

California legal community steps up to aid Maui relief

By Douglas Saunders

Daily Journal Staff Writer

California legal professionals are stepping up to assist people devastated by the wildfire that wiped out the picturesque village of Lahaina on Maui.

Mike Arias, founder and managing partner of Arias Sanguinetti Wang & Torrijos LLP in Los Angeles, lives part time on Maui and has been there since the disaster first unfolded on Aug. 9.

“I have a deep appreciation for the rich culture and community that exists on Maui,” he said. “I am eager to assist the residents of Lahaina in rebuilding their lives after this horrific disaster.”

Arias and many other law firms have donated to and organized charity with Maui Strong — Hawaii Community Fund. Arias said all the funds raised and donated to the Hawaii Community Fund go directly to the disaster survivors.

“The fund is a vetted source of community funds that will be directly distributed to those most severely impacted by the devastation,” Arias said. “These efforts not only help provide essential supplies, shelter, and medical assistance but also extend a glimmer of hope to those who have lost everything.”

There is also a Maui Relief tab on Amazon.com set up by the American Association for

Justice’s Trial Lawyers Care Committee, where goods can be purchased to be shipped to the island to help families who have lost everything. There is also the Maui Food Bank, which takes donations.

The death toll as of Wednesday was 110 and officials said they expected that number to grow; it has already surpassed the 2018 Camp Fire in Northern California as the most deadly wildfire in the U.S. in 100 years. Along with mourning the dead, residents will be facing the daunting reality of trying to survive and rebuild in the most expensive state in the nation, with a cost of living that is almost twice the national average and housing costs three times the national average, according to the World Population Review.

The Maui Emergency Management Agency estimated that it would cost \$5.52 billion to rebuild.

The fire was driven by winds from nearby Hurricane Dora.

Robert D. Jarchi, a partner at Greene Broillet & Wheeler LLP in El Segundo, was in Honolulu when Dora hit.

“I met with victims of the Hurricane that fled from Maui. Each one had a harrowing story of narrow escape, but hundreds and possibly thousands were not so lucky,” Jarchi said. “It is a horrible tragedy. So many have lost loved ones under such preventable circumstances. As trial lawyers, when we see

disaster, we want to help. Our firm feels strongly about assisting the victims and are doing what we can to encourage the legal community to step up and offer any assistance they can.”

The Morrison Foerster Foundation, which is funded primarily by Morrison Foerster’s lawyers and staff members, is donating \$25,000 to support the Maui Strong Fund and the Maui Food Bank.

In a firmwide email, Kelly M. Dermody, the managing partner at Lief, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein, wrote that the firm would donate.

“On behalf of the firm’s Executive Committee, I am thus announcing that Lief, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein will be making a \$25,000 donation to the Maui Strong Fund, a project of the Hawaii Community Foundation,” Dermody wrote. “We welcome and encourage any of you who may be inclined to give as well to a charity of your choice in the spirit of aloha.”

Donations can be made directly to [Hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/maui-strong](https://hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/maui-strong) or the mauifoodbank.org.

New York Times News Syndicate contributed to this report.

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