

NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

SUMMER 2017



"[We] run towards bad situations that would turn others in the opposite direction, making God present in the midst of tragedy, and making Christ manifest in the midst of horrendous moments in the life of those whom we are called to serve."

– IOCC Frontline Volunteer
Abbot Tryphon

2017 ANNUAL FRONTLINER CONFERENCE EDUCATES AND ENERGIZES VOLUNTEERS

Forty volunteers gathered for the 5th annual IOCC Frontline conference this May. The Frontline is a volunteer network of highly trained, credentialed, and experienced Orthodox clergy and laity who respond to man-made and natural disasters in the United States.

Volunteers shared best practices and lessons learned from their deployments to disaster zones – including in North Carolina, Louisiana, and West Virginia – over the past 12 months, and received continuing education. Frontline volunteer and pediatric psychologist Dr. Georgette Constantinou provided training on how to help children cope with trauma after disaster, while Kevin Ellers, a well-known and highly acclaimed instructor on emotional and spiritual care, conducted a session on counseling for those grieving the loss of a loved one.

IOCC also introduced a new US-based Emergency Response Team model that brings together parishes, Frontliners, and lay volunteers to mobilize physical and human resources to respond quickly and with maximum impact once disasters strike in the United States.

As with any conference of this nature, many stories, laughs, and some tears were shared in the sessions and over meals, and the group left energized and strengthened by new friendships and bonds.

You may visit iocc.org/US to learn about volunteer opportunities with IOCC US programs, including our upcoming national youth leadership and service conference, Serve-X-Treme!

IOCC®  **25**
YEARS

INSPIRED BY FAITH. DRIVEN BY PURPOSE.

**COMMEMORATING
25 YEARS OF SERVICE**

Thank You for Making a Difference through IOCC!

iocc.org/25years



Paul Jeffrey



From the
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I recently traveled to Haiti with a long-time IOCC engineer and longer-time friend to check in on the construction of St. John

School, a new project through the Church of Greece in Haiti, and the reconstruction of Foyer D'Amour, a school that IOCC and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) have collaborated to help in the years since the 2010 earthquake disrupted its operations. Foyer D'Amour is one of only five schools in Haiti for students with disabilities, offering basic life skills to 200 students between the ages of three and 25 while guiding parents on how to respond to their children's special needs. Over the past 22 years, more than 2,000 children have attended the school. It was an honor to meet the school's teachers and to be able to help them as they carry on their mission.

I have been to many places throughout my 25-plus years in international development work, and

Haiti is unique. Despite overwhelming poverty, it is brimming with vibrancy and hope. The people are grateful for their meager possessions and excited about life, even as they brace for the next natural disaster. Their hopeful attitude serves as a reminder to us that faith is a most powerful weapon against fear. No matter the cause of that fear, remaining rooted in our faith helps us to weather the storm, be it figurative or literal.

On behalf of the team at IOCC, I thank you for your faithful commitment, which has given IOCC the ability to serve and help countless people over the past 25 years. Each trip, like that to Haiti, serves as a confirmation of your generosity and renews our commitment to helping those in need as responsible stewards of your gifts.

Wishing you health and happiness as our 25th anniversary celebration continues!

In Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

FORGING BONDS BETWEEN GREEK AND SYRIAN CHILDREN

IOCC, in partnership with Apostoli, the humanitarian arm of the Archdiocese of Athens, is offering educational and recreational activities to registered refugee children and Greek children from low-income families, in part to help break down barriers between the refugees and their hosts. The program includes Greek reading and writing classes, as well as exercises and activities with musical instruments, puzzles, and other games to improve motor skills. While helping refugee children become acquainted with Greek society, the program also provides enrichment to Greek children whose families have been affected by the economic depression.





THANK YOU!

The IOCC Board of Directors and Executive Team would like to thank our beloved Hierarchs, clergy, and generous donors for their loyal support and compassion in 2016 and throughout our 25-year history. We are humbled to be a venue through which you express your Orthodox faith.

Mark D. Stavropoulos
Chairman of the Board

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

TRAINING LEADERS IN DISABILITY ISSUES IN ETHIOPIA

As a physiotherapy instructor at the University of Gondar in Ethiopia, Tamiru (pictured to the right) has worked with people with disabilities through movement, exercise, and manual therapy, but he lacked training in the proper fitting and adjustment of wheelchairs. To rectify this, he was recently trained in wheelchair-services delivery based on World Health Organization guidelines. This training is part of IOCC's work in Ethiopia to equip people facing mobility challenges with customized wheelchairs. After completing his specialized training, Tamiru will provide wheelchair services to patients directly and incorporate lessons learned into his physiotherapy lectures, equipping students with information and skills that they can use to serve people with disabilities in their communities. IOCC is one of the first international organizations in the country to train practitioners in wheelchair-service delivery issues.



International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief 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.



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

a member of
actalliance

EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR DISPLACED PEOPLE IN MHARDEH VILLAGE, SYRIA

The village of Mhardeh, Syria, has the highest concentration of Orthodox Christians in the modern-day Middle East.

After an increase in violence in March 2017, approximately 10,000 residents – mostly women, children, and elderly people – left the village. An additional 40,000 in the surrounding villages were abruptly displaced. They now live in community shelters or with host families, but lack resources to purchase basic items such as food and cooking supplies.

To help these communities, IOCC, through its partner the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch, Department of Ecumenical Relations and Development (GOPA-DERD), directed resources to meet the immediate humanitarian needs in Mhardeh. Significant gaps remained, especially in food and other essential supplies. But through the generosity of IOCC co-founder and former Chairman of the Board Mr. Charles Ajalat and his wife, Marilee, IOCC and GOPA-DERD received additional funds for hygiene kits, mattresses, and food items such as rice, beans, bulgur, lentils, and cheese. In order to help support the local economy while also helping those displaced to live with greater comfort, all items will be purchased from local vendors and then distributed to those in need.

The needs of the people of Mhardeh are indicative of the plight of millions of Syrians who have been displaced within their own country. Since 2012, IOCC and GOPA-DERD have maintained one of the largest networks inside of Syria to assist those who have been displaced across the country.

SEEDS of HOPE



With a planned gift to IOCC, your legacy can ensure that those in need learn how to grow food for their families and communities in a sustainable manner.

For more information, please contact IOCC's Director of Development at (877) 803-4622.

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iocc.org/plannedgiving

PARTNERS IN COMPASSION

As little as 33¢ a day
can make a difference!

Join IOCC's Partners in Compassion monthly giving program and help ensure that we respond quickly and effectively to people in need.

iocc.org/monthly



UPCOMING IOCC 25th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS IN THE US

iocc.org/events

- **August 19: Denver, CO**
Pan-Orthodox Walk/Run for IOCC
- **October 12: Salt Lake City, UT**
IOCC Wine Tasting
- **October 21: Baltimore, MD**
Baltimore Running Festival
- **October 28: Charlotte, NC**
25th Anniversary IOCC Evening
- **October 29: Philadelphia, PA**
25th Anniversary IOCC Banquet

More are in the works! Check the webpage often for updates.