



Full of Happiness

Piha me ka Hau'oli

Meals from the Heart, Food for the Soul

HAWAI'I MEALS ON WHEELS NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2025

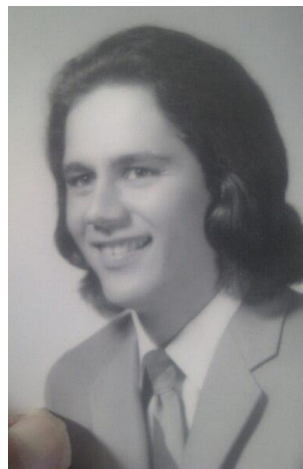
A Ray of Light: How Meals and Kindness Brighten Carl's Days

As Carl's world grew smaller and darker, Hawai'i Meals on Wheels became a lifeline he never expected.

Born and raised in Honolulu, Carl remembers a time when life revolved around surfing and playing volleyball. A graduate of Roosevelt High School, he became a merchant marine, operating tugboats transporting cargo between O'ahu, the neighbor islands, Guam, and Samoa. It was a job he loved, but it came with challenges.

Overtime, the physical demands of his work took a toll on his health. When he started falling multiple times a day, he knew something was wrong. One day, alone at home, he suffered a stroke. It was two days before his daughter found him.

By then, the damage was done: Carl was paralyzed on his right side and permanently blind in his left eye. After a long career as a seaman, his health forced him into retirement at age 68.



Carl's high school senior portrait circa 1972.



Meal delivery driver Jon drops off a hot meal and reminisces with Carl about music venues from the 70s and 80s.

Though he worked hard to regain his mobility and speech, Carl's vision continued to decline. Now legally blind, he struggles with daily tasks that once felt effortless.

"I'm doing the laundry, and I can't see the buttons on the washing machine. Warm wash? Cold wash? If there's a neighbor there, I'm not afraid to ask them for help anymore."

Continue inside...

A Ray of Light

Continued from cover

Cooking has also become a challenge.

"Because my eyesight is going, I stopped cooking. One time I left the stove on when I turned off the wrong burner. I went out, and when I came back, the stove was red hot! Ever since then, I don't even try to cook," Carl shared.

After this close call, Carl's case worker recommended Hawai'i Meals on Wheels. **It was a turning point for him.** Soon, hot meals were delivered to his apartment Monday through Friday.

"Oh man, I love the meals!" Carl said with a smile. "I like their curry. I get beef stew, teriyaki hamburger, and fish with some kind of delicious topping. And on the side, there's sometimes cake and almond float. Before Hawai'i Meals on Wheels, I was eating mostly cold cuts. Also, tuna and mayonnaise – mix it around and put it on bread."

A few months after he started receiving meals, Carl mentioned to our team that he didn't have a microwave. **Within days, our team delivered both his meal and a microwave to his home.** Overwhelmed by the kindness, Carl called us that morning in tears.

"I was taken aback! I'm all set up now. If I have an extra meal or leftovers, I leave it in the icebox and can reheat them later," he shared.

Carl is thankful for visits from his meal delivery drivers. **One driver, Jon, has become a special part of his week.**

"I hear Jon when he's coming down the hallway. He calls out my name. And I know his voice! I'm so grateful," Carl shared.

As they got to know each other, Carl and Jon discovered they shared a love for music and even had mutual musician friends. Carl grew up with Hawaiian musicians, including the Makaha Sons, Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, and Skippy Ioane. Talking story about their pasts and shared connections strengthened their bond, turning meal deliveries into moments of joy.

Thanks to generous supporters like you, homebound kūpuna like Carl can receive nutritious meals and vital social connections that brighten their days and keep isolation at bay. ***Mahalo for your support!***





1,365
clients

12
kitchen partners

**RECORD
HIGH!**

202,832
meals delivered

70%
medically tailored
(customized) meals

774
average meals
delivered daily

207
customized
meal types

135
referral calls
per month

60%
female
clients

95
meal delivery routes

78
median age

Aloha!

In 2024, we closed the year with a remarkable milestone: delivering a record-breaking 202,832 meals to over 1,300 kūpuna across the island. ***This extraordinary achievement was made possible by our compassionate volunteers, dedicated staff, and generous supporters like you!***



Every kūpuna deserves dignity, care, and connection. The relief we witness when kūpuna learn they'll receive nourishing meals is truly profound. ***Yet, there are still many kūpuna waiting for help.*** As more individuals reach out for assistance, our waitlist continues to grow.

