

# Hawaii Buddhist Women's News

HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII FEDERATION OF BUDDHIST WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS

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## Message from the President: Lois Toyama

The Buddhist Women's Association had to be creative in their support for peace and equality on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day this year. Because of the pandemic, the annual parade was cancelled. To replace the marching unit which we usually have, we had to go virtual. Thanks to a committee made up of Irene Nakamoto, Penny Atcheson, Dave Atcheson, Liane Vilorio, Sharon Nohara, Lois Toyama, Carol Valentine, and Claire Tamamoto and some expert editing by Jenny Taira of Ohana Arts, we were able to produce a twelve-minute video tribute which is available on the Kyodan YouTube Channel. During the first week, the video has been viewed over 350 times. Mahalo to Rev. Blayne Higa of Kona Hongwanji for his inspiring

Dharma talk which is on the video and to the students of Ohana Arts for their beautiful performance of the song, "Peace on Your Wings." If you haven't seen it yet, be sure to take a look.

In addition to the video, a menu of activities that temples could do was sent to BWA Units statewide. Many temples draped their Shinran Shonin statues with tsuru lei in honor of Dr. King. Pacific Buddhist Academy students strung lei and draped them on the Shinran statue at Hawaii Betsuin.

Honolulu dharma schools, Mililani Dharma School and Kona Hongwanji Preschool students made posters



featuring Dr. King's teachings. Puna Hongwanji conducted a community seminar as well as a food drive in commemoration of Dr. King's Poor People's Campaign. Individuals made monetary contributions to their local food banks.

Thank you for all of your efforts to make this a meaningful statewide effort. A member of the NAACP parade planning committee made this comment in response to your efforts, "Thank you for being who you are. Believe it or not, I look at your organization as my sisters. The Hawaii Buddhist Women's Association has shown honor for Dr. King, and for that alone I am grateful."

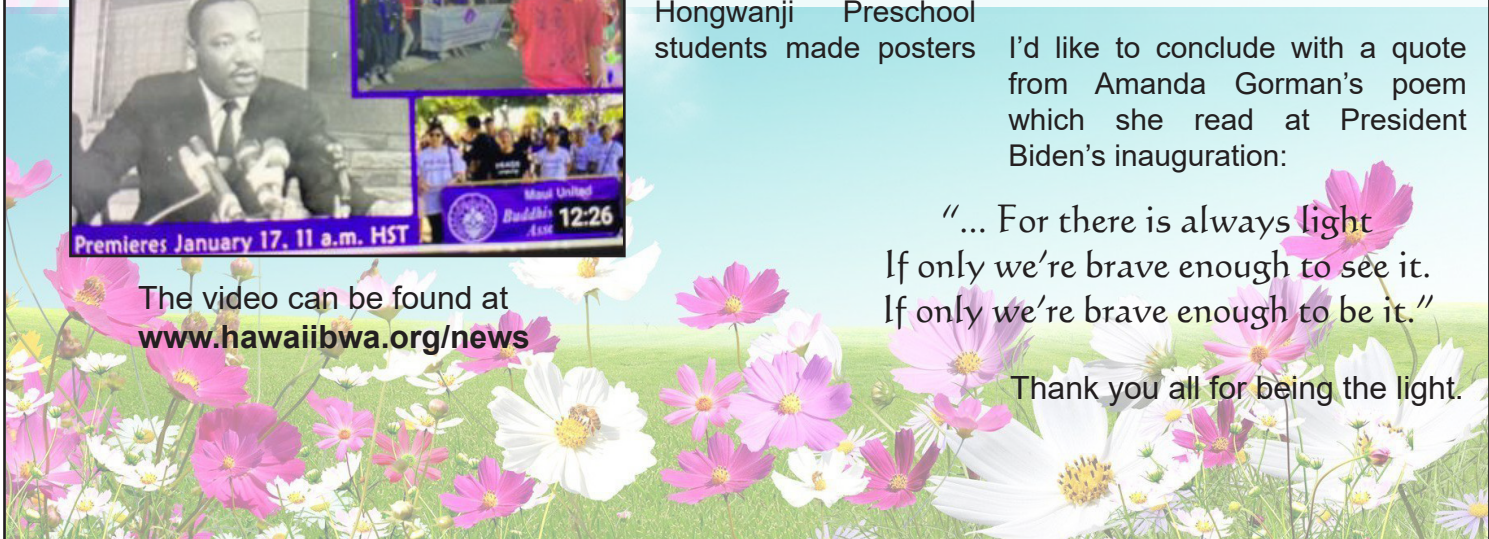
I'd like to conclude with a quote from Amanda Gorman's poem which she read at President Biden's inauguration:

