

## [Ho'ōla LTRG, MDS and partners celebrate Valerie Ho'opai and 'ohana's return home to Lahaina](#)

Maui Now

More than 150 project partners, friends, family and community supporters gathered Friday for a home dedication and blessing honoring Valerie Ho'opai and her 'ohana in Lahaina.

The blessing marked a meaningful milestone in the Ho'opai 'ohana's recovery journey, as they returned to a newly rebuilt home through the support of Ho'ōla iā Mauiakama Disaster Long Term Recovery Group (Ho'ōla LTRG), Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), Cajudoy Construction, Hawai'i Community Foundation and many community partners.

The program included welcoming remarks and partner acknowledgements, a meet-and-greet circle with partners and the 'ohana, words from Valerie Ho'opai, remarks from Mayor Richard Bissen, prayer, hymn and gift presentation by Mennonite Disaster Service, and a blessing by Bishop Tausinga Hafoka of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Wilmont Kamaunu Kahaiali'i. The celebration concluded with a tour of the new home.

"After almost three years away from Lahaina, I kept praying and hoping for a miracle," said Valerie Ho'opai. "Today, that miracle became real as Milo and I were welcomed home. This home is more than we could have ever asked for, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who supported us, believed in this project and helped make this day possible. We are forever grateful."

Valerie Ho'opai's dedication is especially meaningful as the first completed home to benefit from Ho'ōla LTRG's House to Home Program, which helps wildfire survivor families transition from newly rebuilt

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houses into comfortable, livable homes. Through the program, participating households receive support to purchase essential furnishings and household goods such as beds, dining tables, kitchen supplies and outdoor seating, helping restore daily routines and the sense of comfort that transforms a structure into a home.

“Today is about welcoming Valerie Ho’opai and her ‘ohana home to Lahaina,” said Rhonda Alexander-Monkres, Executive Director of Ho’ōla LTRG. “This blessing represents so much more than the completion of a house. It reflects the love, volunteer service and commitment of so many people who have walked alongside Lahaina families on the long road to recovery. We extend a big mahalo to all of the generous nonprofit, faith-based, governmental and community partners, and everyone who helped make this new home construction project possible.”

The project was completed through the coordinated efforts of numerous Ho’ōla LTRG partners, including Mennonite Disaster Service, Cajudoy Construction, Hawai’i Community Foundation, County of Maui, Habitat for Humanity Maui, Lahaina Community Land Trust, Nā ‘Aikāne o Maui, Hawaiian Council, Hawai’i Community Lending, Hawai’i VOAD, Pono Legal, Sacred Hearts School, Honsador Lumber, Episcopal Diocese of Hawai’i, The Salvation Army, United Policyholders, Maui Pono Foundation, Disaster Leadership Team, Emmanuel Lutheran School, Pipe Smith Plumbing, Vision Construction and Building, CMC Rebar Hawai’i, Daybreak Church, AREAA Foundation, Goshen College, JN Electric LLC, JC Structural Engineering, LLC, Lahaina Behavioral Health Center, Maria Lanakila Catholic Church, and many others who contributed time, resources, expertise and aloha.

For Ho’ōla LTRG and its partners, each completed home represents another step forward in Lahaina’s long-term recovery. To date, the nonprofit organization and its partners have completed four homes in Lahaina, helping wildfire survivor families return to stability, community and a place to call home. Through coordinated long-term recovery efforts, the organization supports survivors of the August 2023 Maui wildfires with disaster case management, stabilization support, volunteer coordination and rebuilding assistance.

Owner-occupied single-family homeowners whose homes were destroyed in the Lahaina wildfire and who are uninsured or underinsured are encouraged to apply for disaster case management services through Ho’ōla iā LTRG at [www.maulongtermrecovery.org](http://www.maulongtermrecovery.org). The team works with homeowners to review their

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needs, connect available resources and explore rebuild support as they continue their journey home.

Cash donations for Ho'ōla LTRG's House to Home Program are being accepted through the Maui Pono Foundation. To donate, visit [www.mauiponofoundation.org/waystodonate](http://www.mauiponofoundation.org/waystodonate).

Those interested in supporting the rebuilding effort through services, building materials, contractor discounts, or financial contributions should contact Rhonda Alexander-Monkres of Ho'ōla LTRG at 808-298-6673 or email [rhonda@mauilongtermrecovery.org](mailto:rhonda@mauilongtermrecovery.org).

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