

**International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) Report to
the 2017 Annual Assembly
Marina Edwards, IOCC Parish Liaison
February 11, 2018**

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IOCC's Water Fund has provided clean water to over 30,000 people of rural Tanzania. Whereas mothers and children might have walked miles previously to find water, they now only have to take a few steps.

In Ethiopia, the red clay soil is rich in silica. Chronic exposure to the soil from working barefoot in fields triggers an inflammatory response called podoconiosis (podo) that caused swelling and disfigurement of feet and lower legs. Many Ethiopians rely on agriculture for their livelihood and go barefoot while farming, podo is all too prevalent in the country. Since 2009, IOCC has been working in cooperation with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and medical organizations in an effort to eradicate podo, which impacts an estimated three million people in Ethiopia alone. The program includes prevention activity (including the distribution of shoes to more than 80,000 people annually), treatment of podo patients, and education to raise awareness of the condition's. Also in Ethiopia IOCC is one of the first international organizations in the to train practitioners in wheelchair-service delivery issues.

The village of Mhardeh, Syria, has the highest concentration of Orthodox Christians in the modern-day Middle East. After an increase in violence in March 2017, approximately 10,000 residents — mostly women, children, and elderly people — left the village. An additional 40,000 in the surrounding villages were abruptly displaced. They now live in community shelters or with host families but lack resources to purchase basic items such as food and cooking supplies. To help these communities, IOCC provides hygiene kits, mattresses, and food items. In order to help support the local economy while also helping those displaced to live with greater comfort, all items will be purchased from local vendors and then distributed to those in need.

In Northern California IOCC responded to the wildfires by offering offer emotional and spiritual care and conduct rapid needs assessments.

IOCC Frontliners were the first group to offer emotional and spiritual care at a shelter in downtown Houston and other places during hurricane Harvey.

IOCC working with partners, deliver items worth over \$200,000. Items included clean-up buckets, hygiene kits, dental supplies, mattresses, and bedding.

In 2017 our parish collected 48lb of food and \$275 for Food Gatherers of Ann Arbor on IOCC Soupier Bowl Sunday. During the Great Lent we sent \$475. Also made 30 school kits, which were distributed to children in different countries to help them to attend schools. Our respond to natural disasters in the USA - \$1,192 for hurricane Harvey and \$331 for California wildfires. On IOCC Sunday in November we collected \$320.

There are several ways to participate in IOCC work besides monetary donations.

Orthodox Frontline volunteers are trained professionals who respond to disasters within the United States. These disasters are often natural disasters including tornados, floods, hurricanes, wildfires or earthquakes. However, the Frontline team may also respond to man-made disasters, including acts of terrorism. The Frontline team is focused on providing Emotional and Spiritual Care (ESC) after a disaster; however, they may also find themselves helping to do debris removal or muck-outs.

IOCC's Orthodox Home Build teams support long-term recovery after disasters, because communities affected by these catastrophes often face great need long after the crisis has passed.

As a home build volunteer, you can help families rebuild! Work usually starts 6-12 months after a disaster, and IOCC teams sometimes keep coming back for years, depending on the need.

When a disaster strikes, families often need help removing debris, tearing down water soaked walls, or ripping out buckled floors. In the event of a disaster you could join one of IOCC Emergency Action Teams.

Our other donations in 2017 – Zoe for Life \$1,000 from the festival profit + \$1,331 Sunday collections; Christ the Savior Mission - \$1,000 from the festival profit.