

NEWS RELEASE

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FIVE-FOOT GECKO DESCENDS ON HONOLULU

Kapi'olani Health Foundation's breast cancer awareness fund-raiser unveils first of 50 five-foot geckos

HONOLULU – The first of 50 five-foot, creatively decorated fiberglass geckos, which will soon be seen all over Waikiki and downtown Honolulu as part of the “Geckos in Paradise” celebration, will be unveiled on Thursday, June 17, at 10 a.m. at the Harbor Court sales office (66 Queen Street). Organized by Kapi'olani Health Foundation, Geckos in Paradise is a volunteer-run community art exhibition and charity benefit event intended to increase awareness of women's health issues and raise \$250,000 to benefit the Kapi'olani Breast Center.

The Geckos in Paradise project will go into high gear in September with an event that showcases all 50 geckos on the grounds of the Hawaii State Art Museum. The geckos will then be displayed individually around Waikiki and downtown Honolulu in October, in recognition of National Breast Cancer Awareness month.

All 50 geckos are made from a model designed by master artist Rochelle Lum, and decorated by local creative artists. This once-in-a-lifetime outdoor public art exhibition will transform the landscape of Honolulu and become the most visible community-wide arts event ever held in Hawaii.

The gecko that makes its debut Thursday, “Echo Gecko,” was decorated by Lynn Schoonejongen Ohtani with the assistance and support of Chuck Davis. Ohtani says she was always mesmerized by the Cheshire Cat and the animal kingdom, plus the animation and comedy of Monty Python. These two worlds met in

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her artwork, coming to life in "Echo Gecko." Ohtani studied advertising design at School of Visual Arts in New York, received a BA in visual design from University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and was awarded a fellowship to Stanford University, where she earned a graduate degree in design.

The geckos may live in paradise but they need "adoptive parents." Some of the 50 geckos are still available for sponsorship or purchase. Businesses, organizations and individuals interested in adopting a gecko should contact Kapi'olani Health Foundation's Donna Howard at 535-7118 for more information, or visit www.geckosinparadise.com. Sponsorship levels begin at \$5,000.

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