

GOODNEWS

From The Ministry to Seafarers

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Ready for the Future of Seafarers' Welfare

by Chaplain Michelle DePooter

Every year, the North American Maritime Ministry Association (NAMMA) holds an annual conference in a port city for those involved in port ministry. This year approximately 100 participants met in Seattle and the theme of the conference was *Ready for the Future of Seafarers' Welfare*.

Being ready for the future is important, but it often seems like it's all we can do to get through our day-to-day activities—whether it is in our personal lives, our churches, our workplaces, or in seafarers' welfare. Thinking proactively about the future can be a challenge, especially after the last few years when we were trying to adapt to the new information and new regulations that were thrown at us every few weeks. Forward thinking and being ready for the future seemed beyond reach.

One of the themes discussed at the NAMMA conference is how port ministry has changed. In the past, organizations had large seafarer hotels which morphed into the smaller seafarer centres that are more common now. At the time of that change in the 1960s and '70s, some organizations were worried that they would have to close and that their ministry was no longer needed. But most adapted and continued to have thriving ministries serving seafarers, although in a slightly different way. *The challenge given to us is to look ahead and see how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed things, and instead of resolutely trying to keep doing what we have always done, to look for new opportunities and to innovate.*

Through NAMMA, we have connections and partnerships with maritime ministries in other ports. One way we are looking to the future of seafarers' welfare is to provide a robust continuation of care for them. An example of this came in late August when I received an email from a chaplain in Toronto, who had received an email from a chaplain in Panama, both of whom I had met at the conference in Seattle. A ship was on the way to Montreal, but

had stopped in Panama because a crew member had suffered a heart attack and died. The chaplain in Panama was able to offer some care for the crew, but he wanted to be sure that we knew what was going on so that we could offer appropriate care for the crew when they arrived in Montreal. Technology is making it easier for chaplains across ports to stay connected and to pass on information that can enhance the quality of care provided.

As we prepare for the future, we also need to make sure we care for ourselves. I was blessed to take a 3-month sabbatical at the beginning of 2023, which was a time of rest and rejuvenation. I am thankful that God continues to provide for M2S in unexpected ways, bringing new volunteers and interns at just the right time. I look forward with hope and expectation for God to continue working his plans out for seafarers through everyone who comes through the doors of M2S.

Christmas Parcel Drive

Christmas is coming! Seafarers look forward to the gifts you prepare for them. *"On behalf of my crew I would like to thank you for the Christmas presents received. The handwritten wishes on the Christmas card were highly appreciated."*

-- **Captain M. Schrijver, MV Happy River**

Please jump on board and share the love in your heart with seafarers this Christmas! www.ministrytoseafarers.org/parcels is your one-stop shop for all things related to parcels.

Fundraiser with Les Chanteurs de Lorraine

On December 4th, we will combine efforts with Mariners' House to host **Les Chanteurs de Lorraine**, directed by **Sandra Penner** from First CRC Montreal, in the beautiful Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours Chapel (aka, the *Sailor's Church*) in the Old Port. Cocktails will be served in the historic vault underneath the Sanctuary. All are welcome!



Volunteers...at Just the Right Time!

When people show up "out of the blue" we're learning to recognize them as gifts come to assist us in the work we've been called to do. This quarter we had two volunteers who got in touch at the last minute to offer short-term help because they had gaps in their schedules:



Ophélie Legars-Tousignant, a high school student, had volunteered with us before. We put her bilingual skills to use to do a quality check of the new French version of our website. She was just the right person for just the right task at just the right time!



Katie Mallett, a university student, heard about us through our summer intern. She arrived in time to help Mariners' House with their Italian Festa fundraising lunch. She also leaned in to learn about chaplaincy before her year-long stint began last month at *Love Thy Neighborhood* in Louisville, KY.



Alberto Baruzzi-Rojas spent the summer interning with us. In addition to shadowing the chaplains and connecting with seafarers, he was a huge help in migrating our devotional content onto the Blog of our new website. He kept us on our toes with his puns and quick wit! This devotional content is also being released weekly on our social media sites where it's being shared by other Seafarers' Centres as well. Technology now plays a large role in how port ministry workers keep in touch with seafarers.

Over the course of several months, **Harry Xu** popped in weekly to string 1,000 Christmas parcel bags made by local volunteer, **Mona Horner**. Picture 1,000 gifts in beautiful bags that don't close and you get the idea how this simple but tedious task was so very necessary!



Debby Smit graced us with her presence for a week of ministry and left us with more than 600 photos capturing the work that we do! In this digital age, telling our story in pictures is crucial and we look forward to releasing content over social media in the weeks and months to come.

Without a volunteer apartment anymore, we are finding creative

housing solutions. When **Hans & Cathy Vink** came for three weeks, they camped in their RV across the Saint Lawrence River! We appreciated Hans' help in driving seafarers. While behind the wheel, Hans had several good conversations with seafarers, gave them devotionals and left them with his contact info on WhatsApp so they could continue the conversation. In the quieter moments, Cathy tackled five photo albums of our old pictures, scanning them so they are available in digital format.

We may not see exactly what impact the intersections of our lives will have over time, but we believe that God is weaving our stories together on purpose to create a beautiful tapestry that reflects his love.

Past Events

Day of the Seafarer

June 26 was *International Day of the Seafarer*. A former seafarer donated funds so we could open our doors and offer a buffet dinner to seafarers and friends of our community. About 75 people attended, including some crew of the *Vistula Maersk* who expressed deep appreciation for the event.



Seaway Bike Tour Fundraiser

On September 9, 21 cyclists, including 4 children, rode a combined 782 km, took 77 ferry rides and raised \$11,892 towards the wellbeing of seafarers. **Sheila Margerrison** and **Zubeyde Altun** wheeled coolers of food to our lunch



spot on beautiful Parc national des Îles-de-Boucherville where we enjoyed sightings of deer and other wildlife. This event proved to be a great activity for the whole family. *Mark your calendars! Our next bike tour is September 14, 2024.*

Visits

On August 4, **Kaimei Zhang** brought her adult Chinese immigrant students for a port tour and an educational talk on the influence of Chinese seafarers. Some of these students expressed an interest in coming back to do some volunteer work. It's connections like this that allow our work to thrive.

Financial Update

We encourage our supporters to take a wide view of stewardship. Sign up for the free **Christian Stewardship Services** Donor Newsletter (www.csservices.ca) and learn about creative ways you can make an estate plan.



You can always make a secure, online donation through **CanadaHelps**, the **PayPal Giving Fund**, by cheque, or e-Transfer to donations@ministrytoseafarers.org. For details, visit www.ministrytoseafarers.org/support-m2s/#giving.

What would you like **your** legacy to be?



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