

## 2020 YEAR'S END REPORT TO THE SUNRISE FOUNDATION BOARD

Submitted by Wally Takeshi Fukunaga  
For the Board's Zoom Meeting on Wednesday, December 2, 10:00 am  
Written on November 17, 2020

*"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times;  
it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity,  
it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair....*

These famous opening lines of Charles Dickens' novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, depict a time of extreme opposites – of chaos, conflicts and despair, as well as healing, happiness and hope. Although they were written to describe the tumultuous environment of the French Revolution, I find them capturing well our own unsettling moment in time, wrought by the COVID Crisis.

It began in March of this year, when the mysterious airborne virus struck, inflicting suffering and death, and our State was placed on a near total shut-down. Many lost their jobs and incomes. Ominous clouds of uncertainty and fear began to hover over us. Yet, just as light breaks forth during the dark times in our lives, and healing happens at the points of our wounds, the COVID Crisis somehow brought out the *truest* in us. We turned our fear into compassion, and our anxiety into service to others. Shortly following the outbreak, a section in our website was devoted to essays and poems composed by members of our board to offer encouragement, guidance and hope to our anxious community.

Then in early April we contributed \$1,250 to Hawai'i Foodbank to help feed the hungry. That same month, with Ron Yamauchi serving as liaison, we assisted Partners in Development Foundation and Kamehameha School to inform impacted families of available emergency child-care, medical, food and financial assistance. Those on our board in full-time healing professions found themselves busier than ever. Out of the "worst of times" that hit us unaware in 2020, emerged an amazing outpouring of compassion and care.

It also awoke in us the need to innovate. Instead of staying passive during the crisis, we responded with new ways to connect. By way of a virtual platform, our book study group, now named "The 3-R's" (Reading, Reflection & Response) explored a range of books and other publications on spiritual awakening, lifestyle enrichment and political awareness. They included Serene Jones' *Call it Grace- Finding Meaning in a Fractured Word*, Hector Garcia's and Francesc Miralles' *The Book of Ichigo Ichie – The Art of Making the Most of Every Moment the Japanese Way*, Timothy Snyder's *On Tyranny- Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, Barack Obama's *The Audacity of Hope –Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, TIME's *America Must Change* compilation, Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu's *From Mindfulness to Heartfulness- Transforming Self and Society with Compassion* and most recently, Rev. Al Sharpton's *Rise Up – Confronting a Country at the Crossroads*.

Several in our book group are coping with the third R in our title: *Response*. They ask, "*What might be my response to the dire developments in our community and world?*" At our Nov. 14

session, SF's founding Board member, David Laeha, shared how the tug of that question prompted him to recently volunteer as a CPA to Pacific Gateway Center, whose mission is to serve undocumented immigrants and refugees and assist them in their transitioning to America.

*There is healing happening at the places of our nation's systemic sicknesses.*

Our Support Fellowship also has had to adjust and innovate. Rather than holding its quarterly gatherings at homes, accompanied with a plentiful potluck, it had to settle with assembling over Zoom and having person-to-person contact by email, texting and phone. Participants were reached regularly, so as to continue encouraging and empowering one other. The pandemic made us more purposeful and creative in keeping in touch and upholding our caring community.

On Saturday, Dec. 12, 10-11 am, our Foundation is offering a Zoom presentation on "***Staying Well in These Uncertain Times – Insights and Practices in Holistic Cleansing, Centering and Connecting***". The event is "homegrown", in that all seven speakers are members of our board. They include Bert Sumikawa, Sr. Bitrina Kirway, Norman Oshiro, JP Sabbithi, Anke Flohr, Caroline Sakai and Art Lum. We're grateful to JP, the Zoom host and moderator of the event. As of this writing, forty-nine persons are registered.

Dickens' depiction of opposites – "the best of times" happening simultaneously with "the worst of times" – might well be applied to the outcome of this year's *Give Aloha*, Foodland's Annual Community Matching Gifts Program. Despite the economic downturn and personal hardships from the pandemic, Sunrise Foundation received \$3,950.31 from the gracious giving of its friends. This is an increase of \$1,300.65 from last year's total of \$2,652.50. Mahalo, Ron, for your foresight in having SF participate in Foodland's *Give Aloha* two years ago.

*The light glimmers even in the midst of our fatigue from the COVID Crisis.*

In 2020, we bid a fond aloha and presented a plaque of appreciation to two members of our board, Arlene Luster and Ann Miller. Both faithfully served for four years. We also welcomed two new members – Caroline Sakai and Reiki Kahikina M. Young. Their photos and bios can be seen in Sunrise Foundation's website. If you haven't yet, check out our recently updated website. We're grateful to Kathy Helfrich for ably maintaining it.

Finally, in looking ahead to 2021, I bring to your attention two major events we are sponsoring:

1. A public lecture by Stanford University Professor Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu on May 22, 2021, scheduled to take place at TOHO NO HIKARI Hawai`i.
2. "Journeys to Wellness IX", scheduled for November 6, at the Community Church of Honolulu. Both events will be offered online and, if allowed, in person.

In these uncertain times when our vulnerabilities are laid bare, may the eternal Light of glad tidings shine brightly, and bring you and your loved ones the surpassing gifts of a holy and transcendent joy, hope and peace.