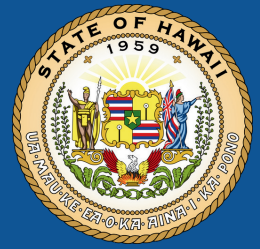


# COMMUNITY REPORT

## SENATE DISTRICT 18 | NOVEMBER 2023



Serving Mililani Town, Waipi'o Gentry, Crestview, Waikele, portion of Waipahu, Village Park, Royal Kunia



Michelle  
**KIDANI**

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### *Aloha Friends and Neighbors,*

As we step into November, a month filled with gratitude and reflection, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our courageous firefighters, first responders, and all other Federal, State, and City officials who have united to combat the recent fires statewide, including in Mililani Mauka. Their resolve and dedication amidst such crises represent the resilient spirit of our community and highlight the importance of remaining vigilant, prepared, and responsive to fire safety concerns.

I continue to reflect upon the impact of the musical "Peace On Your Wings," which I had the honor of attending earlier this month. Guided by Ohana Arts, our keiki illuminated the stage with incredible talent and professionalism, bringing the story of Sadako Sasaki and her 1,000 origami cranes to life. Their performances, filled with vibrant songs, dances, and emotions, captivated the audience, demonstrating that the arts are a crucial cornerstone of our keiki's education. These performances follow the cast's recent trip to Hiroshima, Japan, and I invite you to read on to learn more about their journey.

As the holidays approach, staying ahead of flu and COVID-19 is key to a healthy season. Hawai'i's health officials recommend the latest COVID-19 boosters, available since mid-September, especially for those whose last vaccine was over two months ago. I urge you to get your yearly flu vaccination and consider the COVID-19 booster to fortify your immunity and ensure a healthy holiday season for you and your family.

Lastly, I want to express a sincere mahalo to you, my neighbors of Senate District 18, for entrusting me with the honor of serving you. I remain committed to working tirelessly on behalf of our deserving local families. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, I send my warmest wishes for a safe, healthy, and joyful holiday season to you and your loved ones. Happy Thanksgiving!



Above, from left to right: myself with Ohana Arts Co-Founders Cari Chung, Jennifer Taira, and Laurie Rubin, with Choreographer Danielle Bensky; Superintendent Keith Hayashi, long-time volunteer Shirley Lee, and Senate Deputy Sergeant-At-Arms Park Kaleiwahea.

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## Peace On Your Wings, a Musical Presented by Ohana Arts

The recent Honolulu performances of “Peace On Your Wings” were particularly meaningful, following the cast’s debut in Hiroshima, Japan at the Aster Plaza. There, our talented performers not only shared Sadako’s story but also embodied messages of peace and connection, fostering friendships and understanding. Seeing their transformative journey from Hiroshima to Honolulu was inspiring. Cast members shared with me backstage that they developed a deeper bond with Sadako

and her story after visiting Hiroshima, and in turn, enhanced their performances with profound insight. I am proud to support our keiki in arts education and to witness their growth into community leaders and cultural ambassadors as they spread hope and peace through their art.

*At right, backstage before the show, I joined the cast and crew’s pre-show circle, where they shared their experiences from Japan and exchanged inspirational words. It was truly magical!*



## Senate Ways and Means Committee Visit Pāhoa Elementary on Hawai‘i Island



As a member of the Senate Ways and Means (WAM) Committee and Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, I had the opportunity to participate in a series of site visits on Hawai‘i Island. These visits allow us to learn from State officials about key issues and priorities.

One of the highlights of our visit was a stop at Pāhoa Elementary, where we received updates on important initiatives, including the Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program. Earlier this year, the Legislature committed \$660,000 to the initiative which aims to boost the State’s early childhood workforce. This initiative is the first publicly funded tuition stipend program available to current and future practitioners in the field for both Hawaiian and English mediums.

I firmly believe our early childhood workforce, especially those in the classroom working directly with children, are the backbone of a quality program. I am grateful to Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke for leading these efforts through the Ready Keiki Initiative. With continued partnership between the Legislature and State departments, we can continue to provide opportunities for our keiki and early childhood educators.

To apply for the Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, please visit the Executive Office on Early Learning’s website for more details: <https://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/>.



*Above, all smiles while sharing a heartwarming embrace in a vibrant classroom; below L-R, Sen. Kim, Sen. San Buenaventura, and I engaging with a student.*

## Koa Vista Groundbreaking

I had the opportunity to attend a groundbreaking ceremony for Koa Vista I, an affordable rental project for qualifying seniors and families. The development, located off Ka Uka Boulevard across from Waipi‘o Costco, will feature 192 units to provide quality housing options for seniors with incomes between 30 and 60 percent of the area median income. Koa Vista I is set to open its doors by late 2024 and is funded through the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation and supported by tax credits and revenue bonds.

*Above, participating in the groundbreaking ceremony; below L-R, with Mayor Rick Blangiardi and Kahu Kordell Kekoa; photo of construction project’s current stage.*