"... For there is always light  
If only we're brave enough to see it.  
If only we're brave enough to be it."

Thank you all for being the light.



The video can be found at [www.hawaiibwa.org/news](http://www.hawaiibwa.org/news)



# MAUI UNITED BWA

Charlotte Wilkinson



2021 has arrived! With the vaccine in sight, we are steadfast and ready to face each day with an open mind and a smile.

Welcome to incoming MUBWA President Diane Kosaka. What are you most looking forward to in 2021? "Our Fall and Spring General Assemblies are the only times all MUBWA members are able to get together for fellowship and worship, and to conduct business and participate in educational activities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel the 2020 assemblies and for 2021, we will have a combination Representative Assembly-Spring General Assembly zoom meeting in March."

"We look forward to having the coronavirus vaccination available to all by summer. We look forward to gathering safely in-person by fall. Hopefully, and what we are really looking forward to in 2021 is hosting an IN-PERSON Fall General Assembly in late October

or early November at Makawao Buddhist Temple. Mimy Kiyohara, our Maui education chairperson, has already contacted some interesting possibilities for the education portion. I hope all my 'looking forwards' transition to realities!"

In October 2020 due to COVID-19 cases on Lanai, Governor Ige signed an emergency Lanai two week mandatory "stay-at-home" order. Upon hearing this declaration, the MUBWA leaders reacted in a spirited and thankful way. Each unit on Maui gathered masks, sanitation products, food, word find and crossword puzzle magazines and more to ship to Lanai. Lanai BWA President Catherine Nohara said they were truly grateful. They were able to pack and distribute 15 boxes filled to the brim with goodies. "Every

member opened their door with the joy of seeing a friend bringing your gifts."

Na Keiki O Emalia was the recipient of the 2020 MUBWA Dana Award of \$500. Founded in 2015, it provides support to grieving children, teens, and their families to help them heal after the death of a loved one.

MUBWA membership is open to all women, young adults, and men. Brian Hashiro, newly elected Wailuku Hongwanji BWA President, when asked why he joined the BWA, he replied, "I joined so I could provide some service to my home temple. It has been an interesting two years so far and it should get even more interesting in the following years. After some prodding from Rev. Murakami, I agreed to serve as president."

Yes, any person interested in the teachings of Buddhism and the mission of the organization is welcome to join. Contact your temple office to seek further information.

Hideiko Saruwatari and Rosanna Richardson displaying some of the gift relief packages from the members of MUBWA.



2020 MUBWA Dana Award recipient was Na Keiki O Emalia. Left: Board member Marnie Masuda. Center: Executive Director Terri Erwin. MUBWA Dana Committee L-R: Colleen Suyama, Kallie Keith-Agaran, and Yukari Murakami.



# HAWAII ISLAND UNITED BWA

Jane Iida



The Hawaii Island United Hongwanji BWA held a Memorial Service and General Membership meeting on October 18, 2020, via ZOOM. The Service memorialized the members lost during the year, honored the centenarians, and recognized nine new members of the organization.

Rev. Blayne Higa officiated the service and provided a powerful message on "Finding Meaning and Joy during COVID-19." He related the story of a little bird who tried to put out a forest fire by doing what it could do. "Finding meaning during this time is a personal journey of

self-discovery. Each of us is like the little bird, 'doing what we can do.' This is the way to move forward just as we are in these challenging times. This is the living Nembutsu sustaining our lives."

