

# History in the Making

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## Students from middle to high schools show off their historical projects



*Participants work on an origami project with the guidance of members from the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii.*

With easing COVID restrictions, this year's Honolulu District History Day Fair was not held virtually for the first time since the pandemic. The hybrid format allowed students to attend in-person at Chaminade University's Hale Hoaloha. In total, 114 students—from middle to high schools—registered from eight schools, including some 'ōlelo Hawai'i students; 65 projects were submitted; and 10 teachers acted as mentors.

“The Chaminade School of Humanities has a longstanding relationship with Hawaii History Day,” says Cheryl Edelson, Chaminade’s Dean of School of Humanities, Arts and Design. “In fact, Chaminade Professor of History, Dr. Mitch Yamasaki, is one of the founding members of Hawaii History Day—a program that since 1990 has brought together K-12 teachers, students and community members to research and create projects on the importance of history.”

Hawaii History Day coincides with the National History Day® (NHD), an educational nonprofit organization that engages teachers and students in historical research. The mission of NHD is to improve the teaching and learning of history in middle and high school through an innovative framework of historical inquiry and research. Students learn history by selecting topics of interest, launching into year-long research projects, and presenting their findings through creative approaches and media.

“The scope of projects and the innovative approaches presented by students is always exciting and impressive,” Edelson says. “In 2021, Hawaii History Day participant Keilani Kajiyama Tinkham of Laie Elementary School earned first place honors in the National Junior Division in Performance for her project *The Rhythm of Resilience: Communication through the Bon Dance*.”



*Social Studies teacher Jaimy*

*Valerio helps students with their project.*

Students can choose from one of five different project formats: Exhibit, Performance, Documentary, Essay and Website. On Hawaii Island, students can also enter their projects in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i. This year's narrative theme was "Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas."

"Hawai'i History Day is about community, connection, and the exchange of knowledge through storytelling, connecting our histories to our everyday lives and sparking inspiration for the future," says Shannon Cristobal, Director of Hawai'i History Day. "These community connections and storytelling exchanges have been particularly crucial for our students as they endured constant schedule changes and profound isolation during online learning through the COVID pandemic, which has really hit our educational community hard."

Winners will go on to compete at the state competition at a later date. Their projects capture the human experience, showcasing the complex historical contexts that have led to the ideas, which have become so ingrained in our everyday lives.

"When students participate in History Day, they become expert detectives, writers, artists and storytellers," says Devin Makizuru, Hawaii History Day Assistant Coordinator. "They find bits and pieces of a story, and bring them together to create a different one. This story they tell has a part of them in it, so it is special in that way. We may hear the same stories over the years, but the voices telling them are different. And sometimes, something very special happens...and someone tells a story that no one has ever heard before."

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