

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Malteser International Americas Partners with Maui Disaster Relief to Aid Wildfire Survivors

Maui, Hawaii – Malteser International Americas has announced a \$250,000 grant to aid the Maui Disaster Relief Fund, joining forces with the St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church. Following the devastating Lahaina and Kula wildfires on August 8, 2023, MI Americas spearheaded a collaborative fundraising effort involving the three American Associations of the Order of Malta. Collaborating closely with Daryl Wong, president of the Order’s Hawaii chapter, MI Americas strategically charted a course to address the urgent needs of Maui's affected communities.

The primary objective of this initiative is to offer financial support to the survivors of the Lahaina and Kula wildfires in Maui. With a focused commitment towards vetting and qualifying more than 1,500 financial relief applicants by December 2023, the project aims to alleviate the immense challenges faced by the survivors and provide economic relief for a variety of situations critical to their re-building process.

The repercussions of the wildfires have been staggering. Families have not only lost their homes and possessions but also grapple with ongoing financial burdens, encompassing mortgage payments, vehicle replacement costs, utility bills, and the transition to temporary housing or rentals.

The reduction in tourism has led to job losses, forcing many survivors to subsist on reduced unemployment benefits that fall significantly short of their previous incomes. In some cases, families have been left without medical benefits, resulting in exorbitant healthcare costs.

The evolving situation demands attention as survivors transition into long-term temporary housing, necessitating essential household items like kitchenware, bedroom furniture, and bathroom supplies. The critical funds will also help alleviate many of the financial challenges and enable the survivors to re-build, by being able to purchase supplies and tools that can help them with these efforts.

The collaboration between Malteser International Americas and the Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Maui Disaster Relief Team stands as a testament to the power of compassion, unwavering dedication, and collective action. Together, and thanks to the support from the Order of Malta that provides emergency and disaster relief through Malteser International Americas, these organizations tirelessly work to help survivors reconstruct their lives, underscoring the resilience and solidarity of the Maui community in times of adversity.

For more information, please contact: Communications and Marketing Manager for Malteser International Americas, Ximena Greenhouse, Ximena.greenhouse@malteser-international.org

About Malteser International Americas: Malteser International Americas is the humanitarian relief agency of the Order of Malta. Committed to providing emergency relief, sustainable development, and disaster relief, the organization focuses on the most vulnerable and marginalized communities worldwide.

About Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church Maui Disaster Relief Team: The Maui Disaster Relief Team at Saint Anthony of Padua Catholic Church is led by Director Toni Rojas, and counts on the support of a dedicated group of volunteers devoted to aiding and supporting those affected by disasters in Maui, providing essential resources and assistance to the community.

##