



A Spirit of Aloha *Jeanette M.L. Chun*

A Spirit of Aloha is what distinguishes the Honolulu Marathon from other marathons. It's more than just a road race. It's a feeling of truly GIVING from the heart of one's time – time not only from the organizers, but from the hundreds of volunteers who spend hours behind the scenes in order to make the Honolulu Marathon a reality. It's a sense of pride in putting on a world-class event in which anyone can participate.

It's heart-warming to see people from all over the world gathered together for our event. Though many don't speak the same language, they still manage to communicate without embarrassment simply because they know we care and would extend the same courtesy to them as we would to a member of our own family. This Spirit of Aloha is difficult to put into words. One must EXPERIENCE the Honolulu Marathon to know what it's really about!

The Honolulu Marathon is organized and conducted by the Honolulu Marathon Association (HMA), a non-profit organization whose members firmly believe in the health benefits of long-distance running. We have nurtured the Honolulu Marathon to what it is today: a respected, organized, top-quality event that is open to all and highly regarded among the running communities of the world. The members of the HMA come from all walks of life and hold professional jobs within the community.

Putting on a race the size and quality of the Honolulu Marathon is a year-long process beginning the day after the race when HMA officials meet with out-of-town representatives of our major and supporting sponsors. Subsequent meetings with other sponsors and potential sponsors are held in the weeks and months following the Marathon.

Each member of the HMA is responsible for some aspect of the race. Monthly meetings are held from January through October, followed by weekly meetings throughout the month of November. These meetings are in addition to the ones which members conduct or attend within their own special functional areas. Hundreds of hours and many, many weeks are put into planning for this one-day affair.

My husband, Ronald, an Electronics Engineer by profession, is HMA's Vice-President and Director of Planning, Engineering & Operations for the race. I am the Executive Secretary/Treasurer and also the liaison between our sponsors from Japan and the HMA. As the years flew by, I found myself involved in almost every aspect of the Marathon from ordering supplies for the race and office, and also in specific areas such as the Aid Stations (80,000 sponges, 30,000 apples!) and Kapiolani Park (red nylon fencing, high visibility tape)! Receiving a Macintosh computer from my husband as a birthday gift 23 years ago changed my life completely! Though my responsibilities

A Spirit of Aloha

within the HMA has grown tremendously, having a computer makes everything that much easier. I used to use an old-fashioned electric typewriter WITHOUT any correction feature. Needless to say, I used bottles and bottles of white correction fluid to correct my typo errors! Nevermore!

Ronald and I have been members for the past 32 years. Our home looks like an extension of the Marathon office with blueprints, plans, and volumes of paperwork stored in files and boxes around the house! Our three children have been helping with the Marathon since they were in elementary and intermediate schools. They've grown up with the Marathon.

Why do we and the other members continue to organize this race year after year? Being involved with the Honolulu Marathon means spending a considerable amount of time in detailed planning meetings, coordinating with volunteer groups, sponsors, contractors, media, making what seems like hundreds of phone calls, and writing volumes of correspondence and memos. Why do we do it? I think the answer is that a common bond of fellowship and camaraderie exists between the members who derive satisfaction, enjoyment, and pride from the knowledge that a community service has been accomplished in a world-class manner – one that brings together thousands of average runners from across the globe to participate in an event which gives an individual such a sense of accomplishment when he crosses that Finish Line!

Combine the responsibilities of everyone and you have a race that has become recognized as being first in quality and one which personifies the true meaning of ALOHA! It is estimated that 57% who finish the Honolulu Marathon each year are running a marathon for the first time. The youngest and oldest finishers span more than seven decades. The Honolulu Marathon caters to all levels of competition from superstar to modest jogger.

The Honolulu Marathon brings thousands of people to Hawaii each year. The runners get a well-organized race, the local people get a chance to participate in an event which is world-renown, and the City of Honolulu gets national and international recognition.

The Honolulu Marathon brings in more than 100 million dollars to our Island's economy in an otherwise slow period of the year. There was 1 runner from Japan in 1976 and 14,396 in 2008! A majority of those runners were accompanied by at least one to three family members or friends. Preliminary reports from Japan show that the number of runners from the Land of the Rising Sun will again exceed the 15,000 mark this year! 75% of the Japan runners choose to run their first marathon here in Honolulu. They choose the Honolulu marathon as their baptism into marathoning because they've heard through the Bamboo Pipeline that the Honolulu Marathon is primarily a "People's Race" and that we care for each runner. The climate and beauty of our Islands and the almost immediate access to their Waikiki hotels from the Finish Line is another major factor. Though 15,000 plus Japan nationals may run the race, you have 50,000 others just waiting in Waikiki till their own special runner bounds across that Finish Line!

The Honolulu Marathon receives support from hundreds in the community who give unselfishly of their time, goods, and services. The hundred licensed Shiatsu therapists from the Aisen Shiatsu School donate their services to relieve the aches and pains of the weary runners. Mayor Mufi Hanneman and the City and County of Honolulu give

A Spirit of Aloha

their wholehearted support to the Marathon. The City's Department of Parks and Recreation sponsors year-round marathon clinics for the novice runners.

Also supporting the Honolulu Marathon are the State Transportation Division, the City's Street Usage and Permits Sections, the Honolulu Police Department, and the Outrigger Hotels•Resorts, the official hotels of the Honolulu Marathon.

Our deepest thanks go to our major sponsor JAPAN AIRLINES, supporting sponsors NIKE, MUFG Card, and contributing sponsors NTT DoCoMo, Satohap and Subaru for without their generous kokua, the Honolulu Marathon would not be what it is today – a world-class, quality marathon!

Appreciation is also extended to businesses, corporations, organizations, and those individuals who truly make the Honolulu Marathon a community event. The total commitment, dedication, and support from this whole army of volunteers truly makes the Honolulu Marathon a "People's Marathon", not only because we open it to all runners, but because of the generous help from everyone! The Honolulu Marathon truly exemplifies the Spirit of Aloha!

Thank you.

ALOHA!