

ASSOCIATION *News*



Q&A with Community Service Chair Gary Nushida

By Shelly Awaya

Most Hawaii chapter members may already know Gary Nushida from his active participation within the organization, but hearing what motivates him to head a committee may encourage others to use their strengths to volunteer and become leaders, too. Nushida has been a member since June 2002, has been president for two terms and currently sits on the board. He is the executive housekeeper at Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki, a 500-plus room hotel located at the entrance to Waikiki.

Q: Why was performing community service at the forefront of your agenda during your two terms as chapter president till now?

“As the incoming president, I was a little unsure as to how I would help move the chapter forward. I hoped I could continue the great job (the late) Patty Kawaoka had done as the previous president. I felt we needed to find ways to get involved in our community. One, to give back, and the other to raise awareness about our profession.”

Q: What made you select helping the homeless shelters as a permanent community service project?

“This may sound corny, but one day I was listening to talk radio and a public announcement came on about the Affordable Housing and Homeless Alliance. I knew that as individual IEHA members we help those in need through our work places, but I felt that if we could coordinate our efforts through the IEHA Hawaii chapter it would be a great opportunity to give back to our community.”

Q: The 100th Infantry Battalion cleanup was a community service project initially adopted by former Chapter President Patty Kawaoka. Why did you decide to continue this? Is there a special connection you have to the Battalion, military service, or veterans?

“On Nov. 10, 2004, on the recommendation of Patty and then Community Chairperson Leonida Lumantas, the members chose to adopt the 100th Infantry Battalion Clubhouse as a community service project. I felt it was only fitting to continue the wishes of both Patty and Leonida. What better group to help and show our appreciation than the most highly decorated veterans of the United States military? In addition, my father, who passed away in 1999, was a 442nd and 100th Battalion veteran. I have even brought my mother, wife and son to help with past cleanups.”



Q: Cleaning Washington Place is the newest service project for the chapter. How has that experience been so far? Any challenges or new experiences not seen in the hotel sector?

“Helping keep one of Hawaii’s gems clean has been both a privilege and spiritual experience. We are helping to keep a part of Hawaiian history alive. We were asked to avoid any chemicals that could harm many of the historic pieces that were throughout Washington Place.”

Q: As community service chair, if you could say one thing to all members to increase participation at these service projects, what would you say and why?

“Get involved! There is no better way to showcase your skills as a professional in the cleaning industry and to give back to your community at the same time.”

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The next Oahu meeting will be on Wednesday, Nov. 14, at 10 a.m. at the 100th Infantry Battalion Clubhouse. Please email Veronica Mayer at vmayer@hotelrenew.com to RSVP for this meeting or call 808-354-2817.

For more information about our chapter, please visit www.hawaii-ieha.org.

