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## Woman's deeds transcend Mother of the Year title

By Michael Tsai

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 20, 2012

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This year's Mother of the Year for American Mothers of Hawaii insists she is just like "99 percent of all mothers out there."

And by that Janis Loo, 57, means that she, like so many others, does the best she can to ensure her children grow up safe and happy and aware of the many ways they can contribute to someone else's happiness.

But those who know Loo best have her pegged as a "1 percenter" of the best sort, the rare breed whose everyday exhortations to "be a blessing" are backed by a saintly curriculum vitae's worth of good deeds.

"I just try to remind my kids by serving other people, doing something nice for someone else, even small acts of kindness make the world a better place," Loo says.

Loo grew up in Elele on Kauai and graduated from Waimea High School. She earned degrees in nutrition from Kansas State and the University of Hawaii.

Loo, an accomplished runner, met her future husband, Garrett Sullivan, through their association with the Valley Island Road Runners club, and together they raised three children, Patrick, Jennine and Susannah.

Ten years ago Loo read about Lorena Diego, a Hawaii woman who donated one of her kidneys to a man she did not know. Loo was so inspired by the story that she decided to do the same.

After six months of exams and clearances, the transplant took place, but Loo said she never wavered in her decision, nor has she regretted it in the decade since.

"I felt like I had been blessed with the gift of health, and I just wanted to share it," she says. "If I had five kidneys, I'd give away four."

When her children were in their teens, Loo decided to pursue a long-held dream.

"I've just always had a passion to help children who don't have parents," she says. "At that point the time just seemed right."

And so Loo and her husband made arrangements through a Chinese adoption agency to adopt a 13-year-old girl, who now



Janis  
Loo

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goes by the name Rose. But when they traveled to China to meet their new daughter for the first time, they also felt a bond with one of Rose's fellow orphans.

"Independent of each other, we both fell in love with this other girl," Loo says.

A year later they returned to adopt the second girl, now known as Jade. Suddenly, Loo had the big family of which she'd always dreamed.

In recent years the family has devoted considerable time and effort to church-sponsored international humanitarian missions, traveling to Swaziland, Mexico and the Philippines to help build and maintain orphanages and work directly with orphan children.

"It's a great way to see the world and give something back to other countries," she says. "It's one of my passions."

Reach Michael Tsai at [mtsai@staradvertiser.com](mailto:mtsai@staradvertiser.com).



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**JulieFord** wrote:

Michael captured Janis Loo so well in this column. Anyone who knows Janis agrees that she truly makes the world a better place, one good deed at a time.

on March 20,2012 | 07:13AM

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**WizardOfMoa** wrote:

Wow! An angel among us what a blessing! Kudos to you Ms Loo and a big Thank You from all of us mere mortals.

on March 20,2012 | 09:09AM

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**kimotherapy2** wrote:

It is always great to hear and know about people like Janis Loo. May her tribe increase.

on April 1,2012 | 09:33AM

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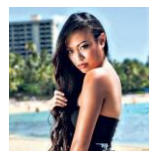


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