

# 2024 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



Pacific Rim Conference

By Genesis Leong, [genesisl@hawaii.edu](mailto:genesisl@hawaii.edu)



Photo of the 2024 Pac Rim Conference organizing team (left to right) Richard Tran, Davin Takahashi, Dr. Lauren Lum Ho, Dr. Maya Matheis, Dr. Nicole Schlaack, Dr. Naomi Rombaoa Tanaka, Dr. Holly Manaseri, Genesis Leong, Max Malmud, Dr. Raphael Raphael, and Lisa-Marie Eng (not pictured, Lori Lum and Sandra Oshiro).

On February 27th, the Center on Disability Studies (HI-UCEDD) welcomed over 750 attendees representing 12 countries from across the globe to Honolulu, Hawai'i to the 39th Annual Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity both online and in-person. In celebration of the conference theme, *Beyond Access: Building a Culture of Belonging* we aimed to explore how we all live to belong, to be part of something greater than ourselves.

# #PacRim2024 Highlights include:



**Featured Presenters** Keynote Mia Ives-Ruble, *Disability Justice Initiative at the Center for American Progress*; Keynote Justice Shorter, *SeededGround*; and Kiran Singh Sirah, Storyteller and Peacebuilder.

**7 Conference strands** representing: Public Health & Healthcare; Inclusive Physical Activity, Recreation, and Sport; Neurodiversity; Built Environments: Digital, Physical, and Social; Employment; Inclusive Practices in Education; and Low Incidence Disabilities / Extensive Support Needs.

**300+ Presenters and 157 presentations** representing advocates, researchers and practitioners

**20+ Exhibitors and Sponsors** including College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa; Hawai'i State Developmental Disabilities Division; Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council); Hawai'i Disability Rights Center; Aloha Independent Living Hawai'i; Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawai'i; Department of Education, Children's Community Council; Easterseals Hawai'i; Oregon Health & Science University UCEDD; and much more.

**8 Pre-events and Post-events** including AS-UCEDD and HI-UCEDD Emergency/Disaster Response and Recovery; Hawai'i APSE Employment First; SUPERFEST Disability Film Festival; VRTA Center for Quality Employment, the International Forum on Disability Studies, and Symposium on Postsecondary Transition of Neurodivergent students in STEM, etc.

Join us in March 2025, as we celebrate our 40th Pac Rim Conference in Honolulu, Hawai'i!! To get the latest updates for proposal submissions, sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities sign-up for the Pac Rim email listserv at <http://eepurl.com/g79LAX>, email [prinfo@hawaii.edu](mailto:prinfo@hawaii.edu), or visit us online at <https://pacrim.coe.hawaii.edu/>.

# FOSTERING COMMUNITY

## 2024 Pacific Rim Conference Sponsors and Exhibitors



Pacific Rim Conference



Photo: group photo at the Easterseals Hawaii exhibitor team at the Pac Rim Conference. Photo credit Monica Patrie.

Mahalo to this year's sponsors:

- [College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa](#)
- [Developmental Disabilities Division, Hawaii State Department of Health](#)
- [Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities \(DD Council\)](#)
- [Center for Assistive Technology Training \(CATT\)](#)
- [Paul K. Longmore Institute on Disability](#)
- [Hawai'i Association of People Supporting Employment First](#)

# SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS 2024



Pacific Rim Conference

By Dr. Nicole Schlaack, Scholarship  
Coordinator, [schlaack@hawaii.edu](mailto:schlaack@hawaii.edu)



Photo (left to right) Dr. Nicole Schlaack, Karen Jeynes, Dr. Alexandra Stribing, Betty Gaoteote, Dr. Sabrina Ali Jamal-Eddine, Jen Ham, Māhealani Ahia, & Dr. Raphael Raphael - not on the picture: Josephone Blas and Jaquelyn Jaquelyn.

This year, the Pac Rim Conference team reintroduced conference scholarship opportunities under the guidance of scholarship coordinator Dr. Nicole Schlaack and with the participation of review committee members Dr. Raphael Raphael, Martha Guinan, and Jessie Sawyer. The committee received a total of 48 applications from individuals around the globe and successfully granted a total of eight scholarships. The scholarship was awarded to 3 young professionals, 3 students and professionals with disabilities, and 2 family members of a person with a disability. Most scholarship recipients also presented at the conference.

The scholarship recipients traveled to Honolulu from Guam, South Africa, The Federated States of Micronesia, American Samoa, Ohio, New Jersey, California, and Hawai'i. The Pac Rim Conference Planning Committee is pleased to provide these scholarships, ensuring the accessibility and enjoyment of this conference for all!



## Betty Gaoteote

PAC RIM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

My name is Betty Gaoteote, a proud native of the South Pacific. In my professional capacity, I serve the American Samoa's Department of Health as a program evaluator for the CDC's Public Health Infrastructure Grant. My academic background is rooted in Human Services, a field I pursued with dedication, leading to my graduation from Walden University and the esteemed Community College of American Samoa. Beyond my professional endeavors, my life is

enriched by the joy of exploring new culinary delights alongside my children Meridian, Mercy, and Niko. My passion for learning is a constant in my life, as I am always on the lookout for opportunities to broaden my knowledge and skills. This drive is not just for personal growth but is fundamentally aimed at benefiting the community and people I am committed to serve.

