

A First for Hawaii Seniors

Respected developer of retail, mixed-use and residential properties builds unique senior community in Hawaii



A new community for seniors, set to be the first of its kind in Hawaii, is almost ready for move-in as crews wrap up the final touches.

Island Paradise Investments capitalized on the urban site to build a dynamic community that will host seniors in their active years up to when they require highly involved medical care. Most of the construction finished up this fall after the groundbreaking in October 2014, and the grand opening will be held in April.

“We felt there was a need for a good product in senior care,” says Louis Leong, Executive Vice President of Island Paradise Investments. “A lot of the senior housing on the West Coast is not located in an urban setting, and we were hoping to develop one that did fit into that environment. We found the opportunity in Hawaii and not only gave it an urban character, but also equipped it so that people can age in place and not have to move to another community when they require more care. We are excited about the potential of this concept.”

FILLING A GREAT NEED

The new community is called Kalakaua Gardens and has a great spot in Honolulu. It’s 17 stories tall with a total of 165 units and 216 beds within four separate care options. Six floors contain independent living and light assisted living with 72 care units and beds. Three floors comprise assisted living with 34 care units and 40 beds. And three memory care floors will offer space with 32 care units and 55 beds.

In addition, there will be 49 skilled nursing and transitional care beds, which are complemented by a large, state-of-the-art rehabilitation center for seniors dealing with a wide range of issues, from hip surgery to speech therapy.

Senior communities in other locations in Hawaii have followed this model in the past, but with buy-in options rather than rentals. This will be the first community of this nature on the islands made up entirely of rental units, and it’s largely the brainchild of Paul Yu, who serves a general manager on the project. The management firm for the community is Avalon Health Care.

Services are comprehensive to support aging in place.

“Besides independent and assisted living, we also have memory care, skilled nursing and transitional care services,” Leong says. “Seniors who have surgery can stay on the transitional floor and have access to physical therapy. Residents using that service can return home without inconvenience once they are finished with their treatments. We can also accommodate couples, so if one spouse needs to move to the memory care floor, the other can stay in the community and not be separated in a different location. Our goal is to make it possible for seniors to stay with us for a long time and can call our place their home.”

The demand for this community is very high in Hawaii, primarily because of changing demographics.

“There is a high demand for this type of housing in Hawaii because the percentage of the senior population is higher than the average city in the United States,” Leong says. “People live a little longer here, which is why the percentage of senior folks in the population is higher.”

The response to Kalakaua Gardens from the community and other stakeholders has been positive. The groundbreaking ceremony held this year was a big success, showcasing the widespread local and national support for the new property.

Island
Paradise
Investments

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Louis Leong

LOCATION
San Mateo, California

"We have the blessing of many local government officials and [U.S.] Senator Mazie Hirono," Leong says. "Senator Hirono is especially interested in our project, and she was there for the groundbreaking to act as our keynote speaker."

AMENITIES FOR ACTIVE SENIORS

In addition to excellent medical care resources for people in later stages of life, Kalakaua Gardens exists in an amenity-rich area. This was quite intentional on the part of Island Paradise Investments.

"We sought land in an urban setting and found this lot right in the middle of town," Leong says. "It was underdeveloped, but we thought it was perfect—it is right at the entrance of Waikiki and a prime shopping district for Honolulu residents. It is also close to three major hospitals and several medical clinics. Our emphasis is an active lifestyle for our residents, so we think it's a perfect location. It features amenities, cultural attractions and shopping, along with care needs, which is great for our residents."

Activities within Kalakaua Gardens will also keep residents occupied and active as they enjoy their golden years.

"We want to keep our residents engaged physically and mentally," Leong says. "We are hiring an activity director with experience in resorts and cruise ships, so many different activities will be available for residents."

And those residents who require a higher standard of care will not be left out.

"We are developing programs for our memory care residents to encourage mental exercise," Leong says. "We will not neglect them when it comes to being engaged and enjoying the community."

As the company moves forward, the team at Island Paradise Investments hopes it can replicate the success it's had at Kalakaua Gardens to other projects in the near future.

"We believe that this concept works," Leong says. "We could easily build others like this one, and that is why we seek success with Kalakaua Gardens. We can open up additional similar communities here in Honolulu or in other cities." 📍

