

The Maui News

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Annual stomp out hunger race demonstrates resilience of Maui community after fires

Kameryn Pupunu, a Hawaiian police officer whose Lahaina hometown was devastated by last August's wildfires, joined the First Lady as a guest of honor at the State of the Union address last week, accompanied by his four immediate family members. The invitation and Pupunu's presence were emblematic of the role that Maui's resilience plays in the national psyche.

Amidst the flames, Pupunu drove his squad car through perilous conditions, evacuating strangers to safety. He stands as a symbol for the courageous individuals of the Maui Police Department, honoring the heroism of many officers who risked their lives during the fatal fires of last August.

The damage from the fires left survivors displaced and in dire need of
1g kitchens reached out to Dr.

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Mary Trotto, director of the Hale Kau Kau race, for assistance. In a display of swift response and community support, she was able to immediately mobilize her organization and provide food to survivors within hours of their call.

Pupunu and Trotto represent the resilience of the been rebuilding since.

Hale Kau Kau, affiliated with St. Theresa's church, has been serving daily meals to the needy for 32 years. They have served over a total of 1.5 million meals. Recently, the organization was asked to make 300 meals for the other shelters in Kahului which are housing those displaced by the wildfires.

Jay Satenstein, president of the Rotary Club of Kihei Wailea, echoes this sentiment: *"Anyone displaced can come to the window for food."*

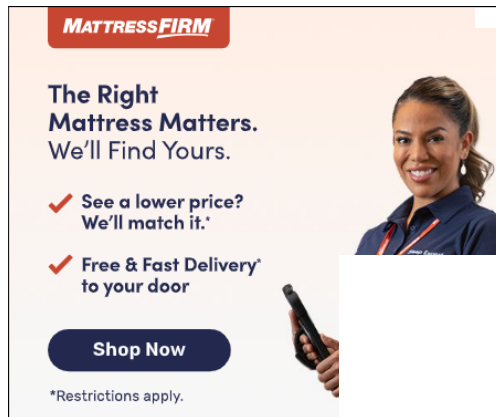
In December 2023 alone, they distributed 4,491 meals with 2,678 delivered to homes and 1,813 served on-site. Race Director Dr. Trotto and the tireless efforts of 217 kitchen volunteers, delivery drivers, and other volunteers, totaling 1,589 hours, who made this happen.

With only a handful of full-time staff members, operations rely on dedicated efforts from volunteers and generous donations from supporters. Events such as the 7th Annual Stomp Out Hunger 5K and 1 Mile Walk, set for October 26th this year, play a pivotal role. Through the race's proceeds, locals and visitors have the opportunity to contribute to a cause that directly impacts the well-being of Maui community members.

Last year's event saw 224 participants (150 entries in the 5K, 74 entries in the 1 mile). Dr. Marv Trotto emphasized the significance of this

entry number is a major achievement and reflects a beautiful and large commitment to ending hunger and helping people, especially since the fires.” So is the money raised for the mission, \$100,000 as in 2022.

Organized yearly by Dr. Trotto and the Hale Kau F race will benefit this impactful organization, instr food for those in need, including survivors of the r



For those seeking their next vacation destination, look no further. United’s homepage showcases a rotating slideshow with the message “Aloha Maui. Come back to Maui with Care, Respect, and Love,” capturing the resilient spirit of the community. Whether you’re a Maui resident, Hawaiian, or visitor from afar, the island offers a perfect getaway and the race’s mission is a perfect reason to go and partake in the spirit of aloha.

For those who can’t make it, friends of Hale Kau Kau can support their mission to feed the hungry with compassion and aloha.

* Robert Weiner was a spokesman for the Clinton and George W. Bush White Houses. He is the creator of the USA Track & Field Masters Media Committee and was a competitor in the Stomp Out Hunger Race last year and is returning this year . He was also Communications Director of the House Government Operations Committee, and Senior Aide to Four-Star Gen/Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey and U.S. Reps. John Conyers, Charles Rangel, Claude Pepper, Ed Koch, and Sen. Ted Kennedy. Ting Cui was bronze medalist at the 2019 World Junior Figure Skating Championships, writer at the Middlebury College Campus Newspaper, and is a Sport Policy Analyst at Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change.