

Sharing the Friendly Skies

With much help from Kamehameha Schools alumni, United Airlines' Keiki Flight 2000 is a resounding success

After maneuvering the huge aircraft into position, the pilot turns toward the runway and begins a thunderous run down the straightaway.

On board, 348 passengers – the majority of whom are youngsters who have never flown before and may not ever get the chance to fly again – collectively hold their breath and grab onto their seats.

Little hearts race.

As the aircraft speeds ever faster, their eyes widen ever bigger. Slowly, the great machine begins its ascent into a clear blue sky, quickly touches the clouds and then is above them.

Inside, young voices are filled with excitement.

"We're flying! We're flying!" says one.

"Look at the sky! Look at the clouds – look at the clouds!" says another.

Others simply cannot pry their eyes away from the windows, but all the children have huge smiles on their faces, and their joy is translucent.

Colleen Silva Kahaku '68 takes pleasure in bringing joy to children.

A veteran United Airlines' flight attendant, Kahaku served as the overall chairperson for the airline's Keiki Flight 2000 project. Begun in 1987 and held each December, the program is United's way of making Christmas just a little more special for selected children by giving them the thrill of an airplane ride followed by a holiday celebration.

Youngsters are targeted for the event through social service agencies and community and school groups – and everything is free.

"Children who are economically and physically challenged from our island community were our guests," Kahaku explained. "Most of the children have never been to the airport or on an airplane. For them, this was a dream come true."

After circling Maui and Moloka'i during a 25-minute flight, the



From left, Keiki Flight Chairperson Colleen Silva Kahaku, Captain Curtis Kekoa and Chief Purser Rachelle "Momi" Lutz Fitchett relax after the day's festivities.



Miss Hawai'i Billie Takaki shares a smile with children from Keiki Flight 2000.

children returned to the airport for a fantastic party, complete with games, donated goodies, entertainment by Kapena, and visits with celebrities like Santa Claus, Kimo Kahoano, Sam Choy, Pal Eldredge, Konoshiki and Miss Hawai'i Billie Takaki.

United Captain **Curtis Kekoa '67** flew in from San Francisco, where he's based, for the honor of piloting Keiki Flight 2000.

"This was my chance to give back to the people of Hawai'i," he said. "I've been away for a long time and I wanted to come back and do my share of giving."

Kamehameha Schools President and Acting Chief Education Officer Dr. Michael Chun was Kekoa's special guest onboard the flight. "Dr. Chun is somebody to be looked up to, and I feel especially fortunate that he was on this flight and that I got a chance to personally see him," Kekoa said. "Dr. Chun was glad to be with me today, but I was more glad to be with him."

Kamehameha alumni not only piloted the plane and chaired the event, Kekoa's 1967 classmate **Rachelle "Momi" Lutz Fitchett** served as chief purser and **Liana Neff-Mausolf '81** served as donations chairperson.

"Colleen Kahaku asked all the Kamehameha graduates at United to get involved," said

Customer Service Supervisor **Ikaika Hoopii '92**. "It makes me feel great to be involved with a project like this. It's a wonderful thing to see the smiles on these children's faces."

"There are a lot of Kamehameha graduates who work for United, and I think about 85 percent of them are involved with the Keiki Flight," said Customer Service Agent **Becky Brown '86**. "It makes me feel good to see the smiles of these little kids."

"The best thing about today was standing at the entryway and watching the children walk through to the airplane," Dr. Chun said.

"Their eyes were as big as dishes and they were so excited. This is just a wonderful program, and we're certainly very proud of all our graduates involved with it."



Kamehameha's Hui Mele Club, under the direction of advisor Eric Shimamoto (second from left) entertains aboard Keiki Flight 2000. From left, senior Melanie Adams, sophomore Le'a Kimura (kneeling), senior Kawika Kopper and senior Jordan Souza.

Kamehameha Schools Alumni at United Airlines in Honolulu

Flight attendants

Mary Kamae Rodrigues '62
 Rachelle Lutz Fitchett '67
 Colleen Silva Kahaku '68
 Abbie Phillips Hanohano '75
 Carl Judd '62
 Ed Kalahiki '65
 Roger Akimoto '63
 Ben Harbottle '59
 James Kaina '61
 Ken Dye '66
 Aaron Akaka '63
 Francis Soon '66
 Ed Tseu Jr. '64

Flight Operations

First Officer Kevin Garcia '75
 Capt. Curtis Kekoa '67

United Cargo

Bunny Leong '63
 Gary Akiona '65
 Jim Luke '60
 Bill Ahina '73

Ramp Service

Bill Asing '81
 Shannon Robello '81

Cabin Service

Michael Baptist '81

Customer Service

Liana Neff-Mausolf '81
 Ikaika Hoopii '92
 Margaret Silva Chinen '70
 Becky Brown '86
 Michelle Lanosa Richardson '86

