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## LOCAL NEWS

Posted on: Sunday, September 27, 2009

# 'Good Table' serves great cause

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By **Simplicio Paragas**  
[sparagas@honolulu.gannett.com](mailto:sparagas@honolulu.gannett.com)

For breakfast, Fred Miyashiro has a banana, some peanut butter and a cup of coffee. For lunch, it could be chicken hekka one day and beef lasagna the next.

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"I'm one of the lucky ones," said the witty and charming 89 year old, who receives his one substantial meal for the day from Lanakila Pacific's Meals on Wheels program. "I know other people only have one meal a day and some none."

Thanks, though, to this local nonprofit group, some of our kupuna and homebound don't have to go hungry.

Although the agency's federal and state funding has remained relatively static for the past five years, the demand for its Meals on Wheels has spiked year-over-year, with a waiting list sometimes of up to 300 people.

"We've got to keep pace with the increase in demand," said Marian Tsuji, president and chief operating officer for Lanakila

Pacific. "We're an aging society and the demand is only going to get greater."

To help raise funds for Meals on Wheels, Teri Yamashige volunteered to be the chairwoman for the inaugural The Good Table.

"They've been doing the same thing in New York City, but all the participating restaurants there are high-end," Yamashige noted. "We wanted it to be a little more inclusive and tailored more to locals."

On Thursday, Oct. 22, more than 55 restaurants will participate in this one-night-only fund-raiser, the first of its kind in Hawaii.

"I think what's different about this event is that everybody who buys a table will be dining exactly at

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Fred Miyashiro is flanked by Teri Yamashige, left, and Marian Tsuji.

Photos by Randy T. Fujimori

### THE GOOD TABLE

What: A one-night-only fund-raiser for Lanakila Pacific's Meals on Wheels program

When: Thursday, Oct. 22 at 6 p.m.

Where: At various participating restaurants

Cost: Tables of four to six range from \$120 to \$2,500

Web site: [www.thegoodtable.org](http://www.thegoodtable.org)

the same time at 6 p.m.,"

Yamashige said. "And they'll be able to share their experience (via a tweet, text or e-mail) on our Web site at that very same time."

Tables of four to six are categorized by Hale Aina, Orchid, Hibiscus, Ginger, Bird of Paradise and Plumeria. Each category represents a different class of restaurant with Alan Wong's being the top in the Hale Aina category, costing \$2,500 for a table of six.

Orchid and Hibiscus tables for six cost \$1,200 and \$900, respectively. Ginger and Bird of Paradise tables for four go for \$350 each and four-top Plumeria seating runs \$120.

A comprehensive list of participating restaurants and detailed information can be found online at [www.thegoodtablehawaii.org](http://www.thegoodtablehawaii.org).

What's original and fun about this event — aside from its synchronized and interactive aspect — is its format. Each category contains a list of restaurants, and those who buy tables will not know which eatery they'll be visiting until they receive their "Welcome Packet" by October 12.

For example, if you buy an Orchid table, you could be dining at Hakone, Hoku's, Le Bistro, Orchids, Twist at Hanohano, Top of Waikiki or 3660 on the Rise. The list of establishments at the Plumeria level include such places as On On at McCully, Kakaako Kitchen, Zippy's or Mini Garden.

Parties, though, are able to buy a "Sponsorship" table outright at their preferred destination by paying a higher fee.

Each restaurant will also stray from its regular menu, with chefs preparing a specially-designed dinner for that one night only.

To understand the importance and impact of Lanakila's programs, Tsuji cited some supporting statistics, including the distribution of 1,500 nutritious meals islandwide and helping feed 500 to 700 students per day.

"Meals on Wheels is one program and our other two are Workforce and TLC (Teaching and Learning Centers)." Tsuji said. "Our mission is to help developmentally, physically and mentally challenged individuals."

And also to feed the elderly.

For Miyashiro, Meals on Wheels has been a blessing since he suffered a stroke in 2004.

"I didn't know about this meal-a-day until a social worker told me about it when I was in the hospital," he recalled. "Now I look forward when Richard (one of Lankila's volunteers) delivers my meal, even though he's late sometimes. But I'm lucky because I'm still getting a meal."

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