

My Karate Journey, Part 12: Giving Back!

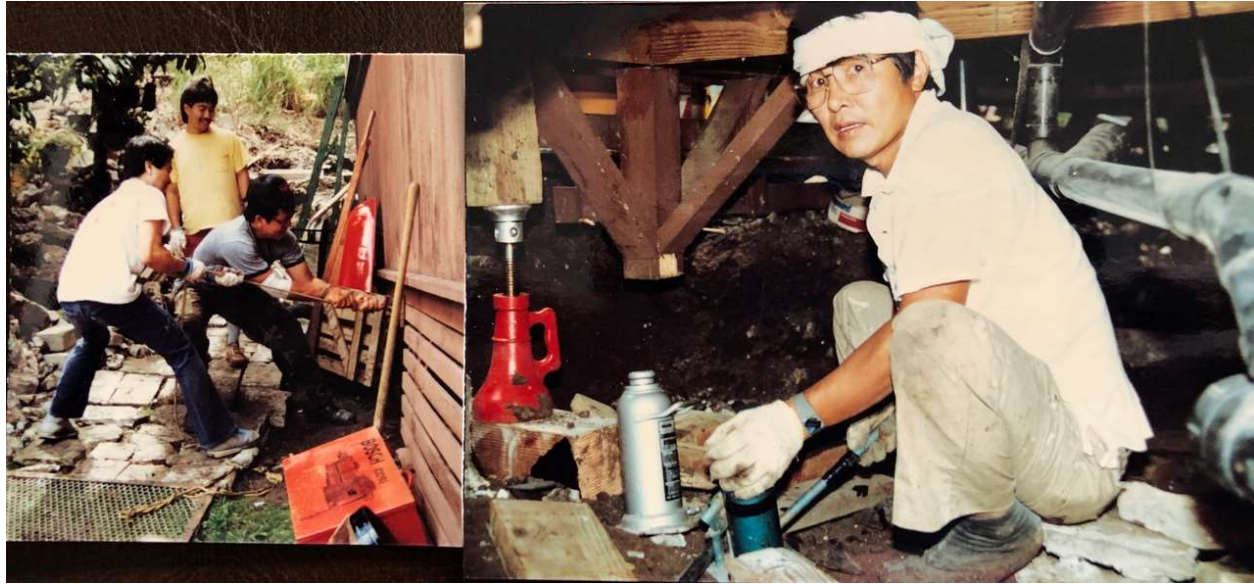
True to my belief that kindness should be rewarded, HSK has given back to the community and worthwhile organizations that help and promote our island Ohana! When I first founded HSK, my foremost concern and efforts were focused on starting and running the organization. I had NEVER attempted a venture of this magnitude before, so ALL my attention was aimed at trying to be successful. My aim was NEVER to make a lot of money. However, it was never to LOSE money either! I was fine with “breaking even.”

The tons of hours put into planning, choosing a suitable neighborhood, securing a training area, preparing, printing, advertising, registering, and finally starting the class has taught me an incredible amount about starting a business ... and about MYSELF!!! Doubts that anyone would show up or, for that matter, even be interested in doing karate, were always in the back of my mind!

However, the success of our Manoa, Kaneohe, and Aiea dojos quickly relieved my fears. HSK was not only running smoothly, it was **THRIVING!** It was now **TIME FOR HSK TO START GIVING BACK!!!**

In February 1988, a strong tropical storm hit Oahu and did major damage to Manoa Valley. The Woodlawn area had extreme flooding and the land and houses started sliding down the hillside! Many houses were damaged and uninhabitable. One of our member's homes in the area suffered major damage, although the family was still able to inhabit their home. HSK gathered members to help them, jacking up

and supporting the house and clearing mud and debris from under and around their house. It was awesome to know that we had helped to save their home!!!



HSK to the rescue!

In February of 1989, we started helping at Noelani Elementary School, where our classes trained in the cafeteria. I reached out to principal Clayton Fujie and asked if HSK could help the school in some way.

They had just started a recycling program, so I volunteered HSK to help. We recycled mostly old newspapers at the time, but it was a great start to a GREAT partnership!!



Recycling help at Noelani!

Soon HSK was doing a multitude of odd jobs around the Noelani campus, including clean-ups of the buildings, and mixing and pouring cement to make planters and pathways for the school! We even painted new lines and directional arrows in their parking lot.





Cement work and painting at Noelani!

Noelani conducted a campus clean-up once a year just before their May Day program when students from each grade level performed songs and dances for their parents. It was an exciting day of fun and games for the children!

Since we used the cafeteria for our training sessions, we agreed to focus on cleaning just that. We washed the screens and cleaned the jealousies, fans, light fixtures, windows, floor, and surrounding sidewalks. It was great to contribute our services to this worthwhile cause, and we continued to do so each year until we moved to the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii (JCCH) in 2014.



Keeping the cafeteria spic and span!

Aside from helping at the school, we helped the community. And when Japan was hit by the earthquake and tsunami in March of 2011, in which more than 28,000 people were either killed or missing, HSK quickly stepped in to aid in their recovery. I called on our members to donate money to the Hawaii Red Cross for the Japan Relief Fund. The eagerness and generosity of our members changed my tears of sadness into tears of gratitude and thanks!!! We donated \$6500, and sent the money and our hearts to Japan!!!

American Red Cross



Red Cross CEO Matayoshi accepts HSK's donation!

In 2014, after moving our dojo from Noelani to JCCH and having taught the STEM program at McKinley High School, I realized the great need for help in our community. My STEM students designed and implemented projects that would help the school or community. Knowing that the time was right and that our members were ready,

able, AND willing to help, we targeted two organizations to help — The Hawaii Blood Bank and the Hawaii Food Bank. We organized blood drives twice a year, pretty much taking over the facility with members and families donating snacks, food, and desserts for our donors and staff. IT WAS LIKE A FAMILY GATHERING!!!





HSK's life-savers!

We also scheduled our food drives twice a year, our first in March, collecting cash donations from our members and friends and then going down to Ala Moana's Restaurant Row to wave, hold signs, and collect donations from passing cars. Our second collection coincided with Thanksgiving, where we collected canned goods and non-perishable foods from our members. We then delivered the food to the Hawaii Food Bank just before Thanksgiving to help those less fortunate enjoy a holiday feast!



Food delivery to the Hawaii Food Bank with CEO Inamine!



HSK REPRESENTS! FB officials and entertainer Keawehawaii



HSK collecting money while practicing their back stance!!!

HSK Works, Plays, and Helps the SAME way — with GUSTO, STYLE, and ENERGY!!!

Alan Sekiguchi, August 21, 2022