President Linda Nagai presided over the General Membership meeting. The following 2021-2022 Officers were elected and installed: President--Ellen Okano, Immediate Past President and Secretary--Linda Nagai, 1st Vice President--Lynn Higashi, 2nd Vice President--Jane Iida, General Fund Treasurer--Eileen Usagawa, Assistant Treasurer--Bessie Kubo, Auditors--Deborah

Fried, Kay Aoki, Lynn Higashi, and Claudia Chang, Federation Directors--Carol Tsunozumi and Shawn Sato.

Our 2020 Dana Fund donation was given to the Peace Committee of Honokaa Hongwanji for their weekly "Feeding the Keiki and Kupuna" program, where BWA members play a key role as volunteers. Due to the pandemic, to-go meals are drive through or walk up. Since this program's inception in February 2019, it has provided nearly 11,000 meals.



Hilo Betsuin BWA officers for 2020 - 2021



# HONOLULU UNITED BWA

Ann Nakata

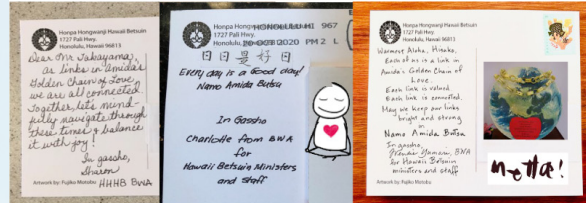


## Hawaii Betsuin BWA:

In October, the executive board handwrote 718 postcards to temple members. The goal was to keep the link between the temple and its members strong. It was signed with their names and from the ministers and staff.



Jo desMarets spearheaded a project to send 170 fabric masks and hand-wipes to Lanai Hongwanji for community distribution in November.



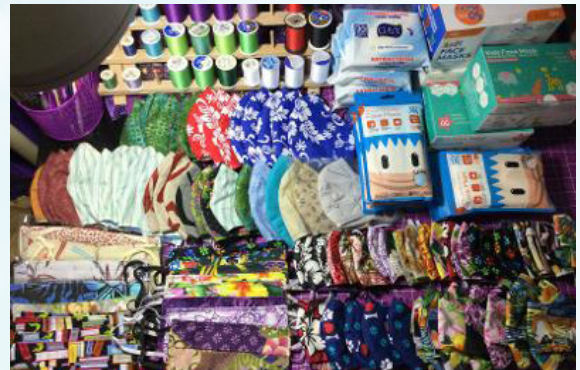
Postcards sent to Hawaii Betsuin members

## Jikoen Hongwanji BWA:

Jikoen BWA will continue to support the Ohana meals for Family Promise. They want to acknowledge Donna Higashi for coordinating this community service.

## Moiliili Hongwanji BWA:

Moiliili Hongwanji BWA observed its 95th anniversary in 2020 and donated a white brocade bereavement uchishiki or altar cloth. Presently, the temple is using another set which was donated for its 50th anniversary.