With your support, no one has to face hunger or isolation alone. ***Together, we provide more than meals—we deliver hope and connection to those in need.***

Mahalo!

Michelle Cordero-Lee, CEO

Join us in making a difference!

Become a member of the Gold Plate Club by making a monthly donation. \$45 will help provide one week of nutrition meals to a homebound kupuna.



Scan to make a gift or visit hnow.org/gift

Congratulations to our volunteers celebrating special anniversaries!

40 Years of Services

Sandy Delmonte

15 Years of Services

David Gutierrez
Wendy Wong

10 Years of Services

Dave Au
Charles Cabral
Janice Ishiara
Naomi Mahiko

5 Years of Services

Emma Bell	Tom Kiyabu
Jon and Susan Fukuda	Leslie Ann Kumia
Sheryl Gushi	Abe Lee
Eric Hamada	Melvin Nakama
Michelle Herrera	Priscilla Purington
John Huey	Kerry Schuman
Kimberly Itagaki	Richard Smylie
Lisa Jack	Lorraine Sugimoto

We have open routes in your neighborhood!

Become a meal delivery volunteer. Help whenever your schedule allows.



Scan to share your availability or visit hnow.org/volunteer

Q&A with Volunteer Sandy Delmonte Celebrating 40 Years!

Meet Sandy! For four decades, **Sandy Delmonte**, 82, has been a dedicated meal delivery volunteer. She joined Hawai'i Meals on Wheels in 1985—when the organization was just getting started—all while raising her five children. Today, Sandy is a grandmother of 12 and soon to be a great-grandmother. While much has changed over the years, one thing has remained constant: Sandy's unwavering commitment to those on her route. As our longest-serving volunteer, Sandy has touched countless lives. We sat down with her to learn what has kept her going all these years.

What inspired you to become a meal delivery volunteer? A few years after moving from California to Hawai'i, my kids were in school, and I thought why not? Back then, I picked up meals at Chaminade and delivered them to clients from Kaimuki to Hawaii Kai. Today, it's convenient to pick up meals from Lunalilo Kitchen and deliver to clients close to home. I've always done the routes by myself, but sometimes I made my grandkids come along!

What's changed over time? Meals on Wheels has done a great job tailoring meals to clients' needs. Meals used to be one size fits all. But today, people who are



Every week, Sandy delivers meals to clients on her Hawaii Kai route. Her cheerful greeting makes their days a whole lot brighter!

diabetic can request a special meal. I've also had others on my route who are lactose intolerant – juice only, no milk. One of my clients today requests fresh fruit only.

What is most rewarding about volunteering?

The appreciation from those I deliver to is the most rewarding part. They're always so kind and thankful. Most of my clients are older, but occasionally, I deliver to someone younger who needs temporary help. It feels good to be able to support them.

What is it like serving kūpuna many of whom are around your age or younger? I can ask: How's your back today? And they know I understand. I have a new, older client on my route who's been afraid to open her door all the way. Last week, we talked about the recent storm, and I can see she's starting to open up and trust me a little more.

What keeps you inspired? Volunteering for four decades – it kind of snuck up on me! I grew up being taught that giving is just something you do. The Bible says: God loves a cheerful giver. Volunteering has always been part of my life, and I don't see that changing. As for staying healthy, I credit my walks around the neighborhood. I'm grateful I can still deliver meals.



Sandy (in pink) with her husband Jim and their five children in 1984.

Mahalo, Sandy, for your heart of service and outstanding dedication and care!



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Save the Dates: Holiday Drive-Thru Fundraisers

Ohana Feast Pack Drive-Thru

Kamehameha Day Weekend

Saturday, June 7, 2025

Help kūpuna AND enjoy a delicious meal for two packed with ono Hawaiian food! Plan ahead and have a plate lunch party with your ohana and friends.

Thanksgiving Drive-Thru

Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 27, 2025

Skip the cooking! Enjoy a delicious holiday feast with some amazing fixings! Scan the QR code below to join our email list and be the first to place your order online.



Stay up to date! Scan to join Hawai'i Meals on Wheels email list.