

The Desire to Help - Guest Editorial

“We are called to serve without judgment.”

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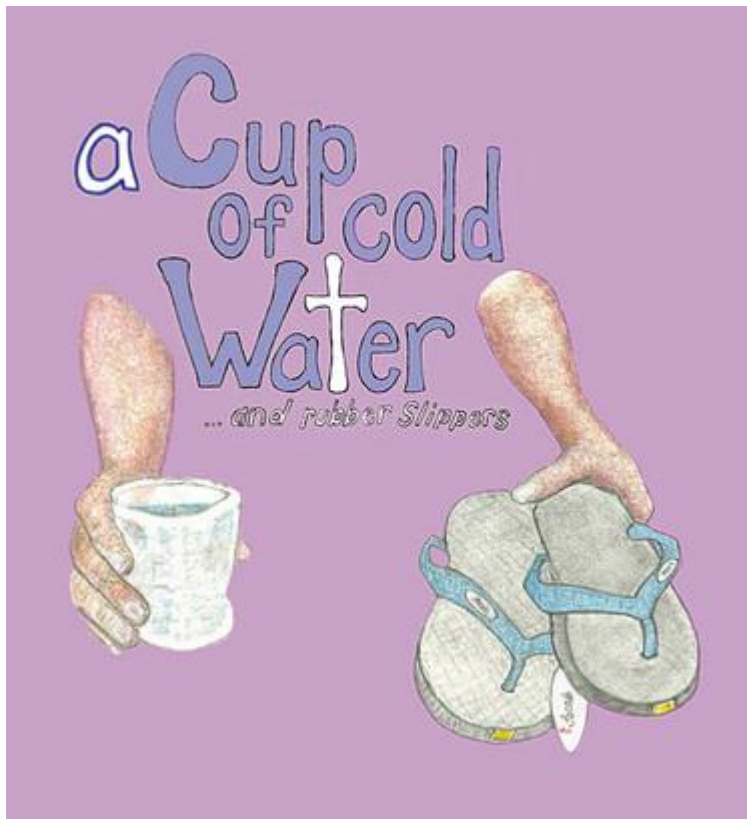
Cindy Schumacher - Contributing Writer , Maui Weekly

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After going out on runs with A Cup of Cold Water (ACCW) Community Care Van (see front-page story, "Angels on Wheels"), one experiences the reality of the human spirit in ways that can't be realized otherwise. That is what happened to me.

Simply said, visiting the different parts of the island with the Care Van, and bringing substance and hope to the most vulnerable among us is unforgettable. When someone looks straight into your eyes with so much gratitude because you handed them a snack pack, cold water and a T-shirt, etc., you realize that we should all have a part in alleviating suffering. And, when a child comes up to the van hungry, you can't help but want to feed them and fulfill their basic needs. You want to give, give and give. I did.

Keku Akana, retired deputy chief of police Maui County, head coordinator and board president of ACCW, said it best when interviewed by the Maui Weekly.



a Cup of Cold Water

... and rubber Slippers

"We are called to serve without judgment," said Akana. "It has always been a primary part of the Judeo-Christian ethos--caring for the poor, supporting the weak and bringing hope to the hopeless. It's a mandate, not an option."

"Our goal is to provide hope and comfort, serve selflessly and be 'prayer in action,'" he said.

Akana believes that elements of secular society will always give ostensibly good reasons why we should not help the poor--they don't want help; they will never change; they are scammers and cons, substance abusers, lazy and don't really want to work or want to change. On and on.

"But when you hear these comments of rebuttal, what we are really hearing is personal deflection, fear, guilt and the common error of the selfishness of modern man, which is me, myself and I," Akana said.

Yet, if everyone really ponders his personal situation, we all have loved ones or ourselves who could find themselves in or very close to poverty because of uncontrollable circumstances. Think of your own family unit right now. Would some of them be without shelter if you were not there for them or they for you?

ACCW is not a group of social workers. They are Christian outreach workers joining hands with all of the other wonderful churches, organizations and individuals who have been in the trenches, serving those living in poverty on Maui for many years. Some examples are Hale Kau Kau, Salvation Army, Feed My Sheep, Ka 'Ohana Kitchen, Family Life Center, Catholic Charities, Maui Intersectional Church and Maui Food Bank. There are many others.

"For ACCW, the motivation is our faith," Akana said. "We are driven by a deep passion and commitment that has spread to other brothers and sisters who volunteer to serve with us in a variety of ways."

He named a few of those volunteers and organizations: Makena's Keawalai Church's outreach committee, St. Theresa's Catholic Community and Monsignor Watanabe, St. Peter's Episcopal Church on O'ahu, Wailuku McDonalds, Four Seasons Hotel, Marmac Ace Hardware, Maui Eldorado, Ka'anapali Beach Hotel, LightSea Images, Sen. Gil Keith-Agaran, Maui Sunseeker Resort, Episcopal Church Women, United Thank Offering, Pukalani Dental Group, Maui Organics, St. Anthony's Thrift Shop, St. Ann's Catholic Church, Outrigger Aina-Nalu, Marriott Hotel, Waste Not Want Not Maui and others.

Is it time for you to connect with a group of people who have a common purpose of being a Good Samaritan? If so, contact Keku Akana at (808) 419-1637 and join the all-

volunteer 'ohana that come from all walks of life and are nourished by prayer and fellowship.

You don't need to be a member of any church to join. You just need to have the desire to help.