



# NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

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## Beirut: One Year Later

### *Rebuilding after Devastation*

Just over a year ago, Beirut, Lebanon, was devastated by a tragic explosion, deepening a crisis for a country already facing many challenges. Lives and livelihoods were lost, homes and businesses were destroyed – incomprehensible destruction instantly changed life for so many.

Through the years, IOCC has been active in Lebanon, which meant that relief efforts could begin almost immediately – and with your support IOCC has been working with the people of Lebanon to rebuild ever since.

For example, Elie, age 22, owns a small grocery store near the port, in a neighborhood hit hard by the blast. The family business, founded by

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*Programs are made possible by generous donors like you, along with support from IOCC partners Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe Germany, Norwegian Church Aid, UNICEF, and UNFPA.*

*An IOCC engineer reviews the conditions of the play area at a Beirut school badly damaged in the explosion, before and after it was rehabbed through an IOCC program.*

Elie's grandfather, has served the area for more than 70 years, selling fruits, vegetables, and other groceries.

The explosion shattered the store's display windows and damaged its steel shutters – forcing it to close. "Many other organizations visited and assessed the damage," Elie said, "but none called me afterward. IOCC was the only credible association that helped me repair the damage ... everything was perfectly done." Once work was complete, Elie was able to resume business and restore his only source of income.

Elie's store is just one example. From August of 2020 through August of 2021, IOCC has repaired more than 545 homes and apartments, more than 125 small businesses, two hospitals, seven primary health centers, five schools, one Sunday School, and its educational facilities.

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# NEWS & NEEDS

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

As a new Church year begins, I thank you for your compassion and generosity.

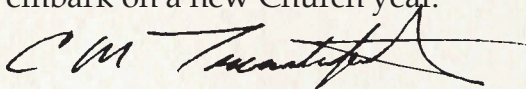
In this issue of *News & Needs*, you will see how that generosity is changing lives around the globe. From feeding families and rebuilding homes and businesses in badly shattered Beirut, to providing much-needed relief for those affected by the wildfires in Greece, your support is truly making a difference.

You will be inspired by the energy of our Church's young adults, in a report on the 2021 Serv-X-Treme conference.

I am also pleased to announce that the IOCC Prayer Journal is now available. It includes activities for all ages based on Chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew, IOCC's inspiration scripture, along with uplifting accounts of the ways you have helped spread Christ's love around the world.

And finally, we look ahead toward the Sunday before Thanksgiving — November 21 — IOCC Sunday, as designated by the Assembly of Bishops. Please save the date and talk with your priest about ways that your parish can mark this special day.

I wish you a blessed autumn as we embark on a new Church year.



Constantine M. Triantafilou  
Executive Director & CEO



*Two classrooms, shown here with their partition wall that the explosion destroyed. Image continued from cover below shows the same space repaired.*

Within hours after the blast, IOCC was also distributing much-needed food aid. Amal, for example, is 70 years old and lives alone. When the explosion destroyed the doors and windows of her apartment, she had no family to support her. IOCC's community kitchen supplied her with three hot meals a week. "You are the only organization that helped me and asked about me, and I can't thank you enough," she said. In the one-year period following the explosion, IOCC provided weekly hot meals for more than 1,300 families in need.

Mother of three Nada, 36, also received food rations. In this case, IOCC's school snacks program supplied food to children at home when schools remained closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. "We cannot buy vegetables, bread, meat, or chicken," Nada said. "The rations are helping a lot; they give me more choices to have a variety of meals for the children."

These programs have reached more than 153,000 people — thanks to your generosity. Through hard work, progress has been made, yet much still needs to be done. Along with our partners, IOCC will continue working with the people of Beirut toward recovery.

*Repairs facilitated by IOCC replaced the wall between these classrooms — one small example of the past year's rebuilding efforts.*





*IOCC's annual service-leadership conference for youth aims to foster a spirit of service in the next generation.*

## Youth Prepare to Go Forth and Serve

*The 2021 Serv-X-Treme Leadership Program*



This summer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, 18 rising high-school seniors from five Orthodox jurisdictions across the country took enthusiastic steps toward service at IOCC's eighth annual Serv-X-Treme leadership conference.

