

It's never too late to get an Advanced Health Care Directive

By Sally M. Mermel

This summer, Volcano resident and beloved local artist Pam Barton did *two* very important things.

First, she finished her Advance Health Care Directive at Community First's Advance Health Care Directive presentation in Hilo. She came to our initial presentation in June and viewed our informative power-point presentation and received all the necessary written packets, paperwork and answers to her questions that this volunteer organization happily provides.

Pam wanted to review all this information on her own and talk with her children about important end-of-life issues if she could not speak for herself. Then, she came back for a follow up session two weeks later and completed her AHCD.

The second thing this vibrant woman did was to turn 90! Nine decades are a lot to be proud of.

For all of you reading this, be happy for this woman, but know you would help your own family and loved ones by doing an Advance Health Care Directive for yourself now.

It's something we urge you not to put off. Community First does a presentation once a month in Hilo (except December). You can see our schedule online at CommunityFirstHawaii.org. I post every month in our Tribune-Herald Saturday Calendar, and there are phone numbers for you to contact to register.

More about wonderful Pam Barton. She now has her end-of-life wishes documented, and this should be of great help to her large ohana. Pam had four children, and her late husband, Claire Barton, had two. The family is obviously grown, so now Pam proudly has nine grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren and four great-great grandchildren.

I would remark that this lovely 90-year-old woman has had a life very well-lived. She was born in Hilo, raised in Ka'u. She attended Kamehameha School in 1941. She attended The University of Hawaii on Oahu and graduated with an associate degree in art and liberal arts in a mere two years in a four-year program. Her focus was in ceramics and printmaking in those college years.

Pam says she had a great interest in paper making and kapa making, which led her to using leftover and found materials to evolve into creative basket making.

A quote from this lively lady: "With a curious mind, one thing just leads to another."

And she joked, "I'm just a basket case."

Pam recently spent a month celebrating with her families in Honolulu, Colorado, Walla Walla, Wash., and New York City. What an energetic and inspiring friend she is. Pam is proud of her finished AHCD and said, "I just did not know where to begin."

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We urge anyone over the age of 18 to have their own Advance Health Care Directive. Goodness don't wait until you are 90!

Our next presentation is on Thursday, Jan., 16 from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Aging and Disability Resource Center, 1055 Kinoole St.

Start the new year right by registering online at CommunityFirstHawaii.org or by calling Tony Kent, (808) 292-4559 or Amy Hamane, 935-1500.

We hope to see you soon!

This column was prepared by Community First, a nonprofit organization founded by KTA's Barry Taniguchi and supported by a volunteer board of community leaders.

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