Hawaii Betsuin BWA sent masks to Lanai

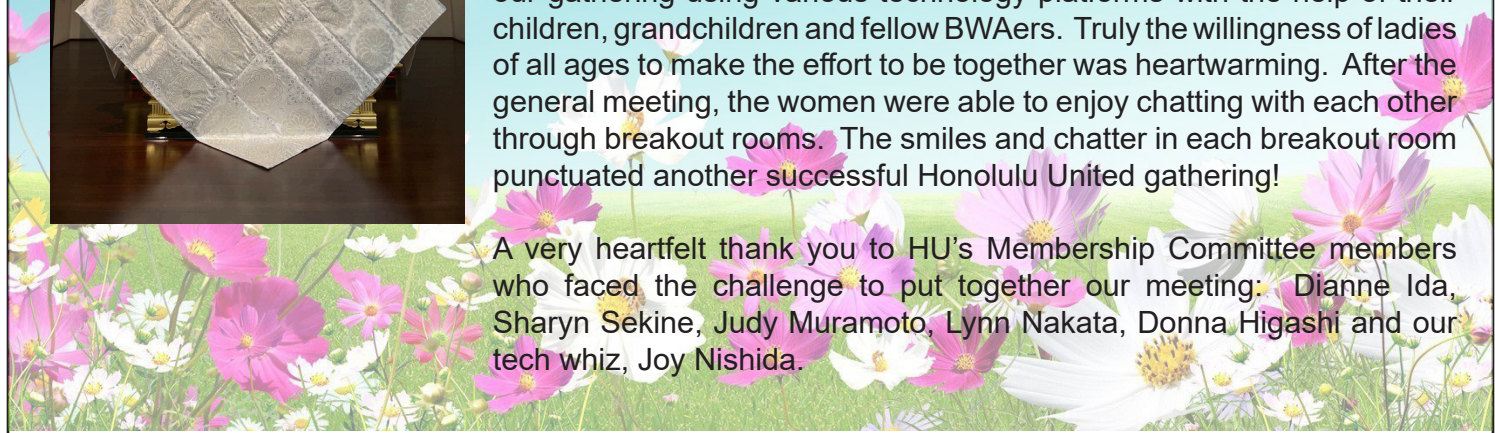


## General Membership Meeting:

Contributed by Lois Ohta, Chair

Onward went the BWA Zoomers from Hawaii Betsuin, Jikoen and Moiliili Hongwanji! Some 70+ women participated via Zoom in our annual General Membership Meeting on November 28th. President Sharyn Sekine was our inspiring speaker who recognized how **B**rave, **W**illing and **A**wesome our women have been in “overcoming obstacles” in 2020. It was indeed impressive to see 90+ year olds be present at our gathering using various technology platforms with the help of their children, grandchildren and fellow BWAers. Truly the willingness of ladies of all ages to make the effort to be together was heartwarming. After the general meeting, the women were able to enjoy chatting with each other through breakout rooms. The smiles and chatter in each breakout room punctuated another successful Honolulu United gathering!

A very heartfelt thank you to HU's Membership Committee members who faced the challenge to put together our meeting: Dianne Ida, Sharyn Sekine, Judy Muramoto, Lynn Nakata, Donna Higashi and our tech whiz, Joy Nishida.



# KAUAI UNITED BWA

Karen Nishimoto



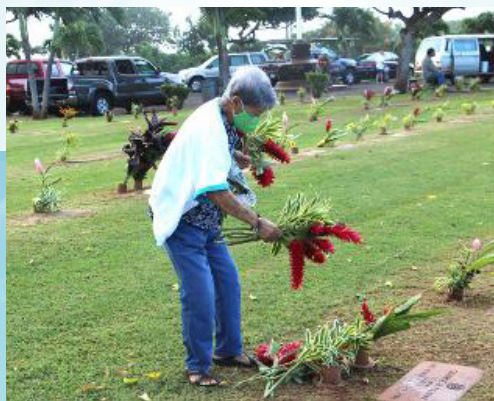
A highlight of November was the annual Kapaa Interfaith Thanksgiving Service and Luncheon. This year the Covid-19 pandemic caused concern about having the event. Fortunately, the Kapaa Interfaith Alliance and Mark Oyama of Contemporary Flavors realized the need to provide a hot meal for the community to celebrate in the spirit of Thanksgiving and express gratitude for the many blessings we share. There were 713 meals packed and delivered by Interfaith volunteers at a drive

people who were home alone. Many thanks to our BWA ladies who brought smiles to the elderly and wished them a Happy Thanksgiving.

With the same spirit of generosity and gratitude, Lihue Hongwanji held a Rice Roundup on November 14. It was a wonderful sight to see so many church and community members drive through the church grounds to drop off their bags of rice and monetary donations. Thanks go to Lynette Mizuo for coming up with the idea and to the temple for sponsoring this event. Over 3,000 pounds of rice and many monetary donations were collected and donated to the Kauai Independent Food Bank. Yee Haw!



held in 1998. At that time, Barbara Funamura, member of Koloa Hongwanji, suggested that all graves at Kauai Veterans Cemetery in Hanapepe be decorated for the annual Veterans Day Service, and that potted marigolds be used to honor Gold Star Mothers. Many years have passed since the first Lonesome Grave Project, but the tradition continues. We may no longer use just marigolds, but members, families and friends of West Kauai Hongwanji, Kapaa Hongwanji and Lihue Hongwanji temples still gather every November 10 to decorate with flowers and greenery to ensure there is no "lonesome grave."



