



Center for Aging 25th Anniversary Event

On Friday, October 14, 2022, there was a ceremony from 10 am to 12 pm to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the opening of the first VA building on Hawaii soil, the Center For Aging (CFA). Many VA Pacific Islands Health Care System (VAPIHCS) employees spoke about the opening ceremony 25 years ago. Senior Facilities Planner Craig Oswald worked on managing the construction of the CFA, and he spoke at length about his memories. Dr. Adam Robinson, director VAPIHCS also spoke to the crowd about what the CFA means to him.

“This is an important component of our ongoing mission to care for the men and women who have worn the cloth of our nation,” Dr. Robinson said. “Making sure that Veterans are cared for and that their wishes are respected as they age is our honor, and our privilege.”

The Geriatric and Extended Care (GREC) choir performed, and retired employees who were at the CFA when it opened were also present. They were honored with leis and gifts of Jade plants grown by Veterans at the Community Living Center (CLC) which is a part of the CFA. Chaplain Richie Charles offered a prayer as well, and CLC resident Jesse Sotelo offered words of thanks to the CFA staff on behalf of the Veterans who live there.

“I want to say thank you to the staff,” CLC Resident Jesse Sotelo said. “You go through it all with us, and we appreciate it.”

The CFA building houses the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Residential Recovery Program (PRRP) as well as the nursing home, named the Community Living Center (CLC). It also still holds office spaces. Chief of Extended Care Programs Dr. James Epure was the Master of Ceremonies (MC) for the event, and he has been working at the CFA since it opened in 1991. He spoke about what he remembers from the last 25 years in between introductions of the guest speakers, the Chaplain, and the choir.

“When we opened the CFA it was the first VA building in the Pacific Islands,” Dr. Epure said. “And, it is a symbol of our commitment to serve Veterans here. We have a lot of new buildings being built now, but this was the first. It’s where we started.”

In the last 25 years since the Center for Aging was built, much has changed in the Pacific Islands. The Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) have been added to our care network, along with the Spark Matsunaga Ambulatory Care Center (ACC) and the smaller VA clinics across the islands. Even now, VAPIHCS is expanding. The Daniel Akaka Advanced Leeward Outpatient Healthcare Access (ALOHA) clinic will open in 2024. Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations (ATLAS) is the newest component of VA’s digital outreach, and our ATLAS booth on the Big Island is already online.

With the rapid expansion of VA services in the Pacific Islands, it can be hard to remember where we started. As the CFA celebrates its 25-year anniversary, it's a good time to think back on all that has been accomplished in the last 25 years to expand and improve health care for Veterans in the Pacific Islands. Many VAPIHCS staff worked hard and diligently advocated for Pacific Island Veterans to create the care network that we have today. As we celebrate this anniversary, we celebrate every one of them, and all the Veterans they serve.

Pictures:



The Navy Wind Instruments Band playing at the end of the ceremony to celebrate the Center For Aging (CFA) 25th anniversary on Friday, October 14, 2022.



The Center For Aging (CFA) entrance on Friday, October 14, 2022, with decorations and picture books from the original opening ceremony 25 years ago.



Dr. Adam Robinson, director VA Pacific Islands Health Care System (VAPIHCS) speaking to the crowd at the Center For Aging (CFA) 25th Anniversary Ceremony on Friday, October 14, 2022.



The Geriatric Rehab and Extended Care (GREC) choir performing the National Anthem at the Center For Aging (CFA) 25th Anniversary Celebration on Friday, October 14, 2022.



Community Living Center (CLC) Veteran Jesse Sotelo speaking to the crowd at the Center For Aging (CFA) 25th Anniversary celebration on Friday, October 14, 2022.



Dr. Adam Robinson, director VAPIHCS greets Veterans after the Center For Aging (CFA) 25th Anniversary Ceremony on Friday, October 14, 2022.