

LOCAL

‘Start from scratch.’ Fire torches house of 3 Georgia College & State University seniors

By Myracle Lewis

Updated December 11, 2025 9:24 AM |  Gift Article

Support for Aidan, Clay, & Holden After House Fire

 Lauren Fitzmeyer and 2 others

Three Georgia College & State University seniors are seeking community support following displacement of a recent house fire in Middle Georgia. [GoFundMe](#)

Listen to this article

Twenty-one-year-old Holden Lewis says he barely had time to grab Milo and Rocky, two house dogs, before the flames took everything at his home near Georgia College & State University.

He grabbed one dog by the collar and scooted the other—who didn’t have a collar—out the door and into the safe haven of his truck.

Lewis, a senior at GCSU, was putting away dishes when he noticed a burning smell and saw smoke coming from his roommate’s bedroom. “The house was up in flames in minutes,” he said, recalling the Monday night blaze that destroyed the Milledgeville home he shared with two fellow students.

The three roommates — Aidan Cowan, Clay Rowland and Lewis — escaped unharmed, but the fire left them with little more than the clothes on their backs and the dogs. Despite losing nearly all their belongings, the seniors say they are grateful to be alive and overwhelmed by the support pouring in from the Milledgeville community.

[A GoFundMe launched earlier this week](#) aims to help them “replace essentials and recover what they can as they start from scratch,” event organizer Lauren Fitzmeyer said in the campaign.

More than 450 people have donated over \$20,000 as of Wednesday evening, less than 48 hours after the fire.



Three Georgia College & State University seniors are seeking community support following displacement of a recent house fire in Middle Georgia. [GoFundMe](#)

Cowan and Lewis said donations from the community will help them secure housing for next semester and replace personal items, including beds, clothes and food.

“You don’t think you know that many people in the community, but then everyone comes together to help you,” Cowan said. “It really means a lot for everyone to take care of us.”

“It’s definitely a beautiful thing to see, even in a tough situation like this,” Lewis added, referencing the “unbelievable” number of people who donated in under a day. “We never would have expected to see this much (support).”

The fire happened Monday night in Milledgeville at 321 North Irwin St., according to incident reports provided by the Milledgeville Police Department.

No one was injured in the fire, and aside from traffic control, the Milledgeville Police Department was not involved, said Maj. Brandon Sellers.

Milledgeville law enforcement were dispatched to the house around 7:30 p.m., police records show. Reporting officer Jacob Roberts said he made sure no bystanders were hurt or in need of medical attention prior to speaking to the residents.

The worst damage was in the room where the fire started, and the area was “pretty torched,” Cowan said.



Three Georgia College & State University seniors are receiving community support following displacement of a recent house fire in Middle Georgia. [GoFundMe](#)

In the days since the fire and with the semester winding down, Georgia College faculty and staff moved quickly to help the students by offering extended deadlines, rescheduled exams, extra meal swipes, computer access and temporary housing.

“They’re working with us,” said Lewis, who had assignments due on the night of the fire. “They’re offering a tremendous amount of support to us — whatever we need.”

Friends also offered places to stay as the students prepare to spend the holidays with family.

The students thanked local police, firefighters and the university for their rapid response and ongoing aid.

“When we called 911, we heard sirens instantly. They were probably at our house within a minute, a minute and a half after we called,” Lewis said.

Both students said they are processing everything the best they can.

“It’s definitely hard losing everything you have,” Cowan said. “It’s definitely a weird feeling. You see it happen to other people and never really think it’s going to happen to you until it does, but we’re just thankful everyone is here to help us out.

Although processing the emotional toll, the students remain focused on what they didn’t lose.

“More than anything, we’re just grateful it did happen the way that it did,” Lewis said. “We were able to get out safely with the dogs,” We had a lot of memories we made in that house.”

Cowan expressed similar gratitude.

“We got everything that can’t be replaced out safely,” he said. “Everything else is replaceable.”

This story was originally published December 11, 2025 at 8:44 AM.