



Provided by Sean Bolton

Frank Alguera and Sean Bolton asked friends to paint murals on the walls of the Donut Dungeon, an all-ages venue in the basement of Frank’s Donuts on Third Street in Lexington.



Provided by Phil Lewis.

Donut Dungeon opened as an all-ages music venue in October 2025 off Third Street, but the Lexington fire marshal shut it down in January due to building code issues.

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SHOP

burning ceiling, among other pricey improvements. The necessary renovations could cost anywhere from \$60,000 to \$100,000.

Alguera and Bolton said they don’t make much money from shows at the Donut Dungeon, and what revenue they earn goes toward improving the venue. It’s not going to be enough to bring the space up to code, they said.

Ollie Bellando, a 20-year-old guitarist and vocalist for shoegaze band Calvary, says Donut Dungeon has been a refuge for the group. Bellando’s age alone means Calvary has a very short list of venues they can play, but the Third Street location is always open to them.

“I love playing there, and they are also super sweet and super cool to me,” Bellando said. “And I really, really appreciate the fact that people of all ages can come have fun. Like I’ve seen there were high schoolers at our last couple of shows there, and that’s cool.”

Most local shows are hosted in bars or venues that sell alcohol on site. Restaurants are often less accommodating of the rock, punk and hip-hop acts Donut Dungeon is known for hosting.

Some bars can let 18-year-olds into select per-

formances, but the decision lies solely with the bar owners. In Lexington, most choose not to take on the potential liability and restrict anyone under 21 from walking through the doors.

Calvary has played some shows at bars, but Bellando has been heavily restricted on when and where they can be in the venue due to their age.

“There have been times where I wasn’t even allowed on the premises unless I was loading in or on stage,” Bellando said. “I had to wait in my car for like an hour and a half one night during a show while other bands were playing.”

“I also want to see these other bands, and it kind of feels unfair. I’m contributing to the show, you know. It’s been frustrating,” Bellando continued.

Bolton and Alguera spent much of their teenage years going to underground house shows. The idea for Donut Dungeon largely sprang from their lifelong bond over music.

While house shows are important to a local music scene, Alguera says it’s important to have a public venue for bands to build their audience.

“A lot of the bands have artists that are under 21. They love the venue because they’re able to come and play, and they don’t

have anywhere else to play,” he said. “That was kind of the idea. We were seeing that the local music scene was dying in Lexington, and we just wanted to do something about it.”

It’s also important for young people to have a place to socialize.

Phil Lewis, 19, is a member of Yak Lyfe, a youth arts and music collaborative in Lexington. Yak Lyfe hosted two hip-hop shows at Donut Dungeon specifically because it’s accessible for people of any age.

“The average 18-year-old, all they really do is stay at home and just play games. It’s just not really nothing good, you know? It’s nothing really productive,” Lewis said.

But Donut Dungeon offered a space where young people can make new friends, enjoy music or even start playing themselves.

“I feel like a lot of young people are stuck on bad narratives and just bad energy,” Lewis continued. “With the Donut Dungeon, with it being a space for all ages, everybody can kind of start something there.”

Having a safe space for young people is about more than simply giving them something to do. Studies have shown safe programming for teens can reduce youth violence in a community. The city of Baltimore drastically decreased youth homicide numbers in 2025, largely due to major investments in sports programming, community centers, public pools and other recreational opportunities for teens.

Locally, the city organization ONE Lexington provides youth mentoring and programming for at-risk youth.

The importance of Donut Dungeon’s openness is not lost on local officials. The fire inspector who examined the venue, Brian Dalton, told the owners he admired the venue’s mission.

“He wants the venue to succeed,” Alguera said. “It’s awesome having that support from city officials.”

Alguera and Bolton have sought community support to fundraise for the needed renovations. As of Jan. 26, they have raised more than \$9,000 on GoFundMe. They hope the community is willing to support a venue open to everyone, meeting a community need.

“We’re trying to do good,” Bolton said. “It’s probably cliché, but we do it for the kids that don’t have anywhere else to go ... when kids don’t have a place to go, they’ll just be on the streets.”

But at Donut Dungeon, teens can be themselves.

“They’re safe there,” Bolton added. “They get to enjoy music. They get to be part of something.”



PROVIDED BY ROCCO BESEDNJAK

Rocco Besednjak, founder of Camp Hero, offers rides to health care employees in Lexington during winter weather using his truck.

‘Serving other people’: How one KY group helps health care workers in the snow

BY MONICA KAST
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When winter weather hits, health care workers don’t have a choice — patients still need care.