The Kauai United BWA members participated in the Lonesome Grave Project on November 10. This service project was first

Even in the difficult and unusual time of a world pandemic, our Kauai United BWA has proved to be healthy and strong in their efforts to provide aid and comfort to our community. Our mask-wearing, socially distanced members were committed to meeting the

through at the Kapaa Hongwanji Social Hall on November 26.

The BWA members and Jr. YBA volunteered to assist with the packing and delivering of meals to the homebound, disabled and



challenges of this year. They carried on traditions and were open to new ways of responding to community needs. They truly did embrace generosity and openness.



# OAHU UNITED BWA

Susan Morishige

## Annual Membership Meeting



the members at Aiea returned home. The zoom meeting resumed and further Bylaw amendments on clarifying At-Large membership and representation, and gender equality were discussed but were not voted on.

**Aiea** Hongwanji BWA members have been holding small in-person monthly meetings in the temple, and workshops on card and envelope making. They provided gift bags to the Aiea Hongwanji Preschoolers and the kupuna at the Lotus Adult Day Care, and plan to present 30 walker bags to the daycare in February.

On December 12, 2020, the OUHHBWA held what President Claire Tamamoto has called our first blended (in-person and online) Annual Membership Meeting and Educational Seminar. Oahu's bylaws allowed electronic meetings only for Board meetings. To amend our Bylaws to allow electronic meetings for all our meetings, which had to be done in person at an annual membership

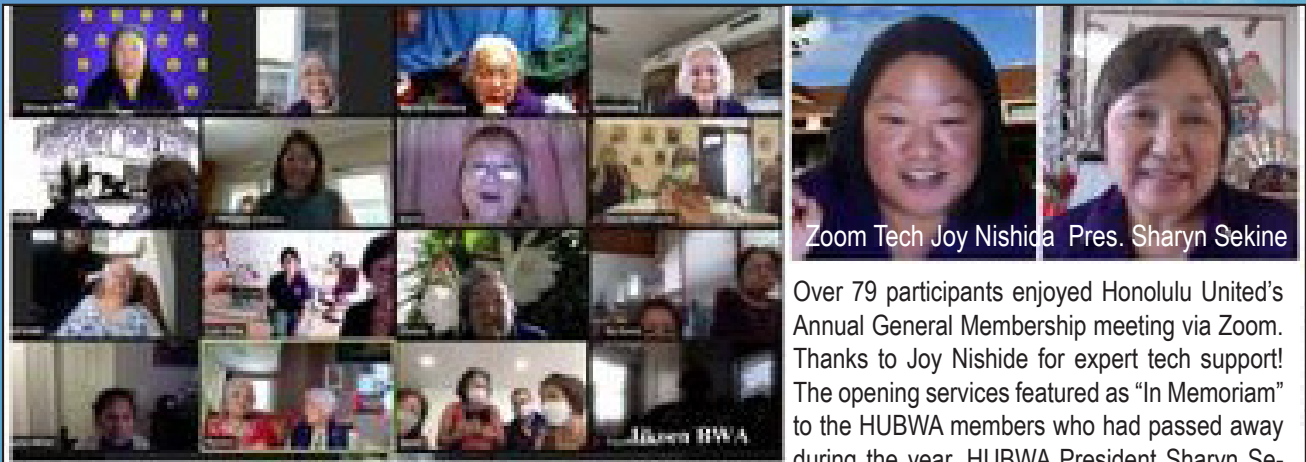
meeting, five members met in the **Aiea** Hongwanji temple for our Annual Meeting. The amendment was effective immediately upon approval, and more Oahu United members then participated via Zoom to elect officers for 2021. The Memorial Service officiated by Rev. Shawn Yagi then followed to recognize members who had passed away during the year. Our guest speaker was Rev.

