



Press Release

The Aloha Award announces a joint venture with ISTO, as well as its first corporate sponsorships.

October, 2022

The Aloha Award is pleased to announce the formation of a joint venture with the [International Surf Therapy Organization](#) (ISTO), as well as its first corporate sponsorships from [Plaza Home Mortgage, Inc.](#)[®], a leading wholesale and correspondent mortgage lender in the U.S., and [Namotu Island Resort](#), Fiji's premier water sports resort.

ISTO is a collective of the world's leading surf therapy practitioners, clinicians, researchers, and influencers. As the #1 resource for the surf therapy sector, ISTO sponsors, develops and disseminates research, evaluation, and training tools, programming, and conferences on surf therapy for the benefit of its 135 surf therapy organizations and the general public. The Aloha Award— whose mission is to recognize, reward, and support individuals in the global surf community who are making meaningful contributions to the well-being of their communities—is thrilled to partner with ISTO, given its wide reach and extensive expertise in surf therapy. All five prior winners of the Aloha Award, along with most runners-up and finalists, are individuals who run surf therapy organizations that prioritize disadvantaged youth, people with physical disabilities, and people with mental health challenges/disorders.

The joint venture with ISTO provides the Aloha Award with access to ISTO's global network of surf therapy practitioners across 50 countries on 6 continents, extensive technical expertise in surf therapy, and a credible and efficient fundraising platform anchored by ISTO's non-profit 501(c)(3) status. The joint venture enhances the Aloha Award's reach and capabilities, providing Aloha Award recipients and nominees with access to technical assistance and training, and allows us to accept tax-deductible donations from individual donors, foundations and corporate sponsors. The Aloha Award gives ISTO a vehicle to recognize, reward and support surf therapy practitioners who are doing exceptional work. As such, the joint venture helps ISTO and the Aloha Award achieve their common goal of helping surf therapy organizations scale, operate more efficiently, and achieve greater impact.

Under the terms of the joint venture, ISTO will become the legal sponsor of the Aloha Award and will receive and keep custody of donations specifically earmarked for the Aloha Award. ISTO will co-administer the Aloha Award in partnership with Aloha Award founder Mark Hartmann. ISTO's Executive Director, Kris Primacio, will join the Aloha Award's 5-member

judging panel, and Mark Hartmann will join ISTO's board of directors. There will be no changes to the Aloha Award's eligibility criteria or judging process.

"We are delighted to partner with an organization that shares our commitment to recognizing and supporting individuals who are harnessing the healing power of the ocean in the service of others. With ISTO's guidance, financial support of \$30,000 from Plaza Home Mortgage, and support from other sponsors like Namotu Island Resort, we hope to increase the amount of prize money available to Aloha Award recipients and to expand our role to include the provision of training, technical assistance, and other support services to community-based surf therapy organizations around the world," said Mark Hartmann, founder of the Aloha Award.

Kris Primacio, Executive Director of ISTO, commented: "The Aloha Award has significantly advanced the surf therapy community worldwide. We are excited to partner with a like-minded organization to bring more attention to surf therapy, expand access to funding for surf therapy organizations, and help those organizations grow their reach and positive impact."

Kevin Parra, co-founder, Chairman and CEO of Plaza Home Mortgage, Inc. added: "It is an honor to contribute to the Aloha Award as it embarks on the next phase of its journey with ISTO. We are proud to be one of their first corporate sponsors and are extremely pleased to support the important work they are doing to support disadvantaged youth and people with physical and mental disabilities."

Ben Wilson, CEO of Namotu Island, also commented: "On Namotu, we pride ourselves on our hospitality and 'Bula' spirit. We are thrilled to support an organization like the Aloha Award that shares our values, and excited to welcome Aloha Award recipients as guests in recognition of the amazing work they are doing for their local communities."

About the Aloha Award

Founded in 2018, the purpose of the Aloha Award is to recognize, reward and support exceptional individuals in the global surf community who, in addition to cultivating and sharing their joy of surfing with others in the water, are making meaningful contributions to the well-being of their communities.

[Prior Aloha Award winners](#) include:

- Mike Castro (2022), for providing surf therapy to at-risk youth in Costa Rica through his non-profit organization, Olas y Sonrisas (Waves & Smiles);
- Chris Dennis (2021) for his work with [Waves for Hope](#), which offers youth development programs that utilize surfing, group discussion, and mentorship to empower and provide positive psychology education to underserved youth in Trinidad;
- Nigel Savel (2020), for his work with [9 Miles Project](#), which provides supplementary education, literacy classes, learning adventures, life skills, leadership training, and surf classes to low-income, at-risk youth in coastal settlements in South Africa;

- Tasha Mentasti (2019), for her work with disabled individuals in the adaptive surfing community in South Africa; and
- Ian Glover (2018), for his work teaching surfing to disadvantaged youth in San Francisco, California.

The winner of the Aloha Award receives a \$10,000 donation to the charity or non-profit organization of his/her choice, plus a one-week, all-expenses paid trip to [Namotu Island](#) in Fiji, a world-class surfing destination with easy access to Fiji's premier surf breaks, Cloudbreak, and Restaurants. The runner-up and each of the 3 remaining finalists receive a \$5,000 donation and \$2,500 donations, respectively, to the charity or non-profit organization of their choice. Nominations for the 2023 Aloha Award are open from October 1, 2022, to February 28, 2023. The winner, runner-up, and remaining finalists, selected by a team of five judges, is announced within 60 days of the end of the nomination period. Our team of [judges](#), chaired by Greg Bertish, includes Chris Dennis, Brisa Hennesey, Kris Primacio, and Jesse Richman.

For more information, visit www.thealohaaward.com.

About ISTO

The International Surf Therapy Organization is a collective of the world's leading surf therapy proponents, researchers, and influencers working together to better practices, collaborate on research and advocate the benefits of surf therapy. Established in October 2017, ISTO's goal is to enable more people in need to access safe, inclusive programs globally and for surf therapy to become a widely accepted evidence-based therapeutic intervention. ISTO collaborates to help change the lives of individuals using surf therapy to positively impact physical and mental well-being.

ISTO pursues three pathways to impact the global surf therapy arena:

- *Increasing understanding of surf therapy.* ISTO conducts shared research projects, publishes, and shares research, and organizes an annual surf therapy conference to highlight the impact and best practices in the sector.
- *Promoting excellence in surf therapy.* ISTO connects leaders of surf therapy organizations worldwide and shares knowledge and exchange program tools, evaluation tools and evaluations to help members improve practices.
- *Building awareness of surf therapy.* ISTO promotes research and impact data at conferences globally, uses social media, and recruits global ambassadors to push awareness of surf therapy globally.

For more information, visit www.intlsurftherapy.org.

About Plaza Home Mortgage, Inc.

Founded in 2000, Plaza Home Mortgage, Inc. is a privately owned, full-service correspondent and wholesale lender serving the United States. Headquartered in San Diego, California, Plaza is dedicated to building quality, long-term relationships with its correspondent and mortgage broker clients by offering a wide variety of programs and an exceptional client experience. For more information, visit www.plazahomemortgage.com,

call 866.260.2529 or email hereforyou@plazahomemortgage.com. Plaza Home Mortgage is an Equal Housing Lender. Plaza NMLS 2113.

About Namotu Island Resort

Namotu Island is Fiji's world class destination for water and sports experiences with easy access to Fiji's premiere surf breaks, including Cloudbreak, Restaurants, and Namotu Lefts. Guests can spend all day in, over and under the water. No matter what activity you may be interested in, Namotu Island's attentive staff are there to make it happen on your schedule. For more information, visit www.namotuislandfiji.com.

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