While others in Fayette County can take a snow day, doctors, nurses and other hospital employees still have to show up.

For UK HealthCare employees, overnight accommodations are available to staff who want to stay on site. Over the weekend, nearly 400 staff members chose that option, said Allison Perry, UK HealthCare spokesperson. Some additional accommodations were offered directly by departments, too, she said.

One Kentucky organization has spent the last several years providing rides to health care workers during inclement weather.

Camp Hero, which was started by Rocco Besednjak as a way for veterans and first responders to address mental health concerns by spending time in nature, has offered free rides for health care workers during inclement weather since 2021. Besednjak’s wife has been a pediatric nurse for 20 years, which inspired him to start offering rides to other health care workers.

“They don’t have a choice of whether they can have a snow day or not, because there’s other people that rely on them,” Besednjak said. “They’re serving other people.”

This year, Besednjak created an app to take requests for rides. In his lifted truck, he’s able to navigate in the snow and ice where other cars cannot.

In the last three days, there have been almost 1,100 requests for rides. With three drivers through Camp Hero, the organization has given around 260 rides in the last three days, he said. Along the way, he’s also pulled other cars that have been stuck in snowy ditches and jump-started another car.

There has been an increase in requests for rides this year, from 600 requests last year to 1,100 this year, he said.

“I’ve really enjoyed it,” Besednjak said. “My favorite part is being able to have these conversations with people, and be able to talk to people and hear their stories.”

Besednjak is a Navy veteran who medically retired in 2001. He later became a police officer in Shepherdsville, and after being injured on the job, began to struggle with his mental health. He was always someone who was

active outdoors, he said, so when he and his wife bought 160 acres of land in Jackson County, he wanted to find a way to help veterans and first responders find recovery in nature.

For Besednjak, both Camp Hero and offering rides in the snow is about service and giving back.

“I’m trying to set an example and show people that out of all the stuff I’ve been through ... I’m still out here and able to help people and do stuff that’s productive, and have a purpose,” Besednjak said.

The UK Police Department offered rides to employees who live in Fayette County, and between Saturday and Monday, nearly 500 rides were provided. Other departments rented four-wheel-drive vehicles to provide transportation, Perry said.

As of Tuesday morning, Lexington drivers are still being encouraged to stay off the roads as clean up from Winter Storm Fern continues. Mayor Linda Gorton has extended the city’s state of emergency to at least Wednesday as crews with the streets and roads department are actively clearing roads.

The winter storm brought 5.5 inches of snow and 1.48 inches of precipitation over the weekend.

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COLEMAN

Kentucky General Assembly, which had already enacted a near-total ban on abortion in the state following the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Dobbs overturning landmark Roe v. Wade, prohibited mailing or delivering abortion medication in Kentucky.

“Out of state activist groups who are targeting the vulnerable here should be on notice: Keep your illegal pills out of our Commonwealth or face the full weight of the Attorney General’s Office,” Coleman wrote in the news release. “These deadly and unlawful pills cannot be allowed to continue flooding into Kentucky through the mail, and we will thoroughly pursue every lead to hold bad actors accountable.”

This is not Mayday Health’s first rodeo. In fact, they’re locked in a similar legal battle with the attorney general of South Dakota.

Liv Raisner, the non-profit’s executive director, said in a statement to the Herald-Leader that the ads are free speech.

“It turns out Attorney General Russell Coleman doesn’t like free speech as much as he says. This just happened when we put up signs at gas stations in South Dakota,” Raisner wrote. “We won a temporary restraining order against the South Dakota Attorney General.”

“We think everyone in Kentucky, and South Dakota, and around the

country, should know that abortion pills are safe and available.”

The Kentucky chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, which was previously involved in a class action lawsuit against Kentucky’s abortion ban, agreed with Raisner.

“We know abortion bans are harmful, particularly to vulnerable populations such as those in counties where there are no practicing obstetricians or gynecologists. The attorney general cannot prevent information about abortion from being shared in Kentucky, and any attempt to do so will only further isolate pregnant

nant Kentuckians seeking to educate themselves about medical care,” Amber Duke, ACLU of Kentucky’s executive director, wrote.

This story has been updated with comments from

Mayday Health and the ACLU of Kentucky.

Bardstown, KY Seeks Proposals to Reimagine a 1914 Landmark on Court Square

Nelson County Fiscal Court, Kentucky invites qualified parties to submit proposals for the purchase and adaptive redevelopment of the Old Historic Post Office, located in Bardstown’s National Historic District and the Bourbon Capital of the World.

Download Details at:
nelsoncountky.gov/old-historic-post-office-rfp/