



2015 Hawaii Healthcare Heroes

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii is pleased to announce the five 2015 Hawaii Healthcare Heroes! Excerpts from the patients' nomination stories and links to Hawaii News Now videos follow.

Kathy Krammer, MS, CCC-SLP, RN

Senior Speech, Language, Swallowing Pathologist

Head and Neck Cancer Support Group Co-Founder and Group Facilitator

The Queen's Medical Center, Outpatient Rehabilitation Department

"A little over a year ago . . . I was diagnosed with head and neck cancer and within a few months I experienced 4 surgeries, and 40 radiation treatments. My life was changed almost over night. Forty pounds slipped away, my taste was gone, much of my saliva

also gone and eating and swallowing were not just difficult but hardly worth the effort. Along my journey I met an unlikely hero Kathy Krammer. Who knew a speech pathologist would be the key to keeping me off a feeding tube, able to swallow, eventually eating fairly normally, able to speak clearly, provide me the tools to fight lymphedema and make me believe there was hope and keep me positive. Unique in her training and life experiences, skilled in many fields and blessed with the ability to teach, empathize and motivate others she stands out in my mind as a true hero. My life was filled with lots of wonderful specialists who did their job well. But it was Kathy that was able to bring everything together."

Hawaii News Now Video:

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/30188311/healthcare-hero-kathy-krammer>

Grace Porras, LPN

Nurse

Maunalani Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

"Caring for a loved one in need can be extremely overwhelming to the point of being immobilized. You know there are resources, but in a panicked mode - where are they? At the intersection of crash and burn we turn the corner and find Grace Porras, mom's nurse. She was our one-stop station for securing accurate information, developing a plan to address healthcare issues, and providing a compassionate shoulder to cry upon in a safe haven.

Our mom was diagnosed with congestive heart failure and placed in hospice in June 2014 at the Maunalani Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Grace has been a nurse at Maunalani for over 22 years. Her seasoned professional experience and excellent nursing skills are indicative of her time there but her enthusiasm for her job is refreshing, motivating and invigorating. She truly cares. It was never more

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evident than the day of mom's passing. She knew the signs and skillfully guided family through the process with honesty and compassion. She stayed way beyond her shift because she knew it was time. The way Grace engaged with mom was no different than any other night. There it was, the special touch of aloha – a bit of humor to make her laugh, a massage, and nourishment for her spirit in the form of calm encouraging words or a prayer. The only difference was that Grace was now taking care of us too. Grace fed us in more ways than one and provided us respite. Mom died peacefully with dignity and family by her side. Mahalo to Grace Porras who lives up to her name that is synonymous with elegance, kindness, and blessing. We honor her as a Hawaii Healthcare Hero who serves all her patients with unequalled greatness and excellence.”

Hawaii News Now Video:

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/30197258/healthcare-hero-grace-porras>

Jim Stremick, MPT

Physical Therapist

Prime Care Services Hawaii, Inc.

“I know they all thought I would never walk again . . . at the hospital, where I spent 7 weeks recovering from heart failure . . . my heart became medically stable but my physical condition did not progress much more than to be able to sit up in bed and dangle. Jim Stremick came to visit me the next day, after I got home. I saw the look on his face when I told him that I did not need therapy. He only smiled and reassured me that one day, I will be able to walk again because there was nothing physically wrong with my legs.

He also found out that I had front row seats at the Pasadena Rosebowl Parade, which I always looked forward to attending every year. Then he used the Rosebowl Parade as a motivator. He talked about the Parade, the roses on the floats, which I admired. At one of the visits, I saw a bouquet of roses, my favorite flowers. My grandson told me it was from Jim.

One day Jim and my grandson helped me to get out of bed. Jim put a belt around my waist to support me. I took 3 steps and sat on a wheelchair. Eventually, 3 steps increased slowly and carefully to 500 feet and more. After 2 months of therapy at home I made it to California, to the parade that Jim helped me to visualize. Today I can walk. I have to thank Jim, my Healthcare Hero, for not giving up on me!”

Hawaii News Now Video:

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/30226380/healthcare-hero-jim-stremick-a-physical-therapist-at-prime-care-services-hawaii>

Warren Tamamoto, MD
Chief of Pulmonology
Kaiser Permanente Hawaii

“Dr. Warren Tamamoto, gave me back my life! I'm asthmatic & it only got worse between 2004-2013. I couldn't breathe, shower without making sure I had my rescue inhaler outside the shower, walk to the mailbox, do my laundry, cook (because of the smell/smoke), etc. I lost touch with friends & family, who eventually gave up inviting me to functions because they knew the answer would be no. I used to be a wedding coordinator & simply adored life, being on the go, dancing at parties, laughing out loud, doing karaoke, & so much more. Then things turned for the worse & I was so bad, that if I did go out, at one point I was on oxygen & in a wheelchair.

On the 14th evening after the final procedure [bronchial thermal plasty], I was home & preparing for bed, when I realized something different. It was QUIET, I WASN'T WHEEZING!!! After years of struggling & using oxygen, meds, a nebulizer sometimes more than six times a day & a CPAP machine, I was BREATHING ON MY OWN...QUIETLY!!! The results I've had since the procedure was completed, have been phenomenal. I am now able to enjoy outings with my family, I am only on a maintenance inhaler & my biggest achievement of all, is I just returned from a 4 day trip to Japan & an 11 day trip to Korea where all we did was walk. We walked day & night for 10-14 hours a day, climbed miles of stairs, where the levels were steep and I got to enjoy EVERY SINGLE STEP of my trip. No wheelchairs, no extra meds, no oxygen, no rescue inhalers, just LIFE!!!”

Hawaii News Now Video:

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/30190321/healthcare-hero-pulmonologist-dr-warren-tamamoto>

Juliette Zelada, MD
General Surgeon, Trauma Medical Director
Wilcox Memorial Hospital

“I discovered my son in a coma, eyes rolled back, foaming at the mouth, pointing upwards to heaven. I had not heard from him for three days and after calling his cell, went upstairs to his studio and found him, called 911, and KFD, and the EMT's and ER immediately cared for him.

Dr. Zelada was the surgeon who [operated on] him for six days, her tireless efforts to stem the invading flesh eating bacteria, necrotizing faciitis, saved his life. She gave clear explanations, providing the family with peace as to what was happening with John. Part of his thigh, back and abdomen were surgically removed down to the muscles. Had it not been for Dr. Zelada's constant care, John would have died. Dr. Zelada had the skills, knowledge, and wisdom to know what to do to save his life. Today, John is recovered and, thankfully with lots of prayers for his healing both physically and spiritually, driving me to church for the last two years. Thank you, Dr. Zelada, my Hawaii Healthcare Hero.”

Hawaii News Now Video:

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/30208740/healthcare-hero-dr-juliette-zelada>