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January 2022



This year, take control of scammers who steal your identity, rob your assets and stain your legacy. Learn how...contact SMP Hawaii today.

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January 2022 The Department of Health/Senior Medicare Patrol Hawaii Working For You

**SMP**  
HAWAII  
PREVENT DETECT REPORT

**Kukui Gram**

*The Kukui Nut (Candlenut) is highly revered as the Hawaii State Tree. Kukui symbolizes light, using its oil in lamps to bring light to darkness. Kukui means "enlightened," representing wisdom, protection and peace.*

### Happy New Year!

This edition focuses on the Dirty Dozen tax schemes to avoid being the next target...Enjoy the "Duty Free" Film Team's re-cap last month to honor our Volunteers, and find out the latest with SMP Hawaii on Hawaii Island...Join us for our 20/22 Web Series on Caregiving in Hawaii – see [Calendar of Events](#). Learn about the current issues, where to get help and the resources available for caregiving. Everyone inevitably joins this road so find out all you can to better prepare in 2022...Finally, SMP celebrates **25 years of service on June 1<sup>st</sup>!** Look for details on our website: [smphawaii.org](http://smphawaii.org)

**Kukui Gram** was created to help our kupuna. It takes a village to raise a child and an entire state to protect our beloved kupuna. Please send us your stories to share. Mahalo!

Norma Kop, SMP Hawaii Director

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### Did You Know? Dirty Dozen Alive & Well

January 31 ushers in Tax ID Theft Awareness Week, with dire IRS and FTC warnings that the Dirty Dozen tax schemes will make their rounds beyond April 15. In a nutshell, these scams fall into 4 categories:

1. Pandemic-related scams, including Economic Impact Payment theft;
2. Personal information cons, using social media, phishing, ransomware and phone "vishing;"
3. COVID-19, fake charities, immigrant and disaster relief fraud;
4. Persuasive schemes soliciting taxpayers into unlawful action.

#### Beware of these **Red Flags**:

- A caller claims to be from the IRS threatening to have you arrested by the police unless you pay immediately a tax bill.
- An email pretending to come from the IRS instructs you to press on a link to verify personal info.
- A link to complete application for your "delayed" EIP check.
- An imposter tax preparer asks you to pre-sign a blank tax form.

Avoid these traps by remembering to Prevent, Detect and Report. When it comes to scams, remember that "Knowledge is Power!"

The IRS will give taxpayers prior notice before making actual calls; it doesn't threaten with arrests or make demands for payments. SMP Hawaii encourages review of the Dirty Dozen schemes at [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov) to recognize scams during and after the tax season. Call the IRS at 800-829-1040 or contact the FTC Complaint Assistant at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov). Or call SMP Hawaii.

Knowledge, vigilance and avoidance are keys to avoid becoming a victim of tax fraud, in the same way you would protect yourself from health or Medicare scams. If you suspect a scam, report it today!

*Mahalo Volunteer Mae for conducting the research for this article.*

**Contact us for virtual presentations by trained Volunteers!**

## Volunteer Spotlight: Stephanie Hashimoto



Like many Baby Boomers, Stephanie Hashimoto is no stranger to caregiving. Both her mother and grandson keep her in-step with the various aspects of care. The Oahu resident extends her knowledge and experience, particularly to the vulnerable and elders who live alone. Stephanie's skills, traits and high level of professionalism were primary reasons for naming her the program's Counseling Team (CT) Liaison. She serves with five trained volunteers and enjoys the comradeship and the satisfaction of helping people through counseling.

"I'm just grateful that I can help when I can with no pressure to meet a stiff quota other than to carry out our Mission to the best of my ability," said Stephanie. "I enjoy assisting people who call our Helpline; many of them don't know what fraud prevention resources are available; SMP Hawaii is here to help." A former registered nurse in home care, Stephanie knows healthcare experience is not a volunteer requirement. "Just a willing and open mind, and a caring heart," she says. "SMP trains us and we have fun learning and growing together!"

### Duty Free Team honors AEOS Volunteers and steers 2022 plans

While he could not find a job for his 75-year-old mother who was suddenly fired as a seasoned housekeeping supervisor, Sian-Pierre Regis, a journalist based in New York City, could tell her story.

The world responded to his debut indie film "Duty Free" and SMP Hawaii has taken the powerful film to new heights in Hawaii.

The documentary sheds light on ageism, financial insecurity and the caregiving crisis both poetically and unflinchingly, creating the opportunity for all ages to begin the conversation about these issues and ways to address them.

"I made this film to also serve as a wake-up for younger people; why get involved and how," said Regis,

### Grant to help kupuna become tech-savvy for their protection

SMP Hawaii received a new grant from the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control (HCFAC) Wedge Fund to help older adults on the Big Island to be tech-savvy. The goal is to increase digital literacy through these activities: 1. Partner with Community Health Workers (CHW) at the UH Manoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine. CHWs visit homebound kupuna in rural communities. 2. Provide helpful resources to seniors to learn about technology and get connected. 3. Practice safety when using devices and technology to protect identity, personal info and assets.

Contact SMP Hawaii to learn more about this Big Island initiative or to assist with spreading the word.



Sian-Pierre Regis captures a moment with mother, Rebecca Danigelis.

who along with his mother, Rebecca Danigelis, and the film's Impact Producer, Rebecca Mellinger," joined the DOH - Executive Office on Aging's AEOS at its 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Volunteer Tribute & Training Event on December 16 and discussed plans to partner with SMP Hawaii this year and beyond. See *Calendar of Events* on 20/22 Webinar Series.

### Calendar of Events

**Monthly Volunteer Team Meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday 10:00 – 11:30 am**  
<https://zoom.us/j/3124825354?pwd=MHE4Y0pDWHIZenZCcmRKcjRCaS9Gdz09>  
Zoom Meeting ID: 312 482 5354 Passcode: 2021

**20/22 Webinar Series Spring-Summer 10:00-11:30 am**  
*Caregiving: Perspectives & Profiles to Empower*

April 14: Sharing Their Story: Hawaii SHIP, LTCOP and Others  
May 12: CMS - Livanta: What Every Caregiver Should Know  
June 9: Costs, Consequences & COVID-19 Part I

**20/22 Webinar Series Fall-Winter Same as Spring-Summer**

Aug 11: Cost, Consequences & COVID-19 Part II  
Sept 8: Getting Help for Your Questions  
Oct 13: Reliable Resources & Real Support on Our Shared Journey

Save-These-Dates:

- June 1: SMP Hawaii's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!
- July 14: SMP Hawaii Annual Recognition and Training
- Dec TBD: 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual AEOS Volunteer Tribute and Training

To Join these Zoom Meetings, Click on the Link Below

<https://zoom.us/j/3124825354?pwd=MHE4Y0pDWHIZenZCcmRKcjRCaS9Gdz09>  
Zoom Meeting ID: 312 482 5354 Passcode: 2021 *Dates subject to change*

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**Next Issue: April 2022**