

This article was first published in the December 2018 issue of the Sylvia Woods Harp Center e-Newsletter. It is part of Sylvia's ongoing series about living on Kauai, Hawaii.

## Kauai Christmas Traditions

In my opinion, the very BEST Christmas traditions here on Kauai are the annual Christmas Sing-Along with Harps Concerts that pedal harpist Madeleine Brandli and I have presented for the past 4 years. We performed our 2018 concerts two weeks ago, but we've already scheduled next year's concerts for December 7 and 8, 2019. If you're going to be in Kauai next December, be sure to make us a part of your Christmas celebrations!



And here's another interesting tradition here on Kauai.



Every December, Kauai's Historic County Building in the heart of Lihue is turned into a Festival of Lights. The palms and other trees outside the building are covered with beautiful Christmas lights. But the real treasures are found inside.



Local artist Elizabeth Freeman and the County of Kauai launched the festival in 1997. It all started with a collection of hundreds of pieces of original and unique Christmas folk art made by Auntie Josie Chanskey

using toothpicks, Styrofoam cups, flash cubes, soda cans, egg cartons, and other "throw-away" items. This annual event now transforms the entire two-story interior of the county building into a "cocoon of magical light" of trees,



wreaths, ornaments and more . . . all made from recycled materials. Shown here are a sea anemone made from a soda can, and a butterfly made from a plastic bottle.

Focusing on environmental sustainability, Elizabeth trains and inspires the many volunteers of all ages who create some of the new items for the displays at her Santa's Workshop events each November. This year's displays include: *Hokulea Aloha Tree*, *Kauai Mermaid Kingdom*, *The Spam Can Tree*, *Rudolf the Red-Nose Rooster Pulling Santa's Sleigh* and more!



The vision shared by Auntie Josie Chanskey and Elizabeth Freeman of turning "trash to treasure" has created a dazzling, uniquely Kauaiian Christmas spectacular.

Check out more information and photos on the [Kauai Festival of Lights](#) website, and in their [informative PDF](#).

Festival photos by Jim Shea and Ron Kosen, used by permission.