

GOODNEWS

From The Ministry to Seafarers



Pandemic Life: Advocacy (and Pizza) for Seafarers

by Patty Sarazen

Seafarers have been impacted by the pandemic in a way that has caused a humanitarian crisis in the industry, and there is still very little relief in sight for the 400,000+ mariners at sea.

With another pandemic surge in process, shore leave is also being limited in many cases, leaving seafarers with few opportunities to step ashore and take care of themselves and their mental health. These crew members from the *M/V Hope* (pictured below) **had not been ashore for 10 months!**

Chaplain Michelle ordered pizza for a crew who couldn't go ashore (*Domino's actually called to make sure the order wasn't a joke!*). Erin, our theologically-minded friend commented, "*The kingdom of God is like...delivering 25 pizzas to seafarers.*" How true! Pray for our chaplains who are feeling stretched as well. It seems like eons ago that they could board a ship, sit and chat over a coffee or lead a chapel service.

Visits to ships are brief, often limited to deliveries at the gangway; any conversations that do happen usually revolve around seafarers wanting to go home. A few months ago, one such conversation led to us advocating with the **ITF** and **Transport Canada** to facilitate a crew change. The seafarers



involved got to go home! Seafarers have expressed gratitude for our help in these challenging times.

One silver lining during the pandemic has been the formation of the **Canada Seafarers' Welfare Board**.

We have a seat at the table along with ship owners, seafarers' welfare and labor representatives, port representatives, and government. **Please pray for their effectiveness and that they would earn a reputation for living well in God's eyes and the eyes of others.** (Proverbs 3:3-4)

M2S is perfectly positioned to offer holistic care to seafarers in the Port of Montreal, through our expanded reach to the port in Sorel, QC, and through digital chaplaincy. **Please pray for creativity, innovation, and encouragement as we look for new ways to increase our effectiveness with seafarers in this on-going pandemic.** Thank you for standing with us to make the work possible!



Seaway Bike Tour

Our first annual Seaway Bike Tour (#seawaybiketour) became a virtual event and was a success! 13 cyclists, from as far away as Michigan, joined in the fun and rode distances of 25, 50 and 100km near local waterways to raise awareness and funds for M2S. In total, we amassed \$6,329 which surpassed our expectations!



Natalie Peters, one of the cyclists said enthusiastically:

"I rode on the north shore of Montreal...and the bike paths along the river. I rode a bit more than 38km, part of the ride accompanied by my niece, nephew, and brother-in-law. Hopefully next year we won't have to contend with this terrible pandemic, because I look forward to riding again and raising even more funds for this amazing cause!"



Christmas Parcels

In a year unlike any other, we have nothing but gratitude in our hearts for you, our fine supporters. It was obvious that many of you survived the pandemic by knitting! You've blown us away with your generous hearts, encouragement, and beautiful creativity. Truly, you made this the most memorable Christmas Parcel campaign yet!

We distributed 1,499 parcels, including sharing 200 with the port in Trois-Rivières after they got the green light late in the season to deliver parcels to the ships.



We were overwhelmed by the response to the *Pack a Virtual Parcel* campaign, receiving \$9,010 in total! Without the help of local volunteers, **Sheila Margerrison, Heather Purdie, Daniel Girard, Ophélie Legars, Bryan Manning, Rob Whitley** and a team from **Teen Haven**, it wouldn't have been possible to check and prepare all the parcels we received AND shop, prep, and pack the virtual gifts too!

Volunteer/Intern Program

It didn't make sense to keep the volunteer apartment anymore and so we let it go in November. We've suspended our out-of-town volunteer program until restrictions are lifted and it's safe to travel again. While we haven't been actively looking for local volunteers, God prompted "complete strangers" to reach out to us in the fall because He knew we would need the help during the Christmas parcel campaign. **Please give thanks that our needs were met!**

Finances, Vision and Challenge '21

Not surprisingly, our revenue from investments declined by 30% in 2020. However, we didn't expect that individual donors would offset that shortfall significantly. By year's end, our overall revenue only decreased by 10%. We are incredibly grateful and thank God for the faithfulness of churches, foundations and individuals who came together in a difficult year to sustain the ministry.

When we met as a staff team recently to plan out the year, we realized that what we needed more than a common vision was a common prayer. We've adopted the **Serenity Prayer** by Reinhold Niebuhr (long version). Please pray it with us throughout the year.

We also realized we need to be intentional about strengthening our community. Please consider joining us for a 10-month fun **Challenge** aimed at keeping seafarers top of mind. We'll be sending an introductory email plus a monthly email with all the information you'll need to participate.



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