



NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

FALL 2018



A family near Mati, Greece, surveys their fire-damaged home.

Greece Fire Response Offers Hope amid Ashes

IOCC, Apostoli Support Access to Basic Needs, Services in East Attica

IOCC and Church partner Apostoli, the humanitarian arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Athens, moved quickly after July's deadly wildfires in East Attica, Greece. Beginning with emergency food and water, and continuing with longer-term access to food and other basics, aid has been ongoing for both families and communities.

Greece is no stranger to wildfires, but this year's destruction near the port city Rafina reached unprecedented levels, particularly in residential areas. The fires that began on July 23 were driven by unpredictable winds of over 75 mph, completely destroying homes and businesses and causing nearly 100 deaths. The seaside village of Mati was decimated as fast-moving fires blew toward the sea. A popular vacation spot, Mati is also home to year-round inhabitants, many of whom lost their only residence.

As search and rescue operations continued the morning of July 24, Apostoli staff conducted a rapid needs assessment and distributed emergency food and water. Through relationships already in place in Greece, IOCC could provide prepaid grocery cards to affected families almost immediately. This has allowed them to purchase essentials like Greek-grown produce, dairy, and meat, as well as cleaning supplies to start making their homes livable again.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear friends,

As this newsletter goes to print, the news is full of natural and manmade disasters. Thanks to you, IOCC is responding.

Fires in Greece decimated the coastal community east of Athens, where IOCC remains on the ground with local Church partner Apostoli, helping those who've lost their only homes. We've provided prepaid grocery cards so families can buy food and basic hygiene items as they determine what their next steps will be. We've purchased municipal trash bins to replace the ones destroyed by flames so that cleanup can move forward swiftly and normal waste disposal can resume. We're tracking changing needs so that we can help where it's needed most.

In the United States, Hurricane Florence has caused extensive damage to homes and livelihoods. IOCC is on the ground in North Carolina, where Frontliners are offering emotional and spiritual care at a shelter in Winston-Salem. In Wilmington, trained emergency-action team leaders will conduct rapid needs assessments and guide volunteers as they do muck outs, clearing homes of sludge and debris.

None of this is possible without you. Thank you for generously serving Christ by serving others.

In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

Back to School in a New Place

Refugee Children Receive Educational Foundation

When families are uprooted by conflict or other disasters, it's often the children who pay the steepest price. Missing out on education is just part of that.

IOCC, with funding from ACT Alliance partner Norwegian Church Aid, recently concluded a specialized education program for refugee children in Lebanon who are Chaldeans, part of a Christian religious minority from Iraq. In an effort to support families after they relocate, this program has offered a solid foundation of learning and social integration that will allow children to enter the Lebanese school system.

The specialized lessons—including English, Arabic, and math—focus on engaging children in what's being taught and on encouraging physical movement and interaction among students. Art and storytelling help develop imagination and teach positive interactions. This method of learning has seen success with kids who have missed substantial amounts of schooling.

After completing the course, students were treated to a special graduation celebration. The next step is enrollment in Lebanese schools, where they'll continue their education as they and their families rebuild their lives.



Engaging approaches to learning give these young students a solid foundation.

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America and a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance, and advocacy.

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.



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IOCC's Serv-X-treme conference unites US youth from across Orthodox jurisdictions.



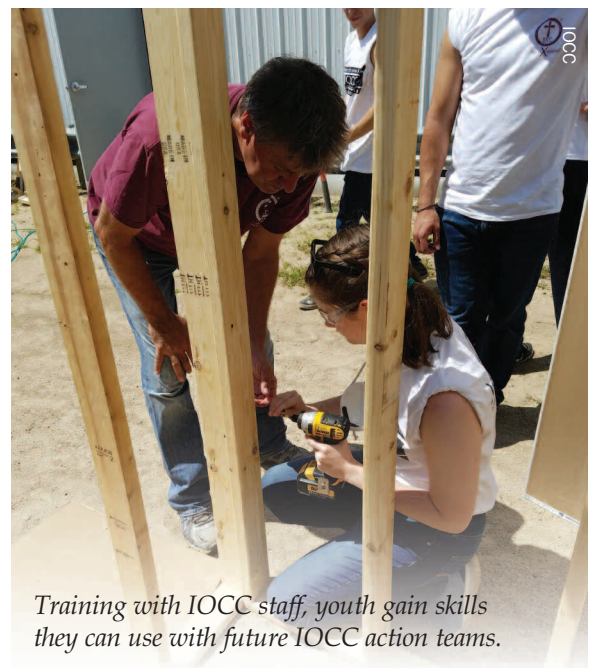
Diaconia: Faith in Action

Orthodox Youth Explore Hands-On Service

Serv-X-treme is IOCC's annual service-leadership conference for high-school juniors and seniors. Part of the US program, the week-long event helps young people explore service in the Orthodox faith through learning and hands-on projects.

During this year's conference near Minneapolis, Minnesota, 27 youth from across the country—representing eight Orthodox jurisdictions—spent time worshiping and working together. Activities included volunteering with local church and service organizations, and training with IOCC staff and emergency-response team leaders in key elements of IOCC's US emergency response: home muck outs and construction basics, such as building wall frames and hanging drywall. "This was life-changing for me and really altered my mindset," wrote one participant at the end of the week.

One aim of Serv-X-treme is supporting participants' long-term engagement in Orthodox service. To that end, throughout summer 2018, groups of Serv-X-treme alumni have joined IOCC home builds to help families affected by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in 2017. Disaster recovery may span years, and IOCC works both to meet immediate needs after emergencies and to support long-term recovery. Home builds are one aspect of that work, and it's exciting that young people who've attended IOCC's service conference are partnering with IOCC again to put faith into action.



Training with IOCC staff, youth gain skills they can use with future IOCC action teams.

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Marigoula (pictured at left), a single mother of five, received an IOCC grocery card. A permanent resident of the worst-affected area, she works year-round at a campground near Mati; the house where she and her family lived at that camp was completely destroyed. The pre-paid grocery card has helped Marigoula's family more easily meet some of their basic needs – providing a small semblance of normalcy.

That sense of routine can be an important part of recovery after disaster, especially for children. IOCC is also offering vouchers for school supplies to families in the area whose homes were severely damaged. Students can start the school year with the items they need, helping minimize the disaster's effect on their education –

and alleviating some of the financial burden on parents who are now preoccupied with repairing homes or affording a new place to live.

IOCC has also worked closely with local authorities to identify and address wider community needs. IOCC delivered 150 trash bins to the municipality of Rafina, replacing those that were destroyed by intense heat and flames. Having new bins in place means that waste collection can resume, and cleaning and clearing property will now be easier for many residents. An additional 300 bins are slated for delivery in Marathon.

IOCC's work on the ground continues, tracking emerging needs and seeking ways to meet them, as residents of East Attica take the next steps toward rebuilding their lives.



Each year on the Sunday before Thanksgiving, Orthodox faithful across the US thank God for the privilege of serving the least of our brethren through IOCC. The Assembly of Bishops has named it *A Day of Sharing*. On this day, we consider IOCC's global work and the ways you sustain it. Please consider giving a gift of compassion today.



IOCC SUNDAY: A DAY OF SHARING

November 18, 2018 | ioccc.org/DayofSharing

