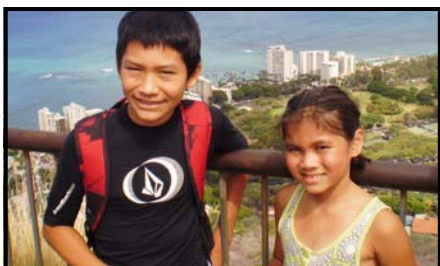


# Honolulu ZOO GM Rus Murakami provides inspiration to friends, family and co-workers

The world is filled with inspirational people. To find one, sometimes you don't need to look any further than within your circle of family, friends and co-workers. Honolulu Zoo SSA General Manager Rus Murakami may be one of those inspirational people. Here's why.

He's passionate about helping people better themselves. He said he enjoys seeing former employees and coworkers excel in their personal lives and careers. The books he reads and the movies and television shows that he watches reflect this enthusiasm. His favorite movies are inspirational, such as *Rudy*, *Soul Surfer*, *Coach Carter* and *Remember the Titans*. The feel-good reality shows, *Undercover Boss* and *Secret Millionaire*, are also high on his list of television programs to watch.

Rus strongly believes in helping others, whether they are family, friends or those less fortunate than him.



**Rus' nephew, Sage, and niece, Kjori, provide inspiration for their uncle.**

Since 1998, Rus has been a World Vision sponsor, an organization that believes the best way to change the lives of children is to change the world in which they live.

Currently, he and his wife sponsor a child in the Phil-

ippines, and they receive hand-written letters as well as pictures from their sponsored child, Frances. They have sponsored her for eight years. Also, every summer his nephew Sage (age 14) and niece Kjori (age 10) visit for the summer from California and since they do not have any children, Rus said they spoil them rotten.



**Rus claims his wife, Tammy, is his biggest cheerleader.**

Personally, Russ shared that every year he tries to improve in all areas in his life. Since work is a big part of his life, he encourages his team to improve and challenge themselves to be better and more efficient than the previous year. He thanks the Honolulu Zoo SSA team for their hard work. "I'm definitely proud of the team as they have come a long way in few short years," he said.

His wife, Tammy, also helps him to be a better person. He said the smartest that he ever did was to marry Tammy. "She's extremely patient, understanding, hardworking and funny! "She's my biggest cheerleader!" he added.

## Things you probably didn't know about Rus

**He's athletic.** Rus is proud of the medal that he earned along with thousands of others. Several years ago, he completed the Honolulu Marathon, which is among the 10 largest marathon races in the world. He not only received a medal, but everyone who finished was adorned with a classic Hawaiian shell lei. He shared it was a great experience, but he doesn't think he'll be receiving another marathon medal anytime soon. When he does have a chance, he enjoys surfing and playing golf.

**He loves everything about food** - preparing it as well as eating it. This love affair may have started when he worked for KFC as his first job. He later completed a two-year apprenticeship program through the culinary-leader American Culinary Federation, working both in the San Francisco and Lake Tahoe areas. After returning to Hawaii, he was a chef at sev-

eral different restaurants and hotel chains before taking a job with SSA in 2007. He claims it would be impossible to give up Thai ice coffee, which is a popular combination of coffee and sweetened milk. When he's not working, he and his wife go out to some of their favorite places to eat palate-pleasing Thai, Vietnamese or Chinese dim sum meals, but he also likes all kind of food. He even likes Spam musubi, which is a very popular snack and lunch food in Hawaii. It's made by wrapping nori or seaweed around a block of rice topped with a slice of grilled Spam. With this love of food, it shouldn't be a surprise that he wants to visit Greece or Thailand because both he and his wife enjoy eating Greek and Thai food.

**He's multi-talented.** While he loves the culinary industry, he's also avid about remodeling and

working with his hands. You would think he would prefer to read culinary magazines, but his favorite magazines to read include *Hawaii HOME Remodeling* as well as any other home remodeling ones. He may have gotten this love of working with his hands from his grandfather who was a carpenter. His most valued possession is an old hand-made wooden carpenter's chalk line spool. It was used by his grandfather over 60 years ago.

**He can be a wild and crazy person.** Rus shared that while celebrating his 21st birthday in Mexico, he and his friends decided to take a four to five hour bus ride, but the only space available was in the luggage compartment. After about ten minutes, he panicked and started kicking the door and screaming for the driver to let him out. Since the bus was full, the driver



**Rus was born in Hawaii, but moved to southern California as a youngster.**

gave him five-gallon bucket to sit on for the ride. The crazy thing is that the bus picked up five more people, and they had to sit on buckets, too. Rus described it as a third row down the aisle of the bus. Interestingly his friend chose to stay in the luggage compartment during the entire ride.