

# Walk focuses on prevention, remembrance

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A crowd led by an Oahu bicycle advocacy group gathered Friday morning for a walk to the intersection of Nimitz Highway and Kalihi Street, just a few feet away from the site of this year's first pedestrian death, and brainstormed ideas to prevent future fatalities in the area.

"We have a vision that nobody needs to die on the streets," said Chad Taniguchi, executive director of the Hawaii Bicycling League. "If people drive slow, follow the law and be careful as they walk and bike, nobody needs to die."

More than 100 people turned out for the non-profit's first "memorial walk," during which participants visit the scene of the pedestrian accident or retrace the victim's route before he or she was killed.

So far this year there have been four pedestrian deaths on Oahu. Last year there were 25 overall, and in 2013 there were 19 deaths.

Before walking about a quarter-mile to the area where 48-year-old Elizabeth Malland was struck while jaywalking Jan. 2, dozens of participants lined up in front of Puuhale Elementary School on Nimitz Highway at

about 7:30 a.m. for sign waving, with messages stressing safety awareness on the roads.

About 75 Puuhale Elementary students proudly displayed colorful handmade signs signaling passers-by to be vigilant regardless of whether they are drivers, cyclists or pedestrians.

Councilman Joey Manahan, speaking over supportive honks from passing cars, addressed the crowd.

"I think it's up to all of us to be careful and respectful of each other when we're out on the road," he said.

Last year the median age of pedestrians killed in the island's traffic accidents was 70.

Francis Au, 84, said pedestrians of all ages must stay on their guard when crossing a road. "You just don't assume that they're (cars) going to stop for you. ... If they don't stop, it's better you stop, let them pass, then you can go," Au said.

Shortly after the sign waving got underway, Au joined a group from Kalihi Union Church that opened the memorial event by singing and playing "Amazing Grace" on ukulele.

Terry Ogawa, chaplain and community liaison for the Institute for Human Services, said in remembrance of Malland, "Elizabeth, we see



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**The Hawaii Bicycling League spearheaded a memorial walk Friday that gathered more than 100 people to honor Elizabeth Malland, Oahu's first pedestrian fatality of 2015, and collect ideas about how to prevent accidents in the future. The event featured performances of reflection songs by a Kalihi Union Church group.**

you. ... We are sorry for the reason we are seeing you today."

Haaheo Guanson, from the Pacific Justice and Reconciliation Center, offered a dedication to Malland in the form of two string lei — one tying together a pair of slippers representing Malland and the other attached to a small golden bell symbolizing the ringing that brings the community together in the wake of a tragic death, and a single red ginger flower signifying life's beauty.

The lei were fastened to the fence in front of the school, facing the highway.

Before leaving Puuhale Elementary for the walk to the accident site, the group sang "Kanaka Waiwai," which the Rev. Kaleo Patterson of St. Philip's Episcopal Church in West Oahu described as a song about "walking and dedicating our lives to being

aware of our surroundings."

A "solutions meeting" was held at Nimitz Highway and Kalihi Street, with a state Department of Transportation official taking note of safer-streets ideas offered up by memorial walk participants.

Among the suggestions: improve visibility with better lighting; add speed bumps to nearby right-turn lanes; and consider installing a "Barnes Dance" crosswalk, through which pedestrians cross the road in various directions, including diagonally.

Taniguchi said the Hawaii Bicycling League plans to hold memorial walks and solutions meetings every time a cyclist or pedestrian is killed in a traffic accident. He said he remains hopeful that such events will make a difference on Hawaii's roads.

Regarding the concept of slowing the drivers down

and having a safer place for pedestrians to wait and be more visible, Taniguchi said, "We hope there's a way DOT can find to make those things happen."

City Department of Transportation Services Deputy Director Mark Garrity applauded the effort to raise public awareness.

"It's real events like this that can help us light a spark, but we have to take it further. ... Let's make a strong effort to make 2015 a safer year than last year," Garrity said.

Throughout this year the Honolulu Star-Advertiser will track the number of pedestrian deaths on Oahu, examine issues surrounding the accidents and offer stories of those who died.

For more information about the Hawaii Bicycling League's efforts, visit [www.hbl.org/memorialwalks](http://www.hbl.org/memorialwalks).