

# I've brought some of Hawaii home in my heart

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October 27, 2000

Dear Fran and Making Memories Foundation,

I'm writing to thank you so very, very much for your wonderful gift to me and my children of my dream come true, a trip to Hawaii.

It meant so very, very much to me, and we had a wonderful time. This was the first real vacation we'd ever had together, and my first in more than 12 years. As you know I've been dealing with my third bout of breast cancer in 14 years, diagnosed as metastasized to my bones almost 4 years ago. This trip was a very much needed respite for me.

I had such a restful, relaxing time, in such a beautiful location. I so much appreciated the very welcome break from my routine of treatment, seeing the doctor, being in the cancer center, and dealing with the side effects of chemotherapy at home in between treatments.

It was so precious having a break from the concern and just being able to be in such a paradise. I work very hard at maintaining a generally positive attitude about my health challenge, however it was such a different, REALLY positive experience being in such beautiful surroundings as Maui.

I especially enjoyed the natural beauty, the accommodations were luxurious and lovely, the people there so very gentle and friendly, another big welcome break from the tough, tense city life I deal with daily.

I will always treasure in my heart the excitement in my heart of sitting on the beach, watching my children surfing for the first time in their lives, in beautiful Hawaii. It meant so very much to me to be able to give them that experience, and in such a special place. That's a very special memory for me.

We took loads of pictures, some which I will send you shortly. I admit to feeling sad seeing how much weight I've gained on chemo and I'm working on loving and accepting myself, and affirming I'm doing the best I can in truly difficult circumstances. I treasure the photos of Maui's unparalleled nature. I will always remember the stunning mountains, circled with puffy white clouds at the top.

The first morning we were there my children had a free scuba lesson in the pool. I really enjoyed seeing them doing that. Another really great memory for all of us.

I also thank Renee Duane of Unforgettable Honeymoons. She kindly donated the airfare and hotel, including rental car. The trip on Hawaiian Airlines was very exciting for us. The luxury condo at the Maui Kaanapali Villas, in Maui, Renee donated was such an exquisite experience for us, we loved it so much, we didn't want to leave! It made me feel special staying there for a week, and it's a very special memory for us.

Cheryl Hutton, of A Wedding Company-Aloha Weddings, in Maui, a lovely woman who was so very helpful. She greeted us at the airport with floral leis, and a video camera, which is a very special memory for me. Cheryl arranged a wonderful, complimentary luau for us at the Old Lahaina Luau, a very beautiful performance, right near the beach.

Our first-ever, very exciting, helicopter ride which showed us so much of the beautiful island, and my children received two exquisite, hand-made bathing suits by Anita of Too Kool Maui, that I hope they will keep forever.

I really feel a shift in my consciousness since coming back. I've had a remarkable and special experience going to Hawaii and I feel like I've brought some of Hawaii home in my heart. It's given me something special and positive to focus on, out of the ordinary, frequently challenging, routine. I can close my eyes and see the beautiful beaches on one side, then shift my internal gaze just a bit and see the magnificent green volcanic mountains crested with clouds. I feel the inner peace present when I remember Maui. Now, when I receive treatment, I can personalize my beach visualizations and see Maui in my mind, to calm and relax my body.

It was a much needed respite and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for creating your foundation, for your caring, and for gifting me with such a wonderful memory I treasure. I am so very deeply grateful, and this has been a profound experience, that I needed so very much.

God Bless you,  
Much love,  
Alexandra Eldin

