

- DHS Director Staff Officers/ Division Administrators Meeting Oct. 7th at 9 a.m.
- HCDCH Executive Director's Meeting October 5th at 9 a.m.
- OYS Executive Director's staff meeting October 14th at 8:30 a.m.

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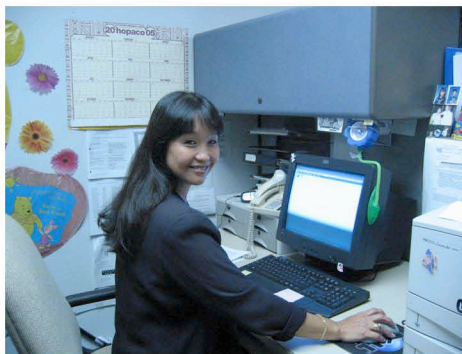
Swimming with life's current

Diane Kutsunai knows the water. This one-time Olympic swimming hopeful approaches life like she does the pool, one stroke at a time.

Kutsunai, program specialist for the Support Services Office at the DHS Social Services Division (SSD) is one of several workers recognized by Department administrators and staff officers for their outstanding work this year.

"Her positive attitude, high energy, and extensive knowledge of her work makes her an asset to the Division," said Amy Tsark, acting administrator for SSD.

Kutsunai, her straight, jet black hair cascading from



Diane Kutsunai

"I love challenges. I'm always open to new things."

-Diane Kutsunai, SSD

her shoulders, is always a blush away from a smile. She is quiet when asked about her accomplishments.

"I love challenges," she says. "I'm always open to new things."

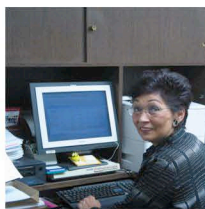
She surrounds herself with trinkets that evoke happiness. Her office space is adorned with Winnie the Pooh memorabilia, balloons, flowers, pictures even bags.

On any given day, Kutsunai can be found involved in several projects, from helping to maintain the child protective services system (CPSS) to troubleshooting problems with the Division's e-mail.

Outside of work she is an electrician in training. And she is open to trying other activities.

"As long as it challenges me," she says.

Thirty years and still going strong



Liz Kimura

Elizabeth Kimura's eyes are fixed on the computer screen when the phone chirps. She swivels her chair from the monitor to the desk, her fingers instinctively reaching for a black pen.

"Director's Office."

She is a person on the move, ready to spring out of her chair and into the next task. "Liz" as she is affectionately called by co-workers, is one of three secretaries in the Department of Human Services

(DHS) Director's Office. And in the metropolitan that is the DHS, Liz helps to direct, deflect and diffuse. She calms, consoles and coordinates.

Public service is never an easy job and Liz knew that 30 years ago when she entered state government. But despite the complaints, the screams and shouts, the ramblings that can go on for days, she loves what she does.

"There's never a dull moment," she says with a laugh. "Everyday is different."

Thirty years and then some. For Liz, it's just another day at the office.

A life dedicated to helping children



John Walters

He is a bearded, larger-than-life man full of boom box laughter. He is a trailblazer, his accomplishments paving the way for others in the Child Welfare Services Branch of the Department.

John Walters, the man who loves

long walks, big trucks and broke-da-mouth taco, calls DHS home. Here for the past 18 years, he has been doing his life's work, helping children and families.

He grew up in the plantation town of Kau, where child abuse was almost as common as someone saying "howzit." One of those abused children, he remembers, walked the streets everyday shaking with fear.

Her name was Lily, and she exhibited the classic signs of a sexual abuse victim. She had no friends, hated being touched, wore jackets all the time even during the summer, and hardly ever smiled.

"Kids don't need to be scared."

They don't need to get hurt."

-John Walters

John recalls how fragile she was, how frightened she looked when she ventured outside her home. Then suddenly she stopped coming outside. He found out later, Lily went home one day and just passed away.

"Kids don't need to be scared," he says. "They don't need to get hurt."

Decades later John became a social worker.

"I liked the idea that kids can be safe and I can do something about it," he said. "I kind of just fell into social work."

Her smile lights up the room and the workplace

Dimples.

Patti Taketa's smile is hard to miss. Yet while her dimples catches eyes, Patti's work in the Department's Personnel Office wins praise everywhere.

DHS Personnel Officer Ed Nose calls Patti "a valuable member of the Personnel team, who has done an outstanding job to improve our recruiting efforts."



Patti Taketa

Patti loves interaction. The prospect of going out, meeting new

people, and listening to their stories led her to the DHS Personnel Office more than 15 years ago.

Patti, a personnel management specialist, is one of several people charged with boosting the Department's workforce.

"What really motivated me to take this job was the staff," she said. "Doing my job is easy when you have staff that are dedicated and motivated."

Her motto at work is fairness and consistency.

"Fairness and consistency," she said. "If you continuously do that, it keeps you out of trouble."

OYS worker believes in "we did" not "I did"

She talks slightly louder than a whisper. And while her words may not carry high decibels, Winifred Doi's work with the Office of Youth Services (OYS) speaks volumes about her importance to this agency.

"Wini," a program specialist at OYS is low key about her role in shaping the agency.

"One person cannot do everything," she says. "It takes a team." OYS Executive Director Sharon Agnew says Doi helps to steer the agency in a positive direction.

"I really value the fact that if she doesn't agree with me, she'll tell me," Agnew said. "She shares her opinion."

