



**WAIKIKI HOLIDAY PARADE
2026 MEDIA KIT**

**Friday, November 27, 2026 | 7:00 p.m.
Waikiki, Hawai‘i**

**www.waikikiholidayparade.com
1-800-331-8579**

**A HOLIDAY TRADITION.
A TRIBUTE TO HEROES.
A CELEBRATION OF HAWAI‘I.**

Every year, under the glow of Waikiki’s torches and holiday lights, music fills Kalakaua Avenue as marching bands, military units, entertainers, Pearl Harbor Survivor families, and thousands of spectators come together for one unforgettable evening.

The **Waikiki Holiday Parade** is more than a parade. It is a celebration of music, history, culture, and community—and a heartfelt tribute to those who experienced the events of December 7, 1941.

In 2026, the parade commemorates the 85th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, giving this longtime Waikiki tradition special significance.



THE PARADE

Founded in 1998 as the **Waikiki Christmas Parade**, the event was renamed the Waikiki Holiday Parade in 2000. Held annually on the Friday following Thanksgiving, the non-competitive parade welcomes participants from Hawai‘i and across the United States.

The parade begins at **Fort DeRussy at 7:00 p.m.** and travels approximately **1.5 miles along Kalakaua Avenue**, ending at **Queen Kapiolani Park**.

Thousands of residents and visitors line the route to enjoy:

- Mainland and Hawai‘i marching bands
- U.S. military units and service bands
- Pearl Harbor Survivor families
- Local performers and entertainers
- Community organizations and dignitaries
- Holiday lights, music, and the spectacular Waikiki setting

85 YEARS OF REMEMBERING PEARL HARBOR

The Waikiki Holiday Parade honors the men and women who experienced the events of December 7, 1941.

In 2026, the **85th anniversary of Pearl Harbor** provides an especially meaningful opportunity to remember their stories and share them with a new generation.

The parade brings together **Pearl Harbor Survivor families, military representatives, students, educators, musicians, and visitors** in an evening that blends remembrance with celebration.

For visiting student musicians, the experience extends beyond the parade. Groups participate in commemorative events, visit historic Pearl Harbor sites, learn about American history, and experience the culture and traditions of Hawai‘i.

MUSIC, CULTURE & ALOHA

For visiting marching bands, the Waikiki Holiday Parade is the centerpiece of an immersive week in Hawai‘i. This year Gateway brings seven touring bands with 600+ visitors to join the parade from throughout the United States.

Student musicians have opportunities to participate in:

- **Pearl Harbor Memorial Events** — Including wreath-laying ceremonies and commemorative performances.
- **USS Arizona Memorial & USS Missouri Experiences** — Educational opportunities that connect students with the history of Pearl Harbor.
- **Polynesian Cultural Experiences** — Programming with organizations such as the Polynesian Cultural Center, University of Hawai‘i, and local schools.
- **Community Performances** — Opportunities to share music with local audiences and build connections with Hawai‘i communities.



The result is a journey that combines **music, history, education, cultural exchange, and unforgettable memories.**

A HUI ANA OF BANDS: THE LEGACY OF JAKE PEPPERS

The Waikiki Holiday Parade was founded by **Jake Peppers**, whose passion for music, travel, and bringing people together inspired the event.

Jake became involved with marching bands and parades through his work with the University of Hawai'i's Hula Bowl in the 1990s. His vision eventually became the Waikiki Holiday Parade—a **“Hui Ana” of Bands**, bringing musicians and communities together from Hawai'i and across the country.

Jake passed away in 2015 at age 87, but his vision continues through the parade. He believed experiences like this could introduce young people to military heroes, different cultures, new places, and the possibilities that come with travel.

Bring people together. Create meaningful experiences. Open young minds to the world.



MILITARY PARTICIPATION

The military has been an important part of the Waikiki Holiday Parade since its beginning. The **U.S. Marine Corps and Marine Corps Pacific Forces Band** have supported the parade since its inception. Recent participants have also included:

- U.S. Navy Pacific Fleet Band
- 25th Infantry Division Band
- Joint Service Color Guard
- Joint Service Marching Troops

Their participation creates a powerful connection between the parade's celebration of music and its mission of honoring American military history.

2026 PARADE INFORMATION

- **EVENT:** Waikiki Holiday Parade
- **DATE:** Friday, November 27, 2026
- **TIME:** 7:00 p.m.
- **START:** Fort DeRussy
- **ROUTE:** Kalakaua Avenue to Queen Kapiolani Park
- **DISTANCE:** Approximately 1.5 miles
- **REVIEWING STAND:** Near the Police Station on Kalakaua Avenue
- **ADMISSION:** Free to spectators and participants



GIVING BACK IN 2026

The Waikiki Holiday Parade is proud to support the **Hawai'i Foodbank** in 2026.

A QR code for monetary donations is available in advance and during parade night, giving spectators and participants an opportunity to support families and neighbors throughout Hawai'i.

BY THE NUMBERS



25+
YEARS

Celebrating music, history, culture, and community on Kalakaua Avenue.



10,000+
PARTICIPANTS

Travelers from **26 mainland states** have participated in the parade.



\$36,655
DONATED

Given on behalf of parade participants to the **USS Arizona Memorial and USS Bowfin Submarine Museum & Park** over 20 years.



85
YEARS

Commemorating the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor in 2026.

GATEWAY MUSIC FESTIVALS & TOURS

Parade Management & Operations

Gateway Music Festivals & Tours has managed and supported the Waikiki Holiday Parade since 1998.

Founded in 1985 by former band director **David Thielman**, Gateway specializes in travel and performance experiences for choirs, bands, and orchestras.

Today, Gateway creates musical journeys throughout the United States and around the world, including **Hawai'i, Europe, Japan, China, Canada, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico, and Argentina.**

Gateway combines music-industry expertise with decades of experience managing the unique travel and logistical needs of performing groups.

In addition to the Waikiki Holiday Parade, Gateway is the exclusive travel provider for the **Rome New Year's Parade** and **Prague Christmas Parade.**

Learn more: www.musicfestivals.com

MEDIA STORY IDEAS

- **85 Years Later: Remembering Pearl Harbor** - How the parade keeps the stories of December 7, 1941 alive for a new generation.
 - **From the Mainland to Waikiki** - Follow student musicians as they travel to Hawai'i and prepare to perform along Kalakaua Avenue.
 - **A Parade With Purpose** - Explore the intersection of music, history, cultural exchange, community support, and remembrance.
 - **Behind the Scenes** - Discover what it takes to bring thousands of participants together for one of Waikiki's signature holiday events.
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CONTACT

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Logos & Media Graphics:

For logos, photographs, graphics, or additional media materials, contact gmf@musicfestivals.com and include "Attn: Marketing Department."