As I look forward to participating in the Pacific Rim Conference, I am filled with anticipation for the learning and growth opportunities it presents. I am confident that this experience will be transformative, aligning perfectly with my ongoing journey of personal and professional development. My story is one of continuous learning, dedicated service, and a deep commitment to the betterment of the people of American Samoa.



## Jen Ham

PAC RIM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Jen Ham is a fourth year PhD student in the History of Consciousness who theorizes from her embedded and embodied position as a blind-deaf woman of color in a constant state of co-constitution with her canine guide and the multiplicity of environments they traverse. Jen's work explores the ways in which health/care emerges with/in entangled worlds. Pulling from research she conducted in Belgium and Denmark, Jen examines the particular ways alternative radical care systems grapple with the social-reproductive contradiction implicit to capitalism.



## Dr. Alexandra Stribing

PAC RIM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Dr. Alexandra Stribing, PhD, is an assistant professor at Kean University in Health and Physical Education. Her service initiatives focus on developing inclusive and empowering programs for youth with disabilities. She is the current director of the Cougars C.L.I.M.B. Adapted Physical Education program and Camp Abilities Field of Dreams.

Dr. Stribing's research efforts concentrate on motor development, physical activity, and health attributes of youth populations (a) with and without disabilities and/or (b) from disadvantaged settings. Specifically, her current research focuses on perceptual influences on actual motor competence in youth with visual impairments. Dr. Stribing has published in numerous peer-reviewed journals such as *British Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, *Journal of Motor Learning and Development*, and *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*.



## Karen Jeynes

PAC RIM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Karen Jeynes has worked extensively as a writer for stage and screen, most recently as the writer, co-director and creative producer of comedy series *The Morning After*, and drama series *Recipes for Love and Murder*. Other productions she has developed and overseen with creative partner Thierry Cassuto at *Both Worlds* are *Point of Order*, *Comedy Central News*, and *Parlement Parlement*, and the documentary *Africa and I*, as well as working as the head writer for *ZANews: Puppet Nation*. She is also in demand as a script consultant, editor and advisor for TV, film and theatre work, working with local and international production companies and broadcasters, as well as individual writers. She is currently busy with her PhD on autistic representation on South African television through the University of Pretoria, and lobbying for the South African industry to reimagine the way it views disability representation on and behind the screen.



## — Dr. Sabrina Ali Jamal-Eddine

PAC RIM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Dr. Sabrina Ali Jamal-Eddine, PhD BSN RN is an Arab disabled queer cisgender woman of color, Spoken Word Poet, Registered Nurse, and health humanities nurse scientist with an interdisciplinary certificate in Disability Ethics from University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). Sabrina's recently defended doctoral research explored the use of spoken word poetry as a form of critical narrative pedagogy to educate nursing students about disability, ableism, and disability justice. Sabrina serves on the Board of Directors of the National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities (NOND) and UIC Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Persons with

Disabilities and is a 2023 Zoeglossia (disabled poet) fellow. Sabrina will soon begin a postdoc in UIC's Disability and Human Development Department. Sabrina's goal is to create transformative change within healthcare education praxis by developing engaging pedagogic strategies to educate healthcare students about ableism and intersectional identity-based oppression. Her long-term goal is to found an interdisciplinary, applied public-humanities community-engaged healthcare equity center in a university that confronts healthcare inequity, violence, and oppression and promotes liberation, humanization, and belongingness for all patients, students, and practitioners.



## — Māhealani Ahia

PAC RIM SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Māhealani Ahia (she/her/'o ia) is a Kanaka 'Ōiwi artist, scholar, activist, songcatcher and storykeeper with lineal ties to Maui. With a background in theatre arts, writing and performance from U.C. Berkeley and U.C. Irvine, Māhea is committed to creating artistic and educational projects that elevate voices of Indigenous feminist decolonial storytelling. She is a PhD candidate in English (Hawaiian Literature) and Graduate Certificate student in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where she has taught "Indigenous Women's Health," "Writing For Healing,"

"Indigenous Feminisms," and currently "Intro to LGBTQ+ Studies." Māhea serves her community as a cohort member of Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND), as a Hawai'i Pacific Foundation/East-West Center scholar, as Grievance Chair for UHM graduate Academic Labor United (ALU), as editor for *Hawai'i Review and 'Ōiwi: A Native Hawaiian Journal*, as co-organizer of the Mauna Kea Syllabus Project, and as co-facilitator of "Committed: A Decolonial DeTour" which re/stories "asylum" mental health history in Hawai'i and is sponsored by the Indigenous Dis/abilities Hui Hawai'i and Mānoa Center for the Humanities and Civic Engagement.

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

*Program Recap - 39th Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity  
By Dr. Nicole Schlaack, Volunteer Coordinator, [schlaack@hawaii.edu](mailto:schlaack@hawaii.edu)*



*Photo - 2024 Volunteers*

We are thankful for the volunteers who helped make this conference possible!! This year's volunteer program was led by volunteer coordinator Dr. Nicole Schlaack. This year 21 volunteers included Adam Tanners, Adrienne Hill, Ali Hildenbrand, Bobb Revels, Carmen Lee, Daniela Bond-Smith, Denise Dolan, Grant Tanaka, Hanako Heine, Jared Galeai, Jenna Singh, Jessie Sawyer, Joseph Peters, Kiyomi Umezawa, Kristofer Teves, Maria Houar, Melody Halzel, Michelle Jay, Rejil Joseph, Robin Dazzeo, & Sarah Richard. Mahalo nui loa for all of your help and support!!