

ISLAND HOPPER[®]

M A G A Z I N E

Your Complimentary Copy - ISSUE 9

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT
MOKULELE HELPS STUDENTS' SURFING CAREERS TAKE FLIGHT



**STATE OF
THE STRINGS**
THE UKULELE AS THE STATE INSTRUMENT

K-9 COMPANIONS
GOING ALL OUT TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Cover photo of NSSA state champion Brodi Sale by Ehitu Keeling @heets7

A message from
Ron Hansen, CEO of Mokulele Airlines



E komo mai!

Welcome aboard and thank you for choosing Mokulele! It is our pleasure to serve you wherever your travels are taking you in our beautiful islands.

You may have seen in the news that go! Airlines, which was operated by Mesa Air

Group, recently ceased operations in Hawai'i, and we'd like to clear up a bit of confusion. This will in no way affect Mokulele's flight schedules or operations. In 2011, Mokulele's parent company, TransPac Aviation, purchased Mesa Air Group's turbo prop division. At that point, go! and Mokulele began operating as two separate airlines, and the code share (reservation) agreement between the two airlines no longer exists. We want to reassure you that we will be here to serve your needs for affordable, efficient interisland travel for many years to come.

In this issue of *Island Hopper*, you'll learn about an incredible organization in Maui's upcountry that trains service dogs to give people with physical disabilities more freedom and independence. Plus, you'll learn about efforts underway by the Hawai'i House of Representatives to make our beloved ukulele the official state instrument. We'll also introduce you to a team of talented young surfers that we're proud to sponsor. And if you think the views from your Mokulele flight are spectacular, be sure to check out what Big Island Air has to offer on its air tours of Hawai'i Island.

Enjoy your flight! We look forward to serving your travel needs again in the very near future. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

Ron Hansen

Ron Hansen, President & CEO
Mokulele Airlines

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DOGGED DETERMINATION

ASSISTANCE DOGS OF HAWAII TRAINS CANINE COMPANIONS TO GO ALL OUT TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

BY KAREN BROST



Mike and his service dog Quincy

As the saying goes, a dog is man's best friend. But when that man (or woman or child) has a disability, a dog can be much more than a friend — it can be a lifeline to independence. That's why the nonprofit organization Assistance Dogs of Hawaii (ADH) has made it its mission to provide professionally-trained service dogs to people with physical disabilities to enhance the quality of their lives.

Over the past 10 years, ADH has graduated over 60 service dog teams through its internationally-accredited program. "Most of our clients are paraplegics or quadriplegics," explains Mo Maurer, the organization's executive director. "We place the dogs and provide lifetime follow-up support free of charge. The lifetime support is very important because some people's disabilities progress and change so we want to ensure the success of each team."

The dogs are trained to perform tasks such as pulling a wheelchair, turning lights on and off, opening doors and retrieving items that are out of reach to help their partners lead more independent lives. The dogs learn more than 90 commands and can even learn to respond to hand signals if their partners are unable to speak. Service dogs can also be trained to go get help if their partner is having a seizure.

"We also place facility dogs like Tucker who works at Kapi'olani Medical Center and we place court house dogs for children who are victims of crimes to help them through the difficult legal process," Mo adds. "There are always new ways that dogs can help people in need."



Dr. Wendi Hirsch and Tucker visit a patient at Kapiolani Medical Center



Photo by Ron Dahlquist



ADH primarily trains Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers. “Most of our dogs are purchased from the Guide Dog School in Australia,” Mo explains. “We get dogs that come from many generations of working dogs because it takes a specific temperament and they have to pass all kinds of health screenings to become service dogs.” ADH’s rigorous training program takes one to two years, and it has attained an impressive graduation rate of 70 percent in an industry where the national average is about 30 percent.

Like most nonprofits, ADH relies on the support of dedicated volunteers like John Tolbert, who is cluster general manager for the Wailea Beach Marriott Resort & Spa on Maui and the Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa on the Big Island. His role is to get the puppies acclimated to being in different social environments. John keeps an ADH puppy as a constant companion, taking it to staff meetings, into the resorts’ restaurants and having it greet guests at receptions. “It’s important for the dogs to have that interaction with a lot of different situations because that’s what they’re going to be doing in real life,” John says. “It’s just like selecting employees. It’s all about setting them up for success. And I have the pleasure of this amazing companionship and the guests love it.”

Since John frequently flies back and forth between Maui and the Big Island, Mokulele has given him permission to bring his puppy-in-training onboard with him. “A lot of the dogs will travel with their partners once they graduate, so it’s really important for them to have that experience,” Mo explains.

Mo stressed the need to protect this public access. “The biggest challenge that our graduates face, especially in the last year or two, is the number of people that are misrepresenting their pets as service dogs. They’re really endangering those people who need their dogs in public.” She shared the story of a client who is blind and in a wheelchair. Her service dog named Freedom was attacked in a restaurant by a dog that was being misrepresented as a service dog, and in that one tragic moment, the woman lost all of her independence. She was so traumatized by the incident that she was afraid to go out in public again. It’s against the law to misrepresent a dog as a service animal and it carries a \$1,000 fine.

To learn more about the amazing work that Mo and her team do at ADH’s facility in Maui’s upcountry, visit www.assistancedogshawaii.org and be sure to watch their very inspirational video, *Unleashing Abilities*.

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