

# Hawai'i Island Portuguese Chamber of Commerce

August 2024 Newsletter



## Portuguese Center Site Work to Begin



Center President Marlene Hapai and Gary De Rego Owner De Rego Services sign site work contract as Grandson Excavation Team of Kaimi and Cainin Francis, Jacob Grace and Casey Francis look on.

*Our mid-year newsletter brings great news on many fronts.* With the signing of the site work contract, the long-awaited HIPCC Cultural and Educational Center project will begin this Fall. Muito Obrigado to the many that have helped us take this major step forward towards the building of our Center. The Chamber's Scholarship Fund also awarded three new \$2,000 scholarships to deserving students and our annual Founders Gala will honor new founding donors and awardees of historical and cultural significance and outstanding service. Please come join us to show our appreciation and enjoy the fellowship and sharing and sense of community, a hallmark of Portuguese tradition.

***Mahalo Nui, Archie Hapai III, HIPCC President, 2019-2025***

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## **Portuguese Cultural and Educational Center Site Work to Begin**

It took 22 years (since 2002) for the HIPCC to form a 501(c)(3), acquire property, visualize and finalize a plan and raise the necessary funds to ensure the Portuguese culture that was being lost at an alarming rate was perpetuated within a cultural and educational center where site work will begin shortly.

The Center's funding, launched by its initial \$1 million grant in 2016, sent aspirations for a center to be built within 3 years. But, like the challenges of their many Hawaii bound ancestral ships, storms, lava flows and COVID put center fundraising on Hawaii County's back burner as everyone turned out to help those in immediate need, while initial projects bids doubled in price. Owners, architect and contractors went back to the drawing board to design a smaller center at a lower cost and professional and other volunteers continued to give of their many resources.

With "high" hopes, a "Calling All Angels" plea was sent out in the Chamber's November 2021 Thanks-for-Giving newsletter and in January 2022 an angel, Theresa Perreira Zendejas, called our Center President, Marlene Hapai as she was leaving to meet architect, Blaise Caldeira and legal advisor, Steven Menezes to further reduce the size of the center to meet the existing budget. Theresa, in her final stage of cancer, had decided to give her home and property to the Center to make sure it was built. In March of 2024 monies from the sale of her property came in and provided the final private funds needed.

This Fall, the long-awaited project will begin its site work on the wings of another angel who came our way after finishing the paving of Our Lady of Lourdes Church parking lot in Honokaa. De Rego Services, established in 1982, owned and operated by Gary De Rego, holds a General Engineering Contractor's License and does excavation, grading, grubbing, paving, trucking and roads, amongst other jobs. When asked how he got into the excavation business, Gary shared his father was his first teacher. David De Rego worked for Hamakua Sugar. He was a mechanic and equipment operator involved directly with excavation, irrigation and operating the crane that loaded sugar cane onto the trucks. Gary also worked with Alfred Andrade, owner of Andrade Service, who increased Gary's expertise and passed his own excavation company on to his son Paul.

Today De Rego Services, a family business, is run by grandpa Gary, mentor and teacher of his excavation team of 4 grandsons and with daughter-in-law handling the business paperwork and son, David running the trucking side of the business. Three generations of De Regos continue to shape the landscape of Hawaii Island for all to enjoy.

The HIPCC Cultural and Educational Center continues to raise funds to develop exhibits, furnish and equip its Center which will not only document the explorations, emigration and assimilation of Hawaii's Portuguese, but also provide technology bringing all Hawaii's families and friends together worldwide.

Please continue to support our Portuguese Cultural and Educational Center. Contributions are gratefully accepted and are tax deductible. Send to: HIPCC Cultural and Educational Center, P.O Box 1120 Hilo, HI 96721

## **2024 Scholarship Fund Awards**

Hawaii Island Portuguese Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund would like to announce the recipients of their 2024 scholarships. Everyone will receive \$2,000 toward their college education. The winners are: Ava Santos, attending the University of Hawaii at Hilo majoring in Biology; Makani Miranda attending Grand Canyon University and majoring in Business Management and Kennedy Moniz attending University of Hawaii at Hilo and majoring in Education or Nursing. Congratulations on receiving our 2024 Scholarships and continued success in all your future endeavors.

Billy Andrade, Scholarship Committee Chairman

*Creating a Legacy: Preserving & Sharing Hawai'i's Portuguese Culture*  
 Hawai'i Island Portuguese Chamber of Commerce Cultural & Educational Center

*Come and Join us*

## 2024 Founders Gala

**Saturday, September 28, 2024**  
 Fairway Grill, 340 Haihai St., Hilo, Hawai'i

5:00 p.m. No-Host Cocktails & Silent Auction  
 6:00 p.m. Dinner | 7:00 p.m. Awards to Honorees  
 8:30 p.m. Boa Noite & Aloha  
 Music by Dexter Veriato

**FOR TICKETS & RESERVATIONS CONTACT:**  
 Jean Alves (808)938-9283 | alvesj002@hawaii.rr.com

Founding Donors Table of 8: \$10,000  
 Mid-Voyage Founders Table of 8: \$5,000  
 Saudades Table of 8: \$2,500  
 Individual Seats: \$100

**RSVP by Friday, September 13, 2024**

HIPCC Cultural & Educational Center is a 501(c)(3).  
 Donations support the furnishing, equipment and operation of our Saudades Center and are tax deductible.



### MEMBERSHIP

The membership and activities of the Hawai'i Island Portuguese Chamber of Commerce help to promote the mission and objectives of our organization.

<http://hipcc.org/mission>

Join us and become a Member.

<http://hipcc.org/membership>

August 2024



HIPCC  
P.O. Box 1839  
Hilo, HI 96721  
Website: [hipcc.org](http://hipcc.org)

**The 3 Arms of our Chamber continue to fulfill our Goals with the Chamber addressing Business and the Economy; the Scholarship Fund and Center, Education; and the Center, our Portuguese Culture.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**September 28, 2024, Founders Gala, 5:00 p.m.  
Fairway Grill, 340 Haihai Street Hilo, HI 96720**