

# Ho‘ōla

WORKING TO FIND THE CURE

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## President's Message

Aloha, friends and supporters of the UH Cancer Center!

I am privileged and humbled to step into the role of president of the Friends of the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center board this year. Like many of you, my life has been touched by cancer, with family and friends who are survivors, and also by loss.

Presently, our hope for the health and wellness of everyone in our community goes out to all during these challenging times of COVID-19. Each of us needs to do our part to overcome this challenge in the short and long term.

However, we also know that the important work of the UH Cancer Center cannot stop, even during times like these. The more I learn about the work of the Cancer Center and its passionate researchers and staff, the more I feel the need to join the fight to end cancer. Going forward, here's how we can all participate:

- **EDUCATION** – Knowing what we can each do to lower our own cancer risk and also understanding available resources when cancer does strike is vital for our health. The Friends sponsors newsletters, symposiums and events for those purposes.
- **CLINICAL TRIALS** - Participating in clinical trials supports research and moves us closer to cancer prevention and cures. I just joined the National Cancer Institute's TMIST (Tomosynthesis Mammographic Imaging Screening Trial) to help researchers learn about the best ways to find breast cancer. As a mother with a daughter and numerous nieces, I am excited to be able to do something that might make a difference in their and many other lives.
- **FINANCIAL** – Your donation to the Friends enables us to fund initiatives that support the UH Cancer Center, its clinical trial participants and summer interns, and many others in our community.

You can learn more about what we do at [friendsofuhcc.org](http://friendsofuhcc.org). When appropriate, we hope you will consider joining the efforts in one or more of the ways above. Working together, we can beat cancer. I'm proud to participate in every way that I can!

Please stay safe and well.

*Monica McLaren*

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*President, Friends of the UH Cancer Center*

Monica McLaren

# Ways the Friends support the UH Cancer Center

## Four Seasons Resort Hualālai's Gift

Each September a small band of Friends-supported UH Cancer Center volunteers travel to Kona to work with staff and other volunteers at the Four Seasons Resort at Hualālai's Run for Hope weekend to raise funds for cancer. Proceeds awarded from the Run for Hope weekend activities, including the Taste of Hawai'i Island Dinner and silent auction, golf and tennis tournaments, and run, netted a gift to the Friends of the UH Cancer Center totaling more than \$22,000 to benefit the Cancer Center.



UH Cancer Center volunteers at the 2019 Four Seasons Resort Hualālai Run for Hope, pose with cases of runners packets they completed.

## Champion of the Year: Jami Fukui, MD

Jami Fukui, MD, UH Cancer Center assistant researcher, was one of three individuals recognized as a UH Cancer Center "Champion of the Year" for her outstanding contribution to cancer clinical trials accrual in Hawai'i. Fukui was awarded at the Hawai'i Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting in November. The Champion of the Year Awards are sponsored by the Friends to recognize cancer healthcare professionals for their outstanding conduct and promotion of clinical trials. Two others who were honored were Kelly Watanabe, PharmD, from The Queen's Medical Center and Robyn Morse, CCRC, from Hawai'i Pacific Health. Congratulations to all!



Jami Fukui, MD, is flanked by UH Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office Assistant Manager Jenai Umetsu and Manager Kate Bryant-Greenwood after receiving her award.

## UH CANCER CENTER SUMMER INTERN ALUM WINS SCIENCE AWARD

UH Cancer Center Summer Internship Program alumnus and student at St. Andrew's Schools, Kelly Masaki, received an award from the American Psychological Association (APA) at the Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools' District Science Fair. Pallav Pokhrel, PhD, MPH, UH Cancer Center associate researcher, was Masaki's mentor for the study, "Relationships Between Depressive Symptoms, Anxiety, Impulsivity and E-Cigarette and Cigarette Use Among Adults".

"In Hawai'i, 29 percent of youths report feeling depressed and almost one third of college students in our study used either cigarettes or e-cigarettes, so it is an important area of study," said Masaki.

Masaki's project received an APA award for achievement in research in the psychological sciences. Her study found that mental health conditions, like anxiety and depression, were associated with increased odds of smoking. Higher impulsivity scores were also found to be associated with higher rates of smoking, and the association between mental health symptoms and smoking were found to be stronger among those with higher impulsivity scores. "Findings from our study can be used to provide

smoking prevention education for groups that need it most," said Masaki.

Masaki was selected in 2019 for a UH Cancer Center internship sponsored by the Friends. Stated Masaki, "During my internship I really enjoyed getting to know the wonderful faculty and staff of the UH Cancer Center, as well as the other interns. I have always loved STEM and the internship experience confirmed that I want to have a career in a STEM field. I love coding and computers and hope to continue in research during college. After the summer program, I took a college class in statistics to learn more about the theory of the programs that I used."