Blayne Higa from Kona Hongwanji. Rev. Mariko Nishiyama installed the officers in the temple and online. A Chair Yoga workshop was led by Demaris Martinez while

**Mililani Hongwanji** BWA members have been meeting via Zoom since October. They observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 18 by making a lei of peace of origami cranes for their temple statute of Shinran Shonin, and will have a trial Country Store in February. They are presently collecting applications for their annual BWA Scholarship and canned goods and monetary donations for their Dana Day donation to the Hawaii Food Bank.



# Honolulu United BWA General Membership Meeting November 28, 2020



Zoom Tech Joy Nishida Pres. Sharyn Sekine

Over 79 participants enjoyed Honolulu United's Annual General Membership meeting via Zoom. Thanks to Joy Nishida for expert tech support! The opening services featured as "In Memoriam" to the HUBWA members who had passed away during the year. HUBWA President Sharyn Sekine presented an inspiring message describing her personal journey in the BWA noting, "... we share in the camaraderie of working together for the temple and BWA, and share in each other's joys, laughs, and sorrows." Then followed a delightful slideshow of HUBWA members to the music of Lady Noriko Ohtani's *Hohoemi to Tomoni*. Following the General Membership Meeting, participants were assigned to small break out rooms for a fun "talk story" time. The program closed with unit photos of members' smiling mahalos and alohas.

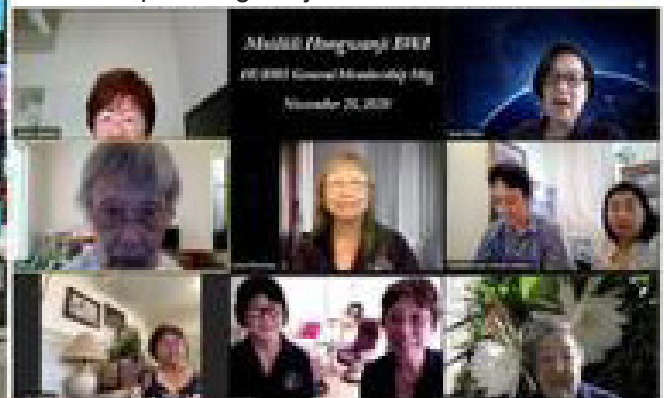
## HUBWA Zoom Meeting



Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin BWA



Jikoen Hongwanji BWA




Collage by Ruth Tokumi  
(Hawaii Betsuin)

# Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2021 and New BWA Officers



To honor the peace legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., Pacific Buddhist Academy students draped leis of peace, made from origami cranes, on the statue of Shinran Shonin on Jan. 14. At the base of the statue, PBA students placed strings of white origami cranes made by Craigsides Retirement Community residents. On the statue's hand, which was much higher, Colleen Kunishige used a bamboo pole to help students drape the leis of peace they had strung of colorful cranes folded by BWA members. Rimban Toyokazu Hagio and Rev. Yuika Hasebe and members of the BWA Executive Board gathered around the lei-draped Shinran Shonin Statue to commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2021.

 "I will write PEACE on your wings and you will fly around the world." Sadako Sasaki



Collage by Ruth Tokumi  
(Hawaii Betsuin)



# Pacific Buddhist Academy Celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 2021



A week later, January 21, PBA students replaced the leis of peace draped on the Shinran statue with new leis. On the new leis of white origami cranes, the students had written positive messages such as "Love is never wrong" and "You matter." Although there was no MLK parade in Waikiki this year because of COVID-19 concerns, PBA and BWA were please to be able to participate in alternative activities to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy of peace.



Collage by Ruth Tokumi  
(Hawaii Betsuin)



## Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Tribute At Mililani Hongwanji



Martin Luther King Day tribute at  
Mililani Hongwanji: with Lyn Watanabe,  
Aileen Sato and Joyce Ogawa

