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MAUI WILDFIRES

Medical duo bringing Kentucky support to the island of Maui and beyond

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LEXINGTON, Ky. — Families are still seeking food, shelter and other emergency resources after days of heavy smoke and debris from wildfires in Maui Hawaii, and beyond.

What You Need To Know

- A couple from Hawaii are working with the Lexington business to support victims of Hawaiian wildfires.
- Friday, Aug. 18 through Sunday, a dollar from each plate at the Big Kahuna will go toward resources for victims through Ignite a life foundation.
- Kristen Muto, a Cardiac Sonographer at Baptist Health Hospital & Advanced Imaging Specialist; and husband Alexander Muto, a UK Medical Student, are hands-on with outreach and services for the non-profit.

Kristen Muto and their husband Alexander are calling Lexington their new temporary home away from home as a medical duo from Hawaii.

“The first place we came to was the Big Kahuna because we wanted somewhere that was near home and (good) coffee as well on the corner of the university, so we saw it as a sign that we are meant to be here,” Muto said.

They’re from the island of Maui Hawaii, a place currently dealing with massive destruction and death from wildfires.

So far, more than 100 people have died. Smoke and fire also consumed dozens of homes and long-time businesses, and left many still missing.

“We have people on the ground like the **Lahaina Canoe Club, the Kahana Boat Ramp** .” she said. “Maui Cardiology is a drop off point in Kahului, an area that was not on fire but is considered the main hub in Maui, and we have our people text the group for supplies immediately.”

It's why the Muto's are extending Alexander's decade old nonprofit, [Ignite a life foundation](#) to the bluegrass for extra support.

The group helps connect economically vulnerable groups and especially kids with services and opportunities back home in Hawaii.

Places like Big Kahuna and Hawaiian Barbeque out of Lexington are stepping in to help get more donations. She expects the community back home to be ready for recovery when it's time.

“Initial funds is helping for supplies, but once the dust is settled and it’s time to start rebuilding again, I know that the population in Hawaii sometimes can find it a bit daunting to apply for federal aid and housing subsidies.” Muto explained.

Muto said they are eager for support from the city.

“We’re doing it all together, and that aloha spirit has extended beyond that the waters of Hawaii into the world, and in all of the help and even here in Lexington,” Muto said.

Like the fires that were just days ago, their efforts are just getting started and Muto says the nonprofit plans to create a hub that will help connect victims to financial grants and resources.



Big Kahuna are helping Ignite a life foundation get resources. (Spectrum News 1/Sabriell Metcalf)