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**MAUI HIGH SCHOOL WINS HONOLULU FESTIVAL'S
MAUI MIKOSHI DESIGN CONTEST**

Students Win Trip to Oahu to Showcase Winning Design at Festival Weekend, March 10-12

HONOLULU – Maui High School is the winner of the Honolulu Festival's 14th annual Maui Mikoshi Design Contest. The students' winning cultural artwork will be on display before tens of thousands of residents and visitors in Honolulu during the festival, March 10-12.

A *mikoshi* is a decorative float unique to specific prefectures in Japan that is carried by groups of celebrants during festivals. High schools in Maui were invited to submit a *mikoshi* design based on this year's Honolulu Festival theme: "Cultural Harmony, a Journey to Peace."

Under the guidance of Mr. Casey Watanabe and Mr. Richard Pacheco, Maui High School won this year's competition. The students involved in creating the *mikoshi* design won a trip to Oahu sponsored by the Honolulu Festival Foundation, Hawaiian Airlines, the Japanese Cultural Society of Maui, Outrigger Enterprises Group, and Maui Ocean Center to showcase their winning piece. This will be the fourth winning design by Maui High School since the contest began in 2004.

"Maui High School has developed a beautifully designed *mikoshi* that carefully ties together the unique cultures of Japan and Hawaii in a well thought-out way," said Tsukasa Harufuku, President & CEO of JTB Hawaii. "We applaud the students for creating design elements that strengthen and bridge cultural diversity."

Maui High's *mikoshi* will be displayed at the Hawaii Convention Center on Saturday, March 11, and then carried through Waikiki in the Grand Parade on Sunday, March 12.

Drawing inspiration from the festival theme, Maui High School's *mikoshi* (see art design below) connects both Hawaiian and Japanese culture in an elaborate way, tying in symbols that represent forms of "cultural harmony" and worldwide unity. Below are some key components of the winning design:

- The **roof** design consists of green 'tiles' of Konbu Maki (seaweed herring), which symbolizes a wish for scholarship and culture with a yellow center, subasu (lotus root), which symbolizes an unobstructed future.
- The **flag** was inspired by the Japanese flag. The bento box design draws influence from the flag through a cluster of roe surrounded by seasoned rice.
- The **walls** represent a diverse mixture of different foods coming together into a bento box to create cultural unity. The koi in particular, combined with a pineapple is strategically placed in the front of the *mikoshi* symbolizing the idea of putting '*cultural unity*' first.
- The **banner's** background of the Japanese cherry blossoms represents the coming of spring and blossoming life.
- The **veranda** features the Hawaiian eel and the Japanese sea dragon, together representing the theme's '*cultural harmony*' as both were considered sea gods in the respective cultures now dancing together in a unified spiral.

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ABOUT THE HONOLULU FESTIVAL

Supported by the Honolulu Festival Foundation, Hawaii Tourism Authority, and corporate sponsors, the 23rd annual Honolulu Festival features a weekend of free arts and cultural displays and entertainment performances for all to enjoy, March 10-12. Under the banner of “*Pacific Harmony*” and the theme “*Cultural Harmony, Journey to Peace*,” the Honolulu Festival’s goal is to help perpetuate the strong cultural and ethnic ties between the people of Hawaii and the Pacific Rim. The Honolulu Festival Foundation supports educational and cultural programs for the benefit of Hawaii’s school children and the community-at-large through public outreach and charitable efforts. For more information, visit HonoluluFestival.com.

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