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**ClimbHI and HLTA Recognize Two Hawaii Educators with Hospitality Award**

*The 2nd-annual award provides immersive industry experiences and mentorship, and includes a $1,000 stipend*

**Honolulu, Hawaii, June 7, 2022** – Hawaii workforce development nonprofit ClimbHI has partnered with the Hawai‘i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) to recognize two educators on Kauai and Maui with the second-annual hospitality educator award. The immersive award provides an array of learning opportunities within the hospitality industry. Each teacher also earns a $1,000 stipend to fund experiences that will provide an enhanced understanding of the industry.

“Hawaii’s educators are such an important part of each student’s understanding of the hospitality industry,” said Julie Morikawa, President of ClimbHI. “We are pleased to offer this annual award, which opens up engaging learning opportunities, industry connections and support for new experiences.”

Each teacher will receive overview briefings from tourism management and marketing leaders; job shadowing and on-site learning at a hotel or resort in Hawaii; and other immersive experiences that showcase various aspects of the industry. The teachers will also be paired with mentors from HLTA’s Women in Lodging & Tourism committee.

**2022 award winners:**

**Crystal Ozaki** has taught at Kauai High School for the past 7 years. Born and raised on Kauai, she has more than two decades of experience in the hospitality industry. She teaches travel industry management and hospitality tourism to help prepare students in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. Ozaki volunteers her time helping with soccer, participating in the district’s mentoring program, and advising the Hospitality Hui Hookipa Club. She also co-advises the Travel Club and graduation and is part of the STEM Cadre at Kauai High School.

“My goal is to continue to educate and expose students to the hospitality industry, as well as building partnerships within the hospitality community and engaging the travel advisory board with co-curricular activities,” she said. “I have a passion to mentor and guide my students with real-world experiences that will help them realize the many opportunities that are available to them.”

**Joyce Miyamoto** is a CTE teacher at H.P. Baldwin High School on Maui. She has 25 years of experience as a secondary teacher, and has served as a Family Career & Community Leaders of America Advisor for 8 years and as an Advisory Board member for the Maui Food Innovation Center for the past 2 years. She holds a bachelor’s degree in secondary education. Miyamoto was raised on a farm in Kula, Maui, which she credits for teaching her the Aloha Spirit that drives her teaching career. She said she would like to develop a curriculum for sustainable tourism, where students are the catalyst for solving the problem of how to balance the number of visitors to Maui with the existing infrastructure.

“Being able to collaborate with various government and community organizations helps to build a stronger school community,” she said. “Helping students to become leaders is important as they will be the ones leading our community one day.  Students must learn how to communicate and have a positive mindset to be in a competitive workplace. Education never ends after graduation, it is only the start of a new chapter.”  

Ozaki and Miyamoto were recognized during a ceremony with Morikawa and Mufi Hannemann, President and CEO of HLTA, on June 3, 2022.

“The Hawai’i Lodging & Tourism Association is proud to partner with ClimbHI to offer this scholarship for a second year. The educators who were selected this year are excellent by every measure of the word, and we are pleased to be able to help them to learn more about our state’s top industry,” Hannemann said.

In June 2021, ClimbHI and HLTA recognized **Alyssa Alcos,** a teacher at Waianae High School on Oahu, and **Fern White,** a West Hawaii District Resource Teacher for Career & Technical Education programs on the Island of Hawaii, with the first-ever hospitality educator awards.

**About ClimbHI:** Founded in 2009, the Hawaii-based 501(c)(3) nonprofitClimbHI seeks to inspire students to finish high school and proceed to post-secondary education or employment by exposing them to future career paths and the steps necessary to achieve those goals. For more, visit [climbhi.org](https://climbhi.org/).

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