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2022 Samoan Heritage Initiative Program: Upega Matalili'i

"It is this inherent bond that compels us to form communities when we travel to and settle in different parts of the world. When beyond the shores of our home, Samoa, our heritage is what binds us"

The Samoa Heritage Initiative Program (SHIP) was held earlier this month from August 6th through the 12th in Honolulu, Hawai'i, hosted by the American Samoa Government - Hawai'i Office. The four pillars of the 2022 SHIP are culture, language, health, and the future of all Samoan people home and abroad. The week-long festivities included the following events:

- E lelei le Alofa o le Atua Scholarship Night
 - Twenty-five recipients received a \$1,000 scholarship
- Opening Church Service
- Traditional Welcoming Ava Ceremony
- Performances from various Samoan Church groups
- Cricket, Basketball and Volleyball League
- Eye Clinic
- Zumba
- Job Fair/ Employment Recruitment
- Car Show
- Special remarks from various leaders of the Samoan and Hawaiian community

"The *Fa'a-Samoa* is the pillar of our existence – it is our roadmap for living. Every Samoan, past, future, and present, is interconnected through the traditions prescribed to us by the *Faa-Samoa*," stated Honorable Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga. He continued "It is this inherent bond that compels us to form communities when we travel to and settle in different parts of the world. When beyond the shores of our home, Samoa, our heritage is what binds us."

"It is the vision of the Honorable Governor Lemanu, and a goal of this administration, to revitalize the Samoa Heritage Initiative Program in Hawai'i," remarked Honorable Lieutenant Governor Talauega E. V. Ale. He continued, "The administration believes that it is our responsibility to not only ensure that the samoan heritage and culture is taught and honored, but to also plant seeds of hope in our Samoan youth, so they may return home and serve our community."

Various leaders echoed the same sentiment throughout the week to urge our Samoan people to remain steadfast in a living culture, and that the revitalization of the heritage program will continue the work of those who have paved the way by instilling in our youth our core values of love, respect, and humility. The Honorable Josh Green, Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawai'i acknowledged in remarks Thursday evening at Keehi Lagoon the important relationship between Hawaii and both American Samoa and the Independent State of Samoa. "Hawaii is admired for its diversity, and for its integration of so many different cultures. And the Samoan community is one of these extraordinary cultures," stated Lt. Governor Green. He continued, "It is one of our largest Pacific Islander communities and the hearts of the Samoan people are the greatest in our state. The Samoan culture strengthens the fabric of this society." To conclude his remarks, Lt. Governor Ale received a certificate of appreciation of the continued partnership with the ASG-Hawaii office to have organized assistance during the measles outbreak in Samoa, repatriation of American Samoa residents during the covid pandemic, and hosting of the Samoan Heritage week.





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