

At 95, Mahelona Hospital care spans keiki to kupuna

Dennis Fujimoto

THE GARDEN ISLAND

KAPA'A — At Samuel Mahelona Memorial Hospital's 95th anniversary, the petting zoo that was an annual tradition was replaced by a health fair geared for kupuna Friday.

"Once upon a time, we were taking care of the keiki with the petting zoo," Josie Pablo, the Mahelona Hospital Recreation Director, said. "Now, our attention focuses on kupuna."

More than 30 vendors offering services and resources for the elderly ringed the hospital's corridor, anchored in the covered lanai by booths

manned by family members of residents and offering a variety of exotic flowers, fresh bagged lettuce, lychee, plant starters and other items.

"This is the hospital's 95th anniversary, so we're using this Passport to Kupuna Health to launch our specially designed shirt commemorating the anniversary," Pablo said, pointing to the booth where sales from employees, vendors, and guests quickly sold out of the initial run of the shirt created by Jaime Pablo, Josie's husband, and printed by Fantasy Shirts. "People can still place orders because we'll be ordering

more, and later this year during the hospital's anniversary, we'll have another big load."

Elderly residents from care centers and community members flocked to the event, which featured entertainment from Doug McMaster, whose wife Sandra works at Mahelona Hospital and was on the organizing committee.

Participants were immersed in information, and could get basic health screenings such as blood pressure, height and weight performed by nursing students from Kaua'i Community College. They could also Zumba with Corrine Medeiros

of Ho'ola Lahui Kaua'i while working toward getting some of the giveaway prizes.

Kupuna residents from Kilauea, toting bags full of giveaways and prizes from drawings of completed "passports," spent their time visiting with residents and were fascinated by watching the flow of people visiting the different exhibitors' stations.

"I think it's wonderful that a special event focusing on health was created just for the kupuna in our community," said Kealoha Takahashi of the county's Office of Elderly Affairs.

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Doug McMaster works his magic on the guitar while his wife Sandra enjoys the music with a Mahelona resident Friday during the Passport to Kupuna Health fair.

Kapuna

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Upon entry, guests were handed a "passport" to be stamped at exhibitors' tables. Completed passports were deposited in a hopper for random prize drawings, including a quilt created by Aimee Leong and an 'ukulele donated by Kaua'i Music and Sound in downtown Kapa'a.

Other contributors included the Trauma Fund, Walmart, Doug McMaster, Abbott Nutrition, Hanako Ishida, Clarence Nonaka, Arnold Leong who cooked lunch for the volunteers, Long's Drugs, the Kaua'i

Veterans Medical Hospital Charitable Foundation, the Mahelona Hospital Auxiliary, Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative and Home Depot.

Placido Valenciano, the hospital's therapist, said Mahelona Hospital hosted a health fair a while back, but it was only about half the size of Friday's event.

"You know, first and foremost you have to take care of your health," Takahashi said. "Even minor health issues such as aches and pains can impact happiness and stress levels. I'm glad to see so many people explore many of the current health options available so they can make informed decisions on

health and well-being."

The planning committee included Josie Pablo, Sharla Hasegawa, Colleen McCracken, Jolyn Chew, Regina Keale, Kehau Ka'auwai, Aimee Leong, Wayne Yamashita, Sandra McMaster, George Salvador, Teresa Augusto, Ryan Martin and Rebecca O'Brien.

"You know, this is good," Josie Pablo said. "But before I retire, I'm going to bring back the petting zoo one more time."

► **Dennis Fujimoto**, photographer and staff writer, can be reached at 245-3681 (ext. 253) or dfujimoto@thegardenisland.com.