Reservations

Stephanie Robello Awa '75
 Eva Burningham Torres '57
 Alyson McLain-Pacarro '78
 Noelani Naluai '96
 Lori Delima '81
 Rene Canto '81
 Tracy Lewis '85
 Kathy Yim '85
 Kimberly Kaaikala '86
 Sharise Palmerton '90
 Waipa Parker '91

Compiled by
 Colleen Silva Kahaku '68



REMEMBERING Song Contest



“What matters is that Hawaiian culture continues to prosper and grow despite ever-present changes Hawai’i has experienced.”

– SAMSON REINY

Each March, the annual Song Contest competition dominates the lives of the high school students at Kamehameha Schools. With each class striving to be crowned champion, competition is at its highest. But, according to senior student columnists Pua Watanabe and Samson Reiny, winning isn’t the only thing that comes to mind when they recall their Song Contest memories.

FELLOWSHIP THE ESSENCE OF SONG CONTEST

by Pua Watanabe ‘01



Ever since my older cousin **Jenny AQUI ‘98** was a freshman at Kamehameha, my family on Kaua’i would gather in front of the television on Song Contest night.

Searching through the sea of faces, we would get so excited when we’d catch even the shortest glimpse of Jenny. Even before I went to Kamehameha, Song Contest was an anticipated event for my family.

I remember how excited I felt when my very own Song Contest experience rolled around three years ago. Not only would I be watching Jenny and her senior class sing live and in person, but I would also be competing against her! I imagined my family on Kaua’i watching Song Contest on television, this time looking for both Jenny and me.

I never realized how much time and effort is put into preparation for Song Contest. Getting more than 400 students to sing out together in unison is not an easy task.

After nine weeks of rehearsal, however, our freshman class was definitely excited to make our debut. Emotions rang high when we gathered in the warm-up area. As the parents pinned red lei onto our dress whites, it was as if we had





suddenly become one unit, joined by the color red and the common desire to win.

We didn't win that night. In fact, we came in last.

Nevertheless, my first Song Contest remains one of my favorite memories at Kamehameha. When the upperclassmen gave us a standing ovation, a sense of camaraderie flowed amongst our entire school.

When this happens at every Song Contest, I feel so proud to be a part of a long-lasting legacy in which so many have participated. As I get older, I realize that while the friendly class competition engendered by Song Contest is fun, the true essence of this event stems from the tradition and fellowship shared within our Kamehameha 'ohana.

I will always remember the pride I felt each time I joined hands with my classmates and sung out.

SONG CONTEST PERPETUATES HAWAIIAN CULTURE

by Samson Reiny '01



During Song Contest season, classes have a healthy competitive spirit. With all the hours of rehearsal, every class wants to win, and on Song Contest day, all the students are prepared to sing with all of their hearts.

As freshman, it was our first year competing in the combined class competition. Moments before we entered the Blaisdell Arena, apprehension and excitement filled the air. We couldn't wait to show everyone what the freshman class had to offer.

Every class had a commendable performance, and the combined voices of the classes created a spellbinding sensation that transported

us back to the renaissance, the theme of Song Contest that year. The renaissance was a period in Hawaiian history when Hawaiian music and culture were revived. It brought the Hawaiian people and Hawaiian-at-heart closer to the past.

Hō'ike that year was an elaborated re-enactment of the annexation and the resurgence of Hawaiian culture. The emotional performance brought many students and audience members to tears. Watching that performance, I too felt like I was a part of the annexation. I became the farmer, the ali'i, and the children as they saw their heritage and their queen being stripped of control and integrity.

All that seemed important to me earlier was trivial in contrast to the true purpose of Song Contest. It wasn't about classes trying to outdo one another or about being on television.

What matters is that Hawaiian culture continues to prosper and grow despite ever-present changes Hawai'i has experienced. Our native voices are a constant reminder of the spirit that dwells within us and always will endure for generations to come.



"When the upperclassmen gave us a standing ovation, a sense of camaraderie flowed amongst our entire school."

— PUA WATANABE

The Kamehameha Schools 2001 Song Contest will be held March 23 at the Blaisdell Center. The event will be shown live on KHON-TV at 7:30 p.m. with a one-hour "pre-show" beginning at 6:30 p.m. In addition, the program will be simulcast on radio station KINE and Webcast at www.ksbe.edu compliments of Sprint Hawaii.