

# Family Profile - Hawaii

## Aloha, Putney!

Parents Eric and Cheri see opportunity for son **Drew Higashihara** to broaden his horizons.

by Chris Lenois

**K**nowing her son would be five thousand some-odd miles away from the familiar topography of Kailua, Hawaii, Cheri Higashihara came upon a simple, yet powerful, idea to stay connected to Drew during his first semester at LC.

"I told him, 'every week, go out and take a picture of the same spot on campus,'" Cheri recalled. Drew selected a spot facing north along the walking path between the Administration building and the Library, which included a stately oak tree in the foreground and a view of Alumni and Stone Halls along the ridge of the upper campus in the backdrop. Cheri would excitedly share the images of Vermont's seasonal shifts with her friends. "Every week, the tree is changing, losing its leaves in the fall and then growing them back in the spring."

The changing tree was also emblematic of the perspective taken by Higashihara family about Drew enrolling at Landmark. This would be something new and something different, and any sense of permanence would be the result of the experience, rather than the location.

"The geographical barrier is a minimal consideration. Actually, it shouldn't even be considered," Eric said. He was certainly impressed that the distance didn't prevent Landmark College Admissions Director Sydney Ruff and the parent of a graduate from visiting the campus of the Honolulu school that Drew attended. "If it wasn't for them being there, we probably wouldn't be here."

Eric and Cheri praised academic advisor Susan Frishberg for helping Drew adapt during his first year of college life. She guided their son to activities like bowling

that harkened back to his high school experience and encouraged him to explore his interest in playing piano.

"Susan has been very influential in helping Drew become a well-rounded student. That has brought us a lot of comfort, knowing that the advisors here care," said Eric. "In my mind, if Drew wasn't at Landmark, it would be an academic and emotional struggle for him, and frustrating for us as parents."



The Higashihara family, left to right: Tate, Cheri, Drew, Eric.

Even as Drew works toward his associate degree, the Higashiharas have become vocal and financial supporters of Landmark College. They want other families to know that the experience and education their son is receiving is well worth the investment.

"We've experienced success at Landmark College through Drew, and are now in a position to give back so those who want and need to attend can do so," Cheri said. "Landmark provides an education, as well as helps our youth continue to develop a solid foundation for successful lives ahead, and that is priceless." 🐦