

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

OFFICE OF SENATOR DAVID Y. IGE—16TH DISTRICT

Volume 3, Issue 1

December 7, 2005



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Welcome to the first issue of the
2006 Community Connection!

We are starting things off early
this year to make a special report
regarding issues and events that
may affect you during this legisla-
tive session.

As always, I encourage your partic-
ipation and input in this newslet-
ter. If you would like to see any
issues covered, community events
or individuals recognized, please
contact my office at the Capitol at
586-6230 or e-mail me at
sendige@capitol.hawaii.gov.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Y. Ige". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Y. Ige
State Senator, District 16

Prescription for Change

Medicare Part D—Is This The Right Benefit For You?

As the “baby boomer” generation ages, our needs for quality medical care and prescription drug insurance grows. What may have been available to our parents and grandparents under Medicare’s initial plan in 1965 may no longer apply. In 2003, the federal government passed the **Medicare Modernization Act**. The intent of the act was to ensure a more affordable health care plan, prescription drug coverage, expanded plan options, and preventative care services. In 2005, **Medicare Part D** was unveiled as a new option to current Medicare subscribers.

Medicare Part D is a prescription drug benefit that begins as early as January 2006. By paying an average monthly premium of \$37 as well as a \$250 tax deductible, Medicare will pay for a part of your prescriptions. Lower income individuals or families may qualify for assistance with the monthly premiums and/or some of the cost of the prescriptions. This benefit is different from Medicare-approved drug discount cards, which will be phased out by May 15, 2006, or at the effective enrollment date.

Part D compliments Medicare’s other insurance plans, and those who are current subscribers may receive **Part D**’s coverage as soon as January 1, 2006. Those who join after the initial start date will receive prescription drug coverage beginning the first day of the following month. For those who may not use a lot of prescription medication at this time, it may still be advantageous to consider subscribing to a drug coverage plan under **Part D**, as there may be a penalty for late subscribers and an increase in premiums after the May 15th deadline.

There are many private plans that offer the benefits of **Medicare Part D**.

Some of us may already have drug coverage through retirement benefits that are the equivalent to or better than **Medicare Part D** plans. Ultimately, we must decide which plan best suits our individual needs. Medicare has taken the initiative to create pamphlets, handbooks, workshops, websites, and hotlines to learn more about this new benefit. Personalized information can be obtained at www.medicare.gov or by calling **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)**.

Meanwhile, providers who have created drug plans under **Medicare Part D** have been sending out information to eligible recipients. The State Department of Health’s Executive Office on Aging provides a free assistance program called **Sage PLUS** that serves people with Medicare and Medicaid, their families, caregivers, and soon to be retirees. Trained counselors offer help regarding the new **Medicare Part D** plans as well as Medigap, Medicare Advantage and other related senior health insurance options. Visit the Executive Office of Aging’s website at:

<http://www4.hawaii.gov/ea>

and fill out their Medicare Counseling Assistance Request form. **Sage PLUS** volunteers can also be reached at **586-7299** or on the Neighbor Islands toll-free at **1-800-875-9229**.

As the scope of this benefit may be confusing and expansive, I suggest visiting aarp.org or www.familiesusa.org for more information. For all current and future Medicare subscribers, I urge you to research both the pros and cons of **Medicare Part D** and the many plans that are available and decide which options are best for you.

Mass Input for Mass Transit

As residents of Central Oahu, we know all too well the stress and strain of traffic. Beating the morning and evening jam has been a way of life and we have sought relief for many years. Thankfully, there is a growing light at the end of our tunnel. The City and County of Honolulu has drafted and evaluated many alternative options for a viable high-capacity transit plan, and now, they need your help. Mayor Mufi Hanneman is holding two public forums on **December 13 and 14** and requests your attendance.

The City and County of Honolulu and hired contractors have compiled a number of mass-transit options that may solve our traffic problems. What they need is community input regarding the proposed route from Kapolei to the University of Hawaii at Manoa along Kamehameha Highway. Unforeseen issues such as environmental impacts, community concerns and possible benefits should be addressed and commented on at the Mayor's two meeting dates.

December 13, 2005 5-8pm at Blaisdell Center

December 14, 2005 7-9pm at Kapolei Middle School

Those requiring special assistance should call **566-2228**. If you are unable to attend these meeting dates and have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please visit the project website at www.honolulutransit.org.

The City and County hopes to make a final decision regarding the best choice for our island needs by the end of 2006. Please spread the word and invite your friends and colleagues. With your valuable input, we can make this proposed mass-transit plan a success!

VISIONS OF THE FUTURE—Leeward Young Artists

Pearl City public schools had a strong turn out this year at the 12th Annual Leeward Young Artists Awards, sponsored by the Estate of James Campbell in cooperation with the State Department of Education—Leeward District. Out of the 49 finalists from 21 Leeward Oahu schools, 16 students from the 16th district were recognized for their talent. **Pearl City High School** senior, **Jacy Miyaki** was awarded one of the top ten awards on November 10th. Two students, **Fiona Burch**, a 5th grader from **Waiau Elementary**, and **Krystal Pascua**, a 7th grader from **Highlands Intermediate School**, were awarded scholarships to attend classes at the Academy Art Center. Artwork by all the finalists were on exhibit in the lobby of Kapolei Hale through November 21st.

Congratulations to all the finalists and winners of the 2005 Leeward Young Artist Awards!

Finalists from District 16 Schools:

Momilani Elementary:

McKenna Noland, Grade 2

Pearl City Highlands Elementary:

Kassidy Jovenal, Grade 1
Marc Rylan Vergara, Grade 3

Waiau Elementary:

Faith Bailey, Grade 5
Hope Bailey, Grade 5
Norman Belen-Medeiros, Grade 5
Fiona Burch, Grade 5
Sheryl Cheong, Grade 1

Highlands Intermediate:

Christine Chong, Grade 7
Jhoanna Gayap, Grade 7
Krystal Pascua, Grade 7
Darlene Pelaez, Grade 7

Pearl City High School:

Jacy Miyaki, Grade 12



The **COMMUNITY CONNECTION** is a published and distributed by the **Office of Senator David Y. Ige**.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us!

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