



NEWS & NEEDS

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

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Transforming Homes and Lives after Devastating Tornadoes

Homeowner Christy, whose house was completely destroyed by the tornadoes, joined the IOCC Action Team that rebuilt her house for a visit on her new front porch.

Crucial Grants Fuel Extensive Home Rebuilding in Kentucky Community

Beverly (not her real name, not pictured) is a resident of Marshall County, Kentucky. Now a widow, she and her husband often volunteered helping people affected by disasters across the US. After her husband's death, devastating tornadoes hit western Kentucky in late 2021, badly damaging the home where they'd lived together so long. Now she's one of the people that IOCC has helped as part of long-term recovery work in Marshall County.

While IOCC Frontliners visited the area soon after the disaster and provided emotional and spiritual care, a grant from the American Red Cross supported home rebuilding throughout 2023. IOCC teams —

made up of staff, trained team leads, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers — rebuilt 26 homes, provided \$430,000 worth of labor, and supplied materials like lumber, roofing, and windows. This is money that homeowners would otherwise have spent trying to get their life back on track.

When other organizations saw how this response was transforming the community, they came together to extend the program. With this funding, along with the dedication of volunteers, IOCC continues rebuilding in 2024. To be part of IOCC's mission serving people like Beverly, visit ioccc.org/actionteams today.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we conclude our journey through Great Lent, we focus on the hope that comes with the celebration of Pascha and Christ's resurrection.

The hope that you create through your support of IOCC is also the focus of this edition of *News & Needs*, which includes an update on long-term rebuilding efforts in Kentucky following devastating tornadoes in late 2021.

In Lebanon, one IOCC program is educating expectant mothers on proper nutrition and care. Here, women gather with specially trained local volunteers who provide guidance and support—helping to change the lives of countless women and children.

Kindergarten is in session again in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region of Georgia, where IOCC is working with local authorities to supply furnishings and equipment for students eager to learn.

Finally, it's my honor to share, in his own words, a note from His Eminence Archbishop Alexios of Gaza, a partner in IOCC's ongoing service to people displaced by conflict there.

Your generosity makes these programs—and many more—possible. Please consider making a gift today to continue bringing hope to people in need. We wish you a bright and joyous Pascha.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

A Group of Women Changing Lives in Lebanon

Promoting Maternal and Child Health through Education

In the Lebanese city of El Mina, where access to healthcare services and education is limited, a group of women have come together to create a support group dedicated to the health of expectant mothers and their children. Among them is Samia, a 32-year-old refugee, who has a compelling reason to help—she suffered a miscarriage due to a lack of support and reliable medical information.

Motivated by her own experience, Samia became a group leader for mothers in her neighborhood as part of an IOCC program. This initiative, funded by Diakonie ACT Austria and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), trains women like Samia to teach mothers-to-be about the importance of prenatal vitamins, nutrition, and proper medical care.

Samia's first goal was to lead meetings that fostered a supportive environment. "Those sessions became a safe space for mothers to share their concerns, ask questions, and learn," she said.

Mona, one of the mothers in Samia's group, is grateful for the knowledge and support she has received. "I learned about the healthy diet of a pregnant woman and the variety of snacks she should eat to get adequate protein, carbohydrates, and different kinds of food," she said. "Taking the

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development projects worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox



Mona learned the importance of pre-natal care and is part of a women's support group that is creating healthier futures for expectant mothers and children.

required vitamins during pregnancy is [another] important point."

"I really like the project," Mona added, "and thank IOCC and the donors."

This program is just one example of how your support helps IOCC work with local communities and partners to create healthier communities for both Lebanese families in need and many Syrian refugees.

rian relief and development
America.

programs to those in need
lox Church to so respond.

ioccc.org



IOCC PROGRAM

REBUILDING IN KENTUCKY


By the Numbers

WORK COMPLETED WITH FUNDING FROM THE AMERICAN RED CROSS:

26
homes completed



316
volunteers
donated their time
and skills



More than **16,000**
hours of work completed

That equates to
\$430,000
worth of volunteer labor

WORK CONTINUES WITH FUNDING FROM THE FOLLOWING LOCAL PARTNERS:

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

American Baptist Home Mission Societies

Brethren Disaster Ministries

Disaster Ministries – United Church of Christ

Week of Compassion

As of this printing, we are partnering with the local Orthodox Church to provide about 400 people plus others in the neighborhood seeking help with:

- hot meals, local produce, food staples
- safe water
- medicine and hygiene items
- emergency supplies



**Note to IOCC
from His Eminence
Archbishop Alexios**
*Representative of
the Greek Orthodox
Patriarchate of
Jerusalem in Gaza*

“In Gaza [we] are living one of the most difficult times of our lives.... We are very thankful to you and your friends that are supporting you in your activities, in being the real Christian charity in the world, especially in the Holy Land, the land of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray to our Lord Jesus Christ in the holy city of Jerusalem ... to strengthen all of you in your duties, and to keep you and your families in good health, to live with peace and prosperity.”



Your support made it possible for more than 225 children to attend kindergarten in safe and fully furnished spaces in Georgia.

Restoring and Renewing Kindergartens in Georgia

Creating Safe Learning Spaces

IOCC’s humanitarian presence in the country of Georgia dates from 1994, with projects assisting thousands displaced by conflict. Work began with emergency response and has since grown to promote sustainable development for families and individuals in need.

Over the years, the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region has accommodated hundreds of thousands of displaced people. Families often sheltered in hotels, unused buildings, and schools. In the city of Zugdidi, 13 out of 17 kindergarten buildings were converted to temporary housing.

One kindergarten in Zugdidi operated out of a rented house for years, without enough space or facilities for children to thrive. When local authorities began converting their school building back into classroom space, they lacked the funds to furnish it appropriately.

IOCC stepped in to fully furnish the space with benches, beds, cabinets, kitchen appliances, mattresses, linens, and computer equipment. Today, the kindergarten is fully functioning and can serve up to 150 children. IOCC also purchased and delivered kitchen appliances, dishes, and cutlery, plus computer equipment, for a second kindergarten in nearby Shamgona so that it’s also ready to serve about 75 youngsters in that village.

The Zugdidi kindergarten is now open again, and IOCC continues working with local authorities to provide additional equipment in Shamgona, aiming to open this spring. In all, the program is creating a safe learning environment for over 225 students.