

# Friend Ships January 2019 Activities Report

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Dear Friends of Friend Ships:

Sondra and I would like to express our sincerest appreciation for all that you do to help us. Whether it is financial support, goods, prayer or if you come and help us personally – each one of these important gifts are critical to our successful completion of the responsibilities given to us by the Lord. Every time you sit down to write a check, or call to offer supplies, each time you reach out to the Lord in prayer on our behalf or travel to one of our facilities to work, we know that you make a decision to give of yourself in a way that is a blessing to the Lord and a huge help to us. We don't take these decisions lightly and we thank God for you.

Today we want to share with you our excitement about a tremendous opportunity we have before us that will begin soon. The details we can share at this time are very limited, but we can say that we will be able to provide medical care and other humanitarian aid to people who are suffering greatly in one of the hottest spots and most significant regions, spiritually, in the world.

Last year, while operating Camp Ichay at the border between Syria and Israel, providing medical and humanitarian aid services to thousands of Syrians displaced within their own nation because of intense warfare, the Lord began to prepare us to take on this next assignment. It was such an honor to operate Camp Ichay and our hearts were broken when circumstances in Syria made it necessary to close. One major lesson learned at this facility that burns in our hearts is what tremendous impact a sincere atmosphere of love has in a situation and what it is able to accomplish, even when our ability to communicate verbally is extremely limited. Our teams are working now on learning how to strengthen that atmosphere of love.

Friend Ships earnestly operates on faith-without the Lord we could do absolutely nothing. Faith works by love. So, for us, love is an essential element of our work. We believe the new camp will be a long-term assignment with lots of time to grow and improve in this and every other area. We have an unprecedented opportunity to bear fruit for the Lord and we are praying daily now to support what may be the most important work we have ever done. We believe that blanketing this mission in prayer and employing the spiritual will allow us to accomplish way beyond what we could ask or imagine if working only by natural means. If you are interested in helping us in this

area and receiving a weekly update for prayer targeted on the new camp please let us know by contacting us at [portmercy@friendships.org](mailto:portmercy@friendships.org).

In addition, the Lord has blessed us with amazing disaster relief equipment and strategies for here in the US and overseas. This allows us to have effective ways to help and encourage people in difficult times and share with hurting people the great love of our mighty God. After responding to two hurricanes here in the US last year, we determined how, by adding a few things here and there, we could make our responses even better. We will be working on these upgrades to our trucks, boats, ships, aircraft and food service equipment in preparation for the hurricane season that starts in June.

Finally, I'd like to say a few words of tribute to my precious Mother, Gwen Irene Tipton, who went to be with the Lord on January 9th. Miss Gwen, as she is called here at Friend Ships, loved the Lord with all of her heart for most all of her life. She was 94 and served the Lord for more than 70 years since giving her heart to Jesus in her early 20's. Gwen's love for Jesus was everything to her. She raised her family with an unwavering commitment to all of us, knowing and serving the Lord and yet she extended tremendous mercy to us when we fell short. Because of who Mom was as a person, she laid a foundation for all that Friend Ships has become. Not only did she love the Lord so very sincerely, but she was also full of passion for His Word and especially for His people, Israel, with every fiber of her being.

In her youth, Mom was one of the first professional women race car drivers—a pioneer in her field. In her 60's, she became a full-time mission worker with Friend Ships, sailing with us on World War II cargo ships to many nations in Central America, Africa, and the Middle East. And when she was not abroad, Mom worked hard every day here at Friend Ships Port Mercy. Gwen was a joy and an inspiration to the family (our son, daughter, grandson and great-grandchildren are all fully involved) as she has been to many who served here over the years. We share with you today the glory of such a life well lived for God and the tremendous spiritual inheritance she has left to her family and to the poor; one who ran a solid race and now is where she longed to be. We are so grateful to Jesus Christ and his saving grace for that.

Once again, thank you for being such an important part of our family here at Friend Ships. You are a great portion of the miracle provisions granted to us by God.

Warmest Regards,

*Don and Sondra Tipton and the Friend Ships Teams*

