



July 22, 2019

Aloha kākou HAPA 'Ohana,

We have some exciting new news about Hawaii Adaptive Paddling Association and its future, and wanted to be sure we shared it with you, since you are the people who are at the heart of the program; we consider you our 'ohana and have we are happiest when we share our love of outrigger canoe paddling with you.

We constantly strive to come up with ways to improve the experience for our participants, their families and caregivers, and our volunteers. We have been brainstorming recently to identify the key issues our program faces, and have worked to come up with new, innovative ways to address them for the benefit of all. We have identified the following as the biggest hurdles and are addressing them in the following ways to keep the HAPA program successful and touching the lives of our participants and their families for many years to come.

1. Weather and ocean conditions that have curtailed our program more often than usual in the past couple of years. It's an inherent issue due to our location on the windward side, and the open ocean conditions of Kailua Beach Park.
2. Ability to attract experienced paddlers as volunteers, especially during the paddling seasons.
3. Fundraising enough money to pay for the expenses of our very modest budget. We have been extremely creative in covering many of our expenses, but still require money to pay for the expenses we do incur.

We believe we are making an excellent decision which would address all of these issues by having HAPA transition and become a part of the AccesSurf non-profit umbrella. For those of you unaware of AccesSurf, they are a 501(c)(3) non-profit that offers adaptive surfing and swimming programs for people with disabilities. They are our "sister program" in these other areas of sporting activities for adaptive participants, and we are extremely excited that they have expressed an interest in incorporating the HAPA paddling into their organization. HAPA will operate as a separate paddling program under the AccesSurf umbrella.

We have been in dialogue with AccesSurf for about six months, exchanging ideas about their interest, our expectations for the future, and the best way to make this transition as comfortable and effortless as possible for our participants and volunteers and continue the legacy of the HAPA program.

Our transition date is scheduled for the program date in September 2019, and with this transition there will be some changes that will be implemented that will address the issues we mentioned above. At this point, we will still use the name Hawaii Adaptive Paddling Association (HAPA) and will be providing AccesSurf with all of the information about our

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program that they will need to provide a seamless transition.

The two of us will continue to be a part of the HAPA program and will be providing guidance and mentorship to AccesSurf and be available whenever needed to assist them in assuming this new role.

We'd like to introduce you to some amazing people that have come into our lives through AccesSurf that will be playing key positions during the transition. Cara Short is the Executive Director for AccesSurf. Cara, her staff, and board have been wonderful to work with and she will head the administrative responsibilities with a vibrant energy that I know you will all love. Penny Kalua and Liz Sabog from Honolulu Pearl Canoe Club (some of you may have met them at our HAPA program earlier this year) have years of paddling experience, sponsor and run the Nā Koa Wounded Warriors Regatta, already have meticulous safety protocols in place, and are two wonderful women that we feel totally comfortable about taking over the reins of running the on-site monthly HAPA program.

Starting in September, the HAPA program will run in its new location at Sand Island (Honolulu Pearl Canoe Club site). This new location has parking, easy access to the shore, is a more central location to serve all of O'ahu residents, has more canoes available for participants, and has sheltered weather and ocean conditions that will prevent the numerous cancellations we have had to make due to the Kailua Beach Park conditions.

IMPORTANT DATE CHANGES: As we transition to AccesSurf, there will only be two programs scheduled between September and the end of the year due to previous scheduling on their part and to give them a chance to feel totally comfortable before offering a monthly HAPA program.

The September date is being revised to Saturday, September 28th and the November date will stay the same on Saturday, November 16.

We would like to encourage you to continue to be a part of this program under the new leadership (we will be). You will meet lots of wonderful new people as this new path for HAPA begins. Initially, the current participants of HAPA will be the ones AccesSurf will reach out to for their continued participation; eventually AccesSurf will expand the program to include participants that attend their surfing and swimming programs.

Financial donors are also encouraged to continue their support of the HAPA program. Donations can be earmarked specifically for the HAPA program and will be restricted for that use.

We have been involved with HAPA since 2005, and the family that HAPA has created has enriched our lives tenfold. We are not going away. We are finding new and exciting ways that HAPA will continue to do amazing work in the community. I hope you will join us on this new journey.

Me ke aloha,

Suzi Mechler & Judy Allen
President & Vice President – Board of Directors
Hawaii Adaptive Paddling Association