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HTA Teams Up With Lifeguards Statewide to Offer Junior Lifeguard Program

HONOLULU – To inspire Hawai'i's next generation of watermen and waterwomen and help improve water safety statewide, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) has teamed up with certified lifeguards on the counties of O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island to offer the Junior Lifeguard Program.

The Junior Lifeguard Program teaches Hawai'i youths essential ocean safety skills, helps build their confidence and promotes the value of protecting and preserving ocean resources. Many graduates of the program have put their training into life-saving action, rescuing people who have gotten into trouble in Hawai'i's waters. Many of Hawai'i's professional lifeguards decided to make it their career after completing the junior lifeguard program.

George D. Szigeti, HTA President and CEO said, "The safety of residents and visitors is our number one priority, which is why we are supporting the Junior Lifeguard Program and wanting to see it flourish on all islands. Hawai'i's lifeguards are the best in the world. By teaching the youths of today, this will help ensure their water safety skills and knowledge is carried forth for generations to come."

HTA is funding the program with \$200,000, which pays for the instructors and equipment, such as tubes, surfboards and tents, to operate the program statewide this summer. The funds are being managed by the North Shore Lifeguard Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, with disbursements being made to lifeguard groups operating the program in each county.

The Junior Lifeguard Program is free and open to all youths, ages 12-17 years old. The one-week trainings will take place at community beach locations throughout Hawai'i. Openings are still available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, please see the following:

City and County of Honolulu: www.honolulu.gov/esdosls.html

North Shore Lifeguard Association: <http://www.northshorelifeguards.com>

County of Maui: <http://www.mauicounty.gov/1565/Junior-Lifeguard-Program>

County of Kaua'i: <http://www.forkauaionline.com/pec-events/2016-junior-lifeguard-program-ages-12-17/>

County of Hawai'i: West Hawai'i: Chris Stelfox, (808) 327-3570 (o); (808) 938-4295 (m)
East Hawai'i: John Baehr, (808) 961-8689 (o); (808) 756-7827 (m)

The Junior Lifeguard Program compliments the state and county's recently launched beach safety online program – www.hawaiiibeachsafety.com – that provides timely information on surf, weather and safety conditions at lifeguarded beaches statewide.

About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](http://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org) is responsible for strategically managing the State of Hawai'i's marketing initiatives to support tourism. HTA's goal is to optimize tourism's benefits for Hawai'i, while being attentive to the interests of travelers, the community and visitor industry. Established in 1998 to support Hawai'i's leading industry and largest employer, HTA continually strives to help ensure the sustainability of tourism's success.

For more information about HTA, please visit www.hawaii tourism authority.org. Follow updates about HTA on Facebook, Twitter (@HawaiiHTA) and its YouTube Channel.

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