



NEWS RELEASE

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ALOHA FESTIVALS CELEBRATES HAWAI'I'S FUTURE WITH *HE LEI ALOHA KE KEIKI – CHILDREN ARE OUR GARLAND OF LOVE*

HONOLULU – The 2017 Aloha Festivals celebrates the love for Hawai'i's children and future with "*He Lei Aloha Ke Keiki – Children Are Our Garland of Love.*" Throughout 'ōlelo no'eau (Hawaiian proverbs) there are poetic references to children as pua (flower) and lei (garland) for their promise and need for nurturing in order for them to thrive. The entire 'ohana (family) from grandparents to keiki (children) are invited to create enduring memories and experiences of Hawai'i's rich cultural history and traditions during the 2017 Aloha Festivals in September.

"Children have always been important to Hawai'i's native language and culture for the life and innocence they symbolize," said Debbie Nakanelua-Richards, Aloha Festivals board of directors' co-chair. "This year we are particularly excited to celebrate the beauty of Hawai'i's beloved keiki as they truly represent flowering buds and Hawai'i's future."

The annual Aloha Festivals, now in its 71st year, is one of Hawai'i's most highly regarded and oldest cultural celebrations, integrating the traditions and cultures of the Islands through music, dance, cuisine and art.

In years past, Aloha Festivals has honored and recognized some of Hawai'i's most celebrated traditions and pastimes – hula, pā'ū riding, music, ocean voyaging, Hawaiian art of featherwork, paniolo and lei making to name a few. The festival also has paid tribute to the people, the masters and keiki (children) who have learned and continue to perpetuate Island traditions, malama the 'āina and be stewards for future generations.

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“Each year I am thrilled to see and experience the delight of the many keiki that participate in the Aloha Festivals,” said Helene “Sam” Shenkus, Aloha Festivals board of directors’ co-chair. “We are hopeful that this year’s theme will encourage more families and children to take time from their busy schedules to learn about Hawai'i’s rich history, traditions and cultures.”

This year’s Aloha Festivals takes place from Sept. 9 to 30 at various locations on O’ahu, sharing the history and traditions of Hawai'i and the unique spirit of aloha with both kama’āina (local residents) and malihini (visitors).

Schedule of Aloha Festivals events:

All events are free and open to the public. They are supported by the sale of Aloha Festivals ribbons and merchandise from participating retailers. Aloha Festivals merchandise also will be sold at all events.

Saturday, Sept. 9

Aloha Festivals Royal Court Investiture & Opening Ceremony

Investiture – The Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Coconut Grove, 4 p.m.

Opening Ceremony – Royal Hawaiian Center, Royal Grove, 5 p.m.

The *Ali'i* – king, queen, prince and princess – take their places in the 2017 Aloha Festivals Royal Court. Court members receive the royal cloak, helmet, head feather lei and other symbols of their reign. Traditional chant and hula kahiko (ancient hula) highlight the event.

Saturday, Sept. 16

Keiki Ho'olaule'a, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Pearlridge Center Uptown

Pearlridge Center will celebrate Aloha Festivals with a variety of activities, demonstrations and continuous stage performances by participating keiki (children's) musical groups and hula hālau (schools). The 2017 Aloha Festivals Royal Court will make a special appearance. For more information, visit www.pearlridgeonline.com.

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Saturday, Sept. 23

Waikīkī Ho'olaule'a, 7 to 10 p.m.

Kalākaua Avenue

The annual Waikīkī Ho'olaule'a is Hawai'i's largest, most festive block party. Thousands of people will take to the streets for food, fun and entertainment. Top Island entertainers will perform along with hula hālau while Hawaiian crafts and floral lei will be on display and available for purchase.

Saturday, Sept. 30

71st Annual Aloha Festivals Floral Parade, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Kalākaua Avenue from Ala Moana Park to Kapi'olani Park

A colorful equestrian procession of pā'ū (long-skirted) riders, exquisite floats with cascades of Hawaiian flowers, hula hālau, marching bands and dignitaries will enliven Kalākaua Avenue.

Aloha Festivals would like to acknowledge the following sponsors – Hawai'i Tourism Authority, City & County of Honolulu, Royal Hawaiian Center, Hawaiian Airlines, KFVE, Hawaiian 105 KINE, Christ Embassy Hawaii, Kyo-ya Hotels & Resorts and Outrigger Enterprises.

About Aloha Festivals

Aloha Festivals was first held in 1946 as Aloha Week, and over the past seven decades has become a celebration of Hawaiian culture, integrating the traditions and cultures of the Islands through music, dance, cuisine and art. All festivities are coordinated by a volunteer board of directors. Aloha Festivals is funded by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, corporate and private sponsorships, and sales of Aloha Festivals ribbons and merchandise.

More information about Aloha Festivals and its events can be found at www.alohafestivals.com, Facebook (facebook.com/AlohaFestivals), Twitter ([@AlohaFstvlS](https://twitter.com/AlohaFstvlS)) Instagram ([@alohafestivals](https://instagram.com/alohafestivals)) or by calling (808) 923-2030.

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