

## Nami Shibuya Grafia – 2024 Hawaii Teacher of the Year

Recognized as the Teacher of the Year by the Hawaii Language Teachers Association in 2023, Nami Shibuya Grafia has dedicated her career to shaping vibrant educational experiences focusing on the field of World Language. As the World Language Chair at a Catholic girls' school in Hawaii, she guides students across a diverse age spectrum, from three-year-olds to high school.

Nami's passion lies in the realms of Japanese language and culture, but she says that World Language education is the key to connecting people. From introducing beginners to fostering advanced understanding up to the AP level, Nami has cultivated a dynamic learning environment where curiosity of human beings thrives. Beyond the classroom, she has contributed significantly as a program developer, spearheading the creation of a comprehensive World Language curriculum, including an impactful ESL program.

Nami's commitment to the broader educational community extends to serving as the President of the Hawaii Association of Teachers of Japanese, a role that allows her to advocate for the importance of language education. She believes that when diverse cultures can communicate and understand each other, it paves the way for acceptance, cooperation, and ultimately, a more harmonious and advanced society around us.