Kalaeloa Raceway Park hosted a fantastic charity event this past Christmas - Granny's 25th Annual Keiki Christmas.

Granny's Keiki Christmas is a long-standing tradition that has been going on for over 25 years. It is an event based on compassion for the less fortunate that is truly in the spirit of Christmas. Polly "Granny" Grace held the first ever Keiki Christmas at the famous Paradise Cove in 1987 and it has continued every year since in one form or another.

This tradition started many years before when Granny would regularly deliver leftover food from her catering business to the homeless at the local beaches. At the time there were no shelters, so Granny and her good friend, Leilani Fernandez in addition to their husbands, would walk the beaches providing warm meals and toys for the keikis that lived there.

"I believe in taking care of the less fortunate, and have instilled these lessons in my children and great grandchildren" says Granny.

Unfortunately, Leilani soon passed. The owner of Paradise Cove asked Granny if there was anything she would like to do in her honor and it's at this time the idea of Granny's Keiki Christmas was born. The first was held at Paradise Cove in December 1987 and continued for 14 years.

After a change of ownership at Paradise Cove, she then moved it to the Waianae District Park where it remained until 2011. In 2011, Kalaeloa Raceway Park offered free use of the premises along with all of the amenities it could offer to Granny's Keiki Christmas. This includes water, toilets, trash collection and other items that would normally cost to use. KRP even provides the insurance coverage for the event. KRP considers this as another chance to support its local community and is proud to be a part of it.

For 2012, KRP once again served as the backdrop for this wonderful spectacle that mixed traditional Hawaiian entertainment with carnival rides and scrumptious meals for less fortunate families. Bus transportation was provided by Grounds Transportation out of Campbell. Brown bag lunches filled with goodies along with hamburgers and chili hot dogs were on the menu as the event kept everyone full and happy. Carnival rides including a roller coaster and rock

climbing wall kept the keikis busy throughout the entire day.

Vince Manuwai, NFL player and one of Hawaii's own, made a special appearance at the event while also donating to the cause.

The legendary Chief Sielu Avea and his group of amazing performers were on-hand to wow the crowd. Chief Sielu is a highly regarded representative of the Samoan culture and was on-hand to share a bit about their way of life along with his trademark humor. In addition, he and his native group performed an fantastic fire dance for the hundreds of attendees that was stunning to watch.

In addition to the fire dancing, Hula Halau Keli'inoi provided exquisite hula for the families along with the well known Kumu Kathy Keli'inoi Westbrook providing the music and more.

At the end of the event, Santa Claus and his helpers came to town to ensure that every keiki, big or small, went home with a toy. Hundreds of families attended the event, and by and large, it was an amazing success that encompassed the spirit of love and giving.

KRP was happy to be a part of this event, and looks forward to hosting once again, next year. A huge mahalo to all that donated their time and more to making the event a huge success!

Please enjoy the photos below:

{gallery}photos/comoutreach/2012/keikichristmas{/gallery}

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