

Father McGivney Student Leads Fundraiser for a Maui Church After Fires

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GLEN CARBON - Father McGivney Catholic High School student Alexandra Uram led a “Dress Down Day” at the school that raised \$2,300. Monies raised from this Dress

Down day will be donated to the Maria Lanakila Catholic Church in Lahaina, Hawaii. This area was wiped out by the tragic fires that destroyed parts of Lahaina and killed over a hundred people.

Principal Joseph Lombardi explained, “Dress Down days at Father McGivney Catholic High School are used to empower our students to serve organizations they have a personal connection with.”

FMCHS has a maximum of 6 Dress Down Days throughout the school year. Each Dress Down day, students are asked to donate \$5.00 to support the organizations and for the privilege to dress down.

Alexandra Uram (Class of 2026), has a strong connection to this church in Hawaii. Uram explains, “I have been blessed to have vacationed in Maui on multiple occasions, including most recently in 2021. Maui is beautiful and Lahaina was a thriving little town. My family and I love Maria Lanakila Catholic Church. It is architecturally beautiful, and has vibrant parishioners. The singing, at that gorgeous church, not just by the members of the choir, but by the entire parish, was angelic every time we attended. You just felt awesome and uplifted after attending Mass at Maria Lanakila, because God's presence was so powerful.

"The degree of devastation that I read about was hard to believe. My dad showed me photos from the 'Wall Street Journal' which were absolutely chilling. When he showed me an article that indicated that Maria Lanakila Catholic Church had been miraculously spared, despite the fact that everything around it had been reduced to ashes, I was overcome with emotion. That beautiful church, which is in the heart of Lahaina, will remain the heart of the city. You just knew that God's hand was present when you saw that the church was unharmed.”

When asked how the fundraiser came to be, Uram explains, “Father McGivney has an awesome program that encourages students to support worthwhile causes. That program allows students to have 6 Dress Down days (i.e. school uniforms do not have to be worn) in return for a contribution. Five dollars is suggested, but students regularly exceed that amount. Our principal, Mr. Lombardi, further encourages participation by allowing the students to suggest the charitable causes to be supported. That is wise, because the students are involved in the planning, which increases the interest and participation. These fundraisers become the students' projects, rather than projects initiated by the teachers or administrators.”

Uram’s younger sister, Anna, who is in 8th grade at St. Mary's School in Edwardsville, received permission from her principal, Mrs. Stacy Henke, to have a dress down day with a Hawaiian theme too. The fundraiser was held at St. Mary's School on Sept. 13.

For more information about the Maria Lanakila Catholic Church in Lahaina Hawaii:
<https://www.marialanakila.org/>