



NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

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A Chance for a Healthy Childhood

Nourishing Children, Supporting Caregivers in Gaza

This IOCC program screens and treats young children for malnutrition and trains parents and teachers in nutrition, meal preparation, and more.

Childhood malnutrition is as dangerous as many diseases. It frequently causes complications like anemia that can lead to organ damage and strain on the heart. And in Gaza, where jobs are scarce and incomes are low, malnutrition is a common problem.

To help combat it, IOCC launched a major health and nutrition initiative in 2018, working with preschoolers and their caregivers. This project, implemented by IOCC in partnership with Peace Winds Japan and with support from the Japan Platform, focuses on three critical areas: screening for and treating malnutrition in youngsters, offering parents health and nutrition training, and supporting kindergartens in promoting their students' health.

Retal, a four-year-old girl, lives with her mother, her five-year-old brother, Yahiya, her uncles, and their families in her grandparents' house. The families' combined income – only about \$165 a month – must stretch to feed everyone.

So when Retal and her brother came to the IOCC screening program, both were malnourished, Retal even more severely than Yahiya. They were referred to a local partner clinic, where both received treatment and were monitored at a series of follow-up visits.

Within six months, both Retal and Yahiya had received normal health and nutrition assessments. Meanwhile their mother, Alaa, attended IOCC-sponsored workshops on health and nutrition to

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FROM THE
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

In an instant, the old year becomes the new. People all over the world cheer, set off fireworks, share a kiss, and prepare for a fresh start.

For many others, however, a fresh start can take weeks, months, or even years of hard work. They might be recovering from a terrible disaster, such as Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. They may be struggling to keep their children healthy, or they may be trying to rise above social stigma to create a better tomorrow.

In 2019, your gifts made a crucial difference, helping determined people all over the world make that fresh start: to recover from disease and economic hardship, or to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of conflict or natural disaster.

While it's impossible to predict the future, unfortunately it is likely our world will continue to face more disease, conflict, and disasters in 2020. What we can say, with certainty, is that IOCC will continue working to help people remember 2020 as the year they made a fresh start.

I hope you'll continue supporting IOCC so together we can reach even more people in the New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

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help her children stay healthy after they finished treatment. "I am forever grateful," Alaa said, "for IOCC [and these] services to help our children."

Like Retal, five-year-old Hidaya was malnourished. The youngest of nine siblings, she was severely underweight. Her growth had been mildly stunted, and her teacher had noticed that she had trouble focusing in her kindergarten class. Through the IOCC health and nutrition program, Hidaya received the treatment she needed for malnutrition, and her parents learned how to make better food choices using the resources they have. As Hidaya's mother said, "The best way to set your child up for a lifetime of healthy eating is to let them see you eating a healthy diet."

In 2019, thousands of children were screened; those who needed specialized care were referred for treatment. In addition, the staff at 12 kindergartens attended workshops to learn screening methods, and the teachers also received first-aid training. While malnutrition remains a concern in underresourced areas, the combination of detection, treatment, and education that this program provides is proving effective.

After proper diagnosis and treatment for malnutrition, children's general health, school performance, and activity levels improve significantly.



International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief and development agency of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America and a member of the ACT Alliance, 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 without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.

Girls in Uganda learned how to sew reusable sanitary pads to help better manage their periods.

Fighting Stigma by Investing in Girls

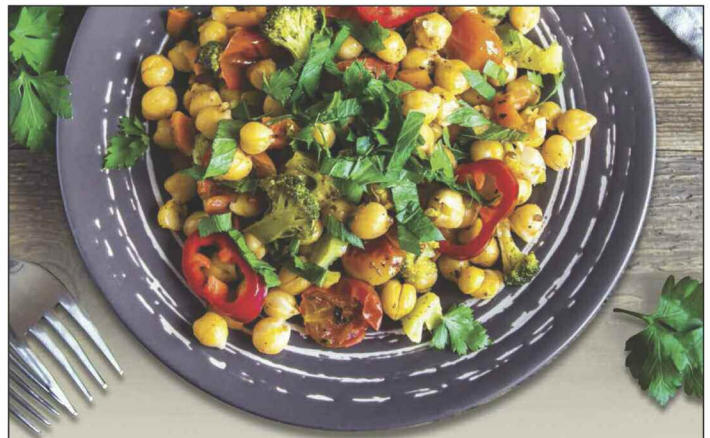
Better Health Means Better Education in Uganda

In many countries, menstruating women are subjected to discrimination or even stigmatized. School-age girls often miss lessons while menstruating. Typical absences in Africa are four days every four weeks; many girls simply drop out once they get their periods.

In Uganda, an IOCC Foundation-funded initiative is working to change all that. At a school in Gulu, one of three Uganda Orthodox Church schools IOCC is working with in rural areas, girls received sanitary supplies, along with education on how to manage discomfort, pain, and cleanliness. As part of the program, the girls were taught how to make their own washable sanitary pads, a skill that was shared with other women in the community, helping further dispel misconceptions about menstruation and women's health.

The difference is noticeable and immediate. Daphine, a student at Gulu, said, "[The] training removed all the myths and taboos I had. I can now participate freely in all activities." Another student, Mary, said, "Now I have confidence when I am on my period, which was not the case before. God bless you."

Equipped with the tools and knowledge they need to better manage their menstrual health, these young Ugandan women are pursuing their educations with a renewed sense of dignity and self-assurance.



Share your Lenten recipes!

Email outreach@iocc.org to have your recipe considered for our Lenten series.



IOCC®



In Bahamas, Serving after the Storm

Meeting Needs of Dorian's Survivors

Hurricane Dorian struck the Bahamas with sustained winds of 185 miles per hour – some of the strongest ever recorded in an Atlantic storm. Thousands of survivors were left without food, electricity, clean water, and housing.

IOCC, along with Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church and other partners, has established two 12-month programs to help meet survivors' needs, particularly those of evacuees.

The largest children's home in Nassau provides food, shelter, and education for children in need. After Dorian, the number of children there doubled, taking in evacuee children from Grand Bahama Island, where their home was completely destroyed. Many have serious health concerns, including cerebral palsy and asthma. IOCC and the United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries are providing financial support for additional staffing and services, such as psychosocial support to help them process the trauma they've experienced.

At Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Nassau, The Lord's Kitchen has been cooking and distributing weekend meals to 700-800 people – despite antiquated equipment. Since Dorian hit, the church has been serving an additional 450 meals a day to evacuees. With generous donor support, including from the National Philoptochos Society, IOCC is providing funds for new equipment and more staff, so that the kitchen can serve weekly meals for up to 600 people in need across Nassau and could serve up to 800 evacuees daily in any future storms.

The more than 75,000 Bahamians affected by Dorian, including thousands who were displaced, now face a long and difficult recovery. As they focus on rebuilding, with your support, IOCC and its partners will continue to help meet the short- and long-term needs of survivors.

Hurricane Dorian caused an estimated \$7 billion loss to property and infrastructure across the Bahamas.

Photo courtesy of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese



Rebuild with IOCC in Texas and Florida

Spend a week rebuilding and repairing homes damaged by disasters in the US. You don't need to be skilled – just energetic!

Dates and Locales*

- Key West, FL March 9-14, 2020
- Key West, FL March 16-21, 2020
- Daytona Beach, FL May 11-16, 2020
- Houston, TX June 15-20, 2020
- Houston, TX June 22-27, 2020
- Houston, TX August 10-15, 2020

**if one of these weeks doesn't work, contact us for other options*

Details & registration at

iocc.org/homebuild

Questions? Contact Krista Hamann at 612.389.7278 or volunteercoordinator@iocc.org