The weeklong program is designed to help young people develop a deeper understanding of Orthodox philanthropy and *diakonia* (service) through

leadership-building activities, workshops, and hands-on service. Highlights included painting a house with Rebuilding Together, volunteering with United Way, and participating in several workshops on service, with featured speakers Paul Karos and Barb Dovolis.

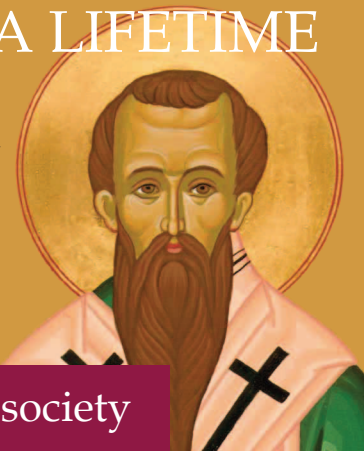
Attendees took part in daily prayer, worship, and reflection, and learned the basics of "muck-out" and rebuilding operations, both key parts of IOCC's disaster response work.

The Serv-X-Treme Conference had a profound impact on participants. "Thank you for offering this program! Giving our kids an opportunity to connect with other Orthodox youth centered around an organization like IOCC is a great blessing," said the parent of a participant. One attendee shared, "The staff is so kind and helpful and funny. This week was filled with wonderful opportunities to learn, serve, and explore. I am very grateful."

At the end of the week, the students took their newfound knowledge home with them, eager to put it into practice in their daily lives and to share it with others. IOCC is thankful and honored to be a part of their journey.

## A LEGACY BEYOND A LIFETIME

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with a  
planned gift.*



[iocc.org/stbasilsociety](http://iocc.org/stbasilsociety)

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.

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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# Hope after Greece's Wildfires

*Families, Small Businesses Receive Aid for Recovering, Rebuilding*

Since 2012, IOCC has worked with Apostoli, the humanitarian arm of the Archdiocese of Athens, on the *Give for Greece* program to provide business and livelihoods support, reliable food access for families in need, medical supplies, and education programs for Greeks and refugees.

In addition, IOCC has also offered relief following emergencies. This summer, wildfires raged across Evia, Attica, and the Peloponnese, destroying homes, businesses, and livelihoods as about 300,000 acres burned. Evia, Greece's second-largest island, was especially hard hit, with one-third of its forests burned, including valuable pine trees – the basis of traditional beekeeping, honey, and resin-collecting industries.

When a seaside community of east Attica was destroyed by fire in 2018, IOCC response focused on



*Metropolitan Germanos of Ileia blessed students and school before local families in this fire-affected community received school-supply vouchers and school kits.*

meeting the immediate basic needs of those who had lost their only homes. After the devastating 2007 fires, IOCC helped farmers in the Peloponnese start over by providing livestock feed and other supplies.

In response to the latest fires, IOCC began with an on-the-ground needs assessment, which the team is using to custom design response in affected areas. Programming began in the municipality of Ileia, in the western Peloponnese, an area that also saw widespread fires in 2007. IOCC collaborated with local Church authorities, the Primary School Teachers Association of Pyrgos-Ancient Olympia Municipalities, and partner Apostoli to distribute school-supply vouchers and school kits to full-time local residents affected by this year's disaster. The items ensured that families in some of the hardest-hit areas could buy what their children needed to start the school year.

Leveraging its experience of both emergency response and long-term development aid in Greece, especially helping small-holder farmers and microbusinesses, IOCC is committed to long-term assistance for survivors of this summer's fires. As families and communities rebuild their homes and livelihoods, watch for more news of how your generous support is reaching those in need.

**my**  
**Prayer Journal**  
**AVAILABLE NOW**  
For your kids or Sunday School!  
Make sure you or your  
Church School Director get a copy.  
Email [donor.services@iocc.org](mailto:donor.services@iocc.org)