bakery also offers nonprofits a new way to fundraise and double their investments. Schools, clubs and other groups pay just \$5 for each 1-pound bag of freshly baked cookies and sell them for \$10. Their generosity reaches far beyond as they've championed other keiki-focused causes, including Shriners Children's Hawai'i, reinforcing their commitment to Hawai'i's families.

The 103-year-old company exemplifies what it means to be a community-centered business, Price says. "They are not only making cookies and crackers—they are making a difference."

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISER IN PHILANTHROPY AWARD

Alma Grocki

U.S. NAVY (RET.)



(<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/content/uploads/2025/11/p/y/1125-hb-1800x1200-web-hero34.jpg>)

In 1977, Alma Grocki became the first woman from Hawai'i to enter the U.S. Naval Academy. She retired from the Navy in 2016, a two-star admiral.

Since her retirement, Grocki has served on the boards of Pacific Historic Parks, the USS Battleship Missouri Memorial, the Pearl Harbor Aviation Museum and the Ke'ehi Lagoon Memorial.

And while she's served in numerous other military related volunteer roles, Grocki's philanthropy also extends to nonmilitary nonprofits. For example, she regularly donates her handcrafted gemstone jewelry to charity auctions across Hawai'i.

One of the beneficiaries of those donations is Assets School. Since 2009, her commitment and contributions to Assets have "had a ripple effect, encouraging others to contribute their time, talent, and treasure to the cause," says Linda Myers, vice president of institutional advancement at the school.

Grocki has also represented Assets in promotional television news segments, expanding visibility and boosting support for the school.

"Alma is a fierce ambassador educating others about giftedness, dyslexia and language-based learning differences, emphasizing the importance of early intervention," Myers says. "Her engagement across multiple nonprofit organizations reflects her belief in service and her broad impact on the local community."

This article appears in the November 2025 (<https://www.hawaiibusiness.com/issue/hawaii-business-magazine/november-2025/>) issue of Hawaii Business Magazine.

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