Wini, who keeps track of the

agency's finances and expenditures, could have already retired from state services.

"I'm really happy I didn't retire because I enjoy coming to work," she says.

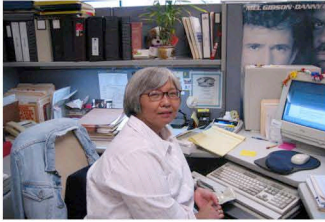
She says what keeps her motivated is the staff.

"Most of the people in this department really believe in what they're doing."



Winifred Doi

MED-QUEST worker shows that respect is earned not given



She is a gem, like her namesake.

Pearl Tsuji a program specialist at the Department's Med-QUEST Division is a walking, talking body of priceless wisdom that inspires and guides those around her.

Pearl Tsuji

For more than 25 years, Pearl has helped individuals qualify for state benefits, including health insurance. Last year, she assisted the Director's Office in launching Hawaii Rx Plus.

Pearl approaches work with the same philosophy everyday.

"If at any time, any family member or friend needed assistance, who would I want as a worker?"

Her patience and understanding has helped her deal with tough clients.

"You treat people the way you want to be treated. If you do that you can't go wrong."

-Pearl Tsuji

One particular case strikes a chord. She was dealing with a woman who was trying to get benefits for her daughter.

The woman's daughter was found to be ineligible. When Pearl tried to explain, the woman didn't want to listen.

"She hated my guts," Pearl recalls. "She did not like me as a worker because I was applying the rules."

Months later, the woman developed a mutual respect for Pearl and her sense of fairness and integrity.

"She even wanted me to marry her brother-in-law," Pearl says with a laugh.

HCDCH duo steps up to help agency during hard times

They are the Queen of Spades (QOS) and Queen of Diamonds (QOD). Sherry Noguchi (QOS) and Patti Miyamoto (QOD) are the super workers who selflessly swooped down to help the Administrative Services Office (ASO) of the Housing and Community Development Corporation of Hawaii.

Noguchi and Miyamoto navigate through the maze of numbers, codes and paperwork that is ASO.

Together these two women have 30 years of public



housing experience.

Sherry said she took the added responsibility of heading ASO because she wanted a "chance to be a part of the team that turns HCDCH around."

Patti agreed.

"I'm just trying to make a difference, even if it's something small," she said.

Despite their humility, HCDCH Executive Director Stephanie Aveiro said Sherry and Patti's work is not insignificant.

"They have done a tremendous job helping the agency overcome some of its many challenges," Aveiro said.

From rebel to leader, VR supervisor forges the way for staff

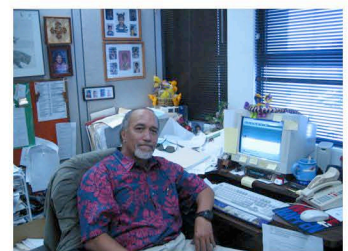
Albert Perez described himself as a rebel in his younger ways, forging his own path when he didn't like the way that was shown.

Now 21 years later, many are following his lead as supervisor in the Department's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division.

"Being a rebel I realize only got me so far," he said. "Now I'm a good soldier, I'll do what I need to do to get the job done."

Perez, who supervises employment counselors at VR, says his job is about giving back to people in need. about getting clients the help they need to live a productive and meaningful life.

"He (Perez) and his staff are making a positive difference for so many individuals with disabilities," said Acting VR Administrator John Noland.



Albert Perez



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The Department of Human Services provides services to help clients meet their basic needs for food, shelter, medical care and other essentials of daily living to help them become self-sufficient, independent, and able to make healthy choices to improve their personal dignity and their and their families' quality of life. There are four divisions in DHS and two attached agencies. The DHS divisions are the Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD), the Med-QUEST Division (MQD), Social Services Division (SSD) and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind Division (VRSBD). The two attached agencies are the Housing and Community Development Corporation of Hawaii and the Office of Youth Services.

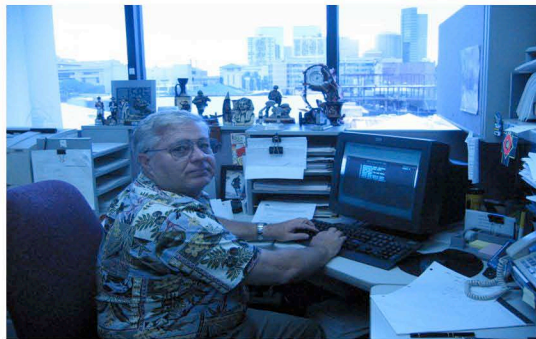
Teacher at heart never stops learning

Learning is lifelong.

Roger McDonald, a supervisor in the BESSD Queen Street Unit, knows in life there is a lot to learn and just as much to pass on.

When he's not helping eligibility workers improve their efficiency at processing benefits for customers, he is reading up on American history, particularly the Civil War. His office space is sprinkled with civil war soldier figurines and framed quotes from the War.

In fact when he was an eighth grader,



Roger McDonald

Roger was so knowledgeable about the Civil War, that the teacher excused him from taking a history test pertaining to the topic.

Prior to joining the Department more

than 18 years ago, Roger taught math and English for the Navy at Barbers Point.

Roger said his enjoyment with work and any other task in life is taking a complicated problem and coming up with a simple solution.

Like any good supervisor, he knows that teamwork is essential to accomplishing the goals set by the Unit, Division and overall Department.

"The staff here are extremely helpful, good people," he notes. "Some of them have been with me for a long time."