



**THE QUEEN'S
MEDICAL CENTER**

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**THE QUEEN'S MEDICAL CENTER INTRODUCES THE
VOLUNTEERS IN PLACE PROGRAM**

HONOLULU - The Queen's Medical Center (Queen's) introduces the Volunteers in Place program (VIP), a way for community-minded individuals and organizations to serve as Queen's volunteers from their own homes, centers or locations.

These volunteers are crafters who are provided with material to create the diverse crafts that directly benefit patients. They make oncology caps, lap blankets, newborn baby beanies and Hawaiian-print heart pillows which help patients cough and breathe deeply after open heart surgery to avoid complications such as pneumonia.

"There are people who want to be of service to others, but maybe they no longer drive, have limited mobility, or simply prefer to stay at home or with their own groups," said April Light, volunteer program manager at Queen's. "This program offers them an opportunity to contribute and make a difference in our patients' lives."

The Volunteers in Place program immediately appealed to the residents of 15 Craigsides, a retirement community in Nu'uano. A group of almost a dozen women, with the oldest being 92, now meet every Monday morning to knit, crochet, sew or stuff pillows. "I wanted to help others and this program is excellent," said Florence Nakamura. "It gives us things to do and we're helping others. We have camaraderie and it's fun."

"We laugh, we roar, sometimes we're so loud," added Willie Faria, with a big smile. Another member of the group, Violet Irinaka, joked, "It keeps you out of trouble." She shared that she was a former breast cancer patient, and that surprised another woman in the group who then shared she was also a breast cancer survivor. You could see the bonds of friendship growing in a room filled with conversation and bags of beautiful handiwork. "Not only do you get the satisfaction of doing something for others, you really get to know each other," said Irinaka.

In her Mo'ili'ili condo, Yoko Futa, an 83-year-old former clerk for the Department of Transportation, puts in 10 hours a week making a variety of crafts for the program. "For me, when you're retired, you have nothing but time," she said. "Now I'm doing something I really enjoy, and putting my time to good use. I should thank Queen's for this – for helping me out of my boredom and giving me the chance to help someone else. The end result is something that is needed, so it makes you feel good."

In June, Pearl City resident Barbara "Bobbie" Omoto retired from the University of Hawai'i Athletic Department, where she served as secretary for the men's basketball team. Where she sat, many of the football players would pass by. She got to know them and made beanies for them to



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wear on the road. Now, the 73-year-old grandmother is devoting her love for crocheting to Queen's patients. "I get a sense of joy from doing this," Omoto said. "I'm happy if I can make something that someone can use and they can be happy, too. That's enough for me."

"Everyone wants to have a sense of purpose, at any age," said Light. "For some, they may find it with our VIP program. The patients are so appreciative and they know that these crafts were made with care, love and aloha. It brightens their day, and it means so much, especially when you are healing. It truly is a win-win for everyone."

If you or members of your organization can knit, crochet or sew, and are interested in participating in the Volunteers in Place program, call Queen's Volunteer Services at Punchbowl at (808) 691-4397.

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The Queen's Medical Center (Queen's), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation established in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, is an acute care medical facility accredited by The Joint Commission. The facility is licensed for 575 acute beds and serves as the major tertiary and quaternary referral center for cancer, cardiovascular disease, neuroscience, orthopaedics, surgery, emergency medicine and behavioral health medicine. It is the state's designated trauma center. It has the only organ transplantation program in Hawaii. Queen's is a major teaching hospital, serving as a clinical training site for the residency programs sponsored by the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii. Queen's is the only hospital in Hawaii to achieve Magnet® status – the highest institutional honor for hospital excellence – from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.