



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
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News Release

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Search suspended for missing swimmer Jaren Asalele

KALIHIWAI – The search for 19-year-old missing swimmer Jaren Asalele was suspended Wednesday afternoon following a four-day, multi-agency effort.

Asalele is being reported as Kaua'i's 11th drowning in 2022.

According to a preliminary report, Asalele was last seen Saturday afternoon swimming at Kalihiwai Beach, on the North Shore, when he became distressed. A family member entered the water and attempted to help him, but could not locate the swimmer after he went under water and did not resurface. He was last seen wearing orange swim shorts.

Asalele could not be located despite a four-day air, land, and sea-based search with a team of rescuers including Kaua'i firefighters, Ocean Safety Bureau officers, Kaua'i police, the U.S. Coast Guard, and volunteers from Kaua'i Search and Rescue. Volunteers with Life's Bridges, a grief counseling service, also assisted Asalele's family throughout the four-day search effort.

According to officials, on Sunday and Monday, there were possible sightings of Asalele's body, both deep underwater and on the surface for brief periods of time. These sightings led officials to extend their search efforts through Wednesday. Ultimately, however, due to limited visibility and rough ocean conditions, officials could not successfully locate and recover Asalele, and the search was officially suspended Wednesday at noon, pending any new information.

“We are extremely grateful for the effort of all agencies and individuals involved in the search for Jaren Asalele, especially during the rough surf conditions throughout the weekend,” said Fire Chief Michael Gibson. “Everyone gave their best effort to locate Jaren, and we are very sad that we could not provide complete closure for his family. We extend our deepest condolences to his loved ones during this very difficult time.”

“Our hearts go out to Jaren’s family and friends, especially those who have been with us these past few days helping tirelessly in the search,” said KPD’s Investigative Services Bureau Assistant Chief Bryson Ponce. “These operations are never easy, and we wish the outcome would have turned out differently. But we truly appreciate everyone involved in our attempts to locate and bring Jaren home.”

Asalele resided in American Samoa, and was preparing to move to O’ahu next year. Please note this is a correction to previous reports which stated he resided on O’ahu.



Above Photo: Jaren Asalele



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