When Disaster Hits Home

US Response Meets Immediate Needs, Supports Long-Term Recovery

When Hurricanes Harvey and Irma hit the US Gulf Coast in August and September 2017, you helped IOCC respond swiftly. Donors and volunteers sprang quickly to action, and IOCC mobilized across Texas and Florida to address an unprecedented compound disaster in the United States.

IOCC’s Frontliners, a network of clergy and laypeople people specially trained in offering emotional and spiritual care during and after emergencies, were on site in Houston ahead of Hurricane Harvey. Invited by the American Red Cross, IOCC was the first organization to offer this type of support at the shelter in downtown Houston’s George R. Brown Convention Center. During the days that followed, Frontliners remained in the area, while others deployed to Florida when Hurricane Irma hit. In all, they served hundreds of affected families, working closely with local parishes across Orthodox jurisdictions to meet the immediate needs of families in Greater Houston, Texas, as well as in Naples, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine, Florida.

In any emergency, the basics are top priority: water, food, and shelter were among the needs IOCC addressed during those first days in Texas and Florida, where extensive flooding was accompanied by wind and rain damage to homes and businesses. Supplies like heavy-duty tarps, generators, and mattresses helped communities protect property, access electricity until the power grid was restored, and cope with heat and displacement during the evacuation.

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Investing in a Brighter Future
Promoting Healthy Lifestyles in Alaska

Substance abuse in Alaska, especially among youth, is alarmingly high. IOCC has worked with the Orthodox Church of America’s Diocese of Sitka and All Alaska, as well as with substance-abuse professionals and Alaska Native community leaders, to identify and implement prevention training for seminarians and clergy and to conduct sports and mentoring clinics for youth.

In partnership with St. Herman Theological Seminary, IOCC has supported a substance-abuse prevention and treatment training hosted at the seminary in Kodiak for several years. IOCC, working with the Diocese, also organized basketball clinics in Anchorage and the village of Napaskiak with professional players and coaches, promoting healthy lifestyles for 50 youth and family members. The clinics provided a fun, sports-focused environment that encouraged positive choices.

“We are grateful for IOCC’s continuing support of our seminarians and clergy to learn the most effective methods in preventing substance abuse,” said His Grace Bishop David of Alaska, who attended the sessions. “[I’m] particularly pleased that these basketball and healthy-lifestyle clinics allowed our youth in Alaska to concentrate on building positive habits in their lives that will protect them from so many contemporary negative influences.”

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.
The Orthodox Frontline

Specialized Volunteers Play Key Role in IOCC’s US Response

IOCC’s Orthodox Frontline, part of IOCC’s US program, is an emergency response network formed in 2001 to respond to disasters within the United States—natural or manmade. Whether it’s a tornado, hurricane, flood, or other devastating event, IOCC Frontliners can offer emotional and spiritual care to the people affected.

Each Frontliner is a professional trained to care for others in some way: they may be priests or chaplains, counselors, social workers, or therapists. Still others might be medical professionals, EMTs, or emergency response managers. As a group, they are well equipped to support people facing trauma and working toward healing.

In addition to their professional education, all Frontliners also receive specific training with IOCC in disaster response. While they focus on providing emotional and spiritual care, on the ground Frontliners may also support IOCC’s emergency action teams responding immediately after a disaster, or later during long-term recovery efforts.

Frontliners first deployed after September 11, 2001, and have responded following numerous disasters since then, including playing a key role in IOCC’s response to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in fall 2017.

There are now 114 IOCC Frontliners from various Orthodox jurisdictions, including 12 from the Orthodox Church in America. We are pleased to introduce many of them to you here.

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### OCA on the Frontline

- **Fr. Theodore Boback**
  - St. Andrew Orthodox Church
  - Baltimore, MD

- **Fr. Innocent Dresdow**
  - Holy Resurrection Cathedral
  - Kodiak, AK

- **Ms. Eleni Fredlund**
  - St. Dimitri of Rostov Orthodox Church
  - Los Alamos, NM

- **Fr. Thomas Moore**
  - Holy Apostles Orthodox Church
  - West Columbia, SC

- **Fr. Antonio Perdomo**
  - St. George the Great Martyr Orthodox Church
  - Pharr, TX

- **Fr. Brad Barnabas Powell**
  - St. Katherine Orthodox Mission
  - Kirkland, WA

- **Fr. Timothy Sawchak**
  - Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
  - Overland Park, KS

- **Fr. Athanasius Shaw**
  - Church of the Annunciation
  - Milwaukee, WI

- **Ms. Michaelyn Sloan**
  - St. Luke Orthodox Church
  - Palos Hills, IL

- **Fr. Marc Vranes**
  - Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
  - Plymouth, CT

- **Fr. Joel Weir**
  - St. Stephen the First Martyr Orthodox Church
  - Crawfordsville, IN

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Want to join the Orthodox Frontline? Qualified professionals may apply at [iocc.org/frontliners](http://iocc.org/frontliners).
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Health kits and clean-up buckets, two components of IOCC’s emergency-kit program, were crucial in the response, giving those who’d left their homes behind the means to feel a bit more human, as well as the tools to begin making flooded or wind-damaged houses livable again. Parishes, families, and ministry groups across the country sent in these kits in unprecedented numbers, allowing continual shipments post-hurricanes and replenishing the warehouse’s supply.

After the storms, to help with the first steps in recovery, volunteers from across the country joined IOCC staff on “muck-out” crews, emergency-response teams that cleared homes of damaged items and debris. Financial assistance for over 100 Orthodox families was also part of the response, and recovery efforts continue in 2018, serving the entire affected community.

SAVE THE DATE

IOCC SUNDAY

Nov. 18, 2018

• CLERGY: Announce IOCC Sunday, pray for those we serve, and plan a special collection.

• VOLUNTEERS: Plan an event or IOCC display. Organize a coffee hour, presentation, or luncheon to benefit IOCC.

• YOUTH: Organize a kit drive or your own IOCC fundraiser—a car wash, dance-a-thon, or spaghetti dinner.

More info available at iocc.org/dayofsharing