



KAKA'AKO VE T

A HAVEN FOR KŪPUNA

HONOLULU KŪPUNA SHED PROVIDES A SPACE FOR HAWAI'I RETIREES AND SENIORS TO WORK ON PERSONAL PROJECTS AND HELP THE COMMUNITY.

Since 2016, **HONOLULU KŪPUNA SHED** has been a safe haven for Hawai'i retirees and seniors to find camaraderie and purpose while working with their hands. About 150 members gather to create meaningful projects that give back to the community, work on a personal project with access to tools and socialize with other likeminded seniors.

Honolulu Kūpuna Shed's last location was a vacant warehouse on Pier 20 at Honolulu Harbor. In 2023, the organization relocated to a larger, 5,000-square-foot space at 330 Cooke St. Ste. D, where Lana Lane Studios once was. With two levels, it's an ideal area for the elderly to gather and talk story.

"We're thrilled," says Robert Speer, president of Honolulu Kūpuna Shed. "This space is just what we needed and it has been a fantastic move for us. It's important for us to grow and improve our program with training, education and equipment, and we are able to do that here."





Some of the community initiatives that kūpuna can get involved with is working with abandoned bicycles and repairing them for the needy and homeless. They also refurbish Hawaiian canoes with koa wood, which is possible as the shed has an extensive wood shop.

“Thanks to a generous donation by a senior, we now have all the equipment that you would need for any woodworking needs,” Speer says.

In the past, Speer says kūpuna at the shed built 20 picnic tables for Jefferson Elementary School — there are currently four tables in the works right now. They’ve also provided construction work for local churches, made picture frames for the Honolulu Elks Lodge and built fences for Mō’ili’ili Cemetery. They also currently partner with the Hawai’i Bicycle League and have built tricycles for handicapped keiki. Even for people who do not know how to use these tools, Speer says there are about a dozen instructors who can help guide and teach kūpuna with their projects.

“Since we moved, this new space in Kaka’ako has been a motivation to get involved,” he says, sharing that there has recently been about 30 new members. “It’s amazing to see the difference in energy, and that has been so positive in many different ways. It has resulted in a step up in activities and was a great thing for us.”

In the future, Speer says there will be a laser machine section and an expanded lathe facility. He also hopes to collaborate with the Honolulu Woodturners, AARP and HMSA.

“We’re hoping to have more collaborative agreements with local groups by this year,” says Speer.

He adds that due to contract, there is unfortunately going





WHETHER RESTORING BICYCLES OR CANOES, SENIORS CAN FIND A PROJECT TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY.

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to be another move for the shed in a year or two, so he will need to find a permanent place.

“But now, we have a great foundational program to support seniors,” he says.

You can apply for membership online at honoluluakupunashed.org. And Speer adds that women are welcome, too. There are currently only a few women out of 150 members, and he would like the shed to receive more interest from female kūpuna.

“Our mission goes beyond just making things,” he says. “The shed is a space where kūpuna can share their knowledge, find companionship and talk about life. It is part of our mission.” ✕

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