**Jeannie Brew, Retired Volunteer Caregiver - Na Hoaloha, in Maui County, HI**

My journey as a volunteer caregiver began during my visits to Maui about five years ago when I started delivering Meals on Wheels on a seasonal basis. It was a modest start, but it planted the seeds of my passion for helping others in need. Eventually, I decided to move to Maui permanently. One day, a friend of a friend's husband was dealing with dementia, and I felt compelled to offer my assistance. That's when I began volunteering with Na Hoaloha, and it marked the beginning of a truly fulfilling journey.

I've been involved in various aspects of caregiving. Initially, I provided rides to doctor appointments and assisted with shopping for those in need. I also took community members on shopping trips to ensure they had access to essential supplies. In addition to these practical tasks, I've been there for emotional support as well by simply spending time with people or getting to know them better, I believe that building connections and fostering a sense of companionship is just as important as meeting their physical needs.

The pandemic brought significant challenges to our community, and many volunteers had to step back due to health concerns. However, I never stopped offering my assistance. People still needed help with transportation and access to food, and I was determined to be there for them. Thankfully, I managed to stay healthy throughout the pandemic and continued to deliver food to people from local food banks and churches.

Over time, I noticed that some individuals became more particular about the type of food they received, and this sometimes took away from the joy of volunteering - and that is when I decided to retire. However, the relationships I've formed with the community members I've assisted have become incredibly meaningful to me. They've become like family, even though we were once strangers. Witnessing the transformation of some from being self-sufficient to needing more support has been a poignant reminder of the importance of community and caring for one another.

My journey to becoming a volunteer caregiver has been influenced by various experiences in my life. After getting married and starting my career as a cosmetologist, I lived in Alaska. I worked with conventions and visitor bureaus, which allowed me to meet new people from all walks of life. When I moved to Maui I transitioned to a career as a massage therapist and a seasonal volunteer as a path to making a positive impact in my community.

**Quotes for Social Media:**

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* *"Witnessing the transformation of some from being self-sufficient to needing more support has been a poignant reminder of the importance of community and caring for one another." - Jeannie Brew, Retired Volunteer Caregiver Na Hoaloha, in Maui County, HI*
* *"Building connections and fostering a sense of companionship is just as important as meeting their physical needs." - Jeannie Brew, Retired Volunteer Caregiver Na Hoaloha, in Maui County, HI*