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Elizabeth Kamaile Kahailihauwelo Kekahuna Crowned Champion at 33rd Annual Hula O Nā Keiki Competition



Video and Images, [HERE](#), courtesy of OUTRIGGER Kā'anapali Beach Resort

Kā'anapali, Maui - Elizabeth Kamaile Kahailihauwelo Kekahuna, representing Hālau Ke'alaokamaile under the guidance of Nā Kumu Hula Keali'i Reichel and Henohea Kāne, was announced as the overall winner of the beloved 33rd annual Hula O Nā Keiki competition at OUTRIGGER Kā'anapali Beach Resort on October 11, 2025. The two-day cultural celebration showcased the exceptional talent of young hula practitioners ages 6 to 17, honoring Hawaiian language, music and dance through both hula kahiko (ancient) and hula 'auana (modern) performances.

The resort welcomed guests of all ages, in reverence for the perpetuation of Hawaiian hula, music, language and fiber arts. The competition featured seven solo performances from six distinguished hālau representing O'ahu and Maui, with each young dancer demonstrating their understanding of the Hawaiian culture through their mastery of traditional oli (chant) and hula (dance).

Soloists performed before a panel of esteemed judges, captivating audiences with their connection to ancestral stories and cultural knowledge passed down through generations. In addition to their stage performances, soloists participated in private interview sessions with a panel of esteemed judges, where they shared the meaning behind their mele and hula, and expressed why they dance hula—offering a personal glimpse into their cultural journey and dedication.

The Akoni Akana & Kanoeau Delatori Kumu Hula Award was presented to Nā Kumu Uluwehi Guerrero a me Kau Krueger of Hālau Hula Kauluokalā, recognizing their excellence in preparing for the competition. Young dancer Sophia Grace Kalehua'ulaokalaniākea Caparso of Hālau Hula Kauluokalā earned top honors in both the Oli and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Award (Keiki Overall) and the Keiki Interview Award, as well as first place in both Hula Kahiko and Hula 'Auana in the Kaikamahine division.

Additional award winners, their top honors, their kumu and their hālau are listed below:

- **Elizabeth Kamaile Kahailihauwelo Kekahuna:** Oli and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Award ('Ōpio Overall); Hula Kahiko Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 1st Place); Hula 'Auana Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 1st Place); Nā Kumu Hula Keali'i Reichel a me Henohea Kāne, Hālau Ke'alaokamaile
- **Jessee Alexis Carter:** Hula Kahiko Award (Kaikamahine – 2nd Place); Hula 'Auana Award (Kaikamahine – 2nd Place); Kumu Hula Iola Balubar, Hālau Hula O Keola-Ali'iokekai
- **Tehani Keaheakeala'oli Leoiki:** 'Ōpio Interview Award; Hula Kahiko Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 4th Place); Hula 'Auana Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 2nd Place); Kumu Hula Kalani Paoakalani Hiapo, Paoakalani Hula Hālau
- **Nāmaka'ālohilohi Racadio:** Hula Kahiko Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 2nd Place); Hula 'Auana Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 4th Place); Kumu Hula Laua'e Yamasaki, Hālau Nā Maka O Ka Laua'e
- **Helena Kahinano Lahuakonakauikalani Mahelona:** Hula Kahiko Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 3rd Place); Hula 'Auana Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 3rd Place); Kumu Hula Kēhaulani Enos, Hālau 'Ilima Kū Kahakai
- **Krysta Valite:** Hula Kahiko Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 5th Place); Hula 'Auana Award ('Ōpio Wahine – 5th Place); Kumu Hula Iola Balubar, Hālau Hula O Keola-Ali'iokekai

Beyond the main stage, the Hawaiian Arts Market welcomed guests to experience the work of local artisans, featuring Hawaiian clothing designers, cultural demonstrations and hands-on workshops. Notable vendors included Manaola, founded and owned by Carrington Yap, the 1994 Hula O Nā Keiki Kane Winner; Pulelehua; and Kalei's Lunch Box, whose team includes employee Lopaka Logan Naihe, the 1996 Hula O Nā Keiki Kane Winner. The market celebrated the full circle of Hula O Nā Keiki's legacy, with past champions now contributing to the perpetuation of Hawaiian culture through their own businesses and crafts.

"Hula O Nā Keiki continues to inspire hope and dedication in our collective mission to honor and perpetuate Hawaiian culture," said Kahulu De Santos, OUTRIGGER Kā'anapali Beach Resort director of 'Imipo'okela and executive director of Hula O Nā Keiki. "Our kumu have devoted their lives to passing down the teachings of their own kumu, and we honor the commitment of our keiki and the transformative power of hula to strengthen our community as we look toward the future together."

"Hula O Nā Keiki represents the heart of what we do at OUTRIGGER Kā'anapali Beach Resort," said Edwin Torres, General Manager of OUTRIGGER Kā'anapali Beach Resort. "For over three decades, this competition has been a cornerstone of culture on Maui. Celebrating our young dancers and providing a platform for them to share their artistry ensures that Hawaiian traditions, language and values continue to thrive for generations to come. We are honored to host this beloved event and to witness the dedication of these talented keiki and their kumu."

The event was made possible through the generous support of co-sponsors including Kāhuli Leo Le'a, Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Honua Consulting, Encore, Hawaiian Airlines, Kanile'a 'Ukulele & Guitar, and TS Restaurants' Hula Grill Kā'anapali. Mele.com provided kōkua in hosting the livestream broadcast, allowing 'ohana across Hawai'i and around the world to experience the magic of the competition. The event broadcast is available to watch now on-demand exclusively at Mele.com.

Established in 1990, Hula O Nā Keiki features keiki and 'ōpio dancers in solo performances and private interviews with a panel of judges, distinguishing it among Hawaiian hula festivals. The event has grown into a vibrant gathering that brings together families, cultural practitioners and visitors, creating a space where heritage, artistry and youth unite.

For more information about continued cultural programming at OUTRIGGER Kā'anapali Beach Resort, visit outrigger.com. OUTRIGGER Kā'anapali Beach Resort offers an unparalleled getaway for guests, steps off of the acclaimed Ka'anapali Beach. Enjoy a stay fit for the entire family and experience the heartbeat of Hawai'i through hula, mele (song) and language lessons. Reservations can be made at outrigger.com, where guests can save 40% off Ocean View rooms and take full advantage of kama'āina specials.

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