

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Seafarers International House

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: We cannot wait till the world is sane

Dear friends of Seafarers International House (SIH):

Thanks to your support, we assisted 19,066 people, over 1,000 more than last year! We had many reasons to rejoice as we journeyed together with seafarers and immigrants legally seeking asylum, even though the year itself can be described as “unsteady”.

In January, Houthis fired upon two US-flagged container ships, putting seafarers in danger. From November 2023 until their release on January 22, 2025, 17 Filipinos, 3 Ukrainians, 2 Bulgarians, 2 Mexicans, and 1 Romanian of the MV Galaxy Leader, a vehicle carrier, were held hostage. Since November 2023, over 90 vessels have been attacked, sinking at least two ships, and killing four mariners. Add the “normal” isolation of contracts lasting for 6-9 months and you understand that seafarers continue to make great sacrifices.

Thanks to your support, our Port Chaplains can bring a ministry of presence, essentials, and transportation to seafarers. Last February, we celebrated the official start of our Ukrainian-born Port Chaplain Pastor Vitalii Guz, who serves with our partners at the Baltimore International Seafarers Center (BISC). We also welcomed our ship visitor, Tim Marzik, who has big shoes to fill with the retirement of our beloved Ruth Setaro after 27 years of service.

We reignited our partnership with the Deutsche Seemannsmission e.V., which traces its roots to 1907, when the son of the director of the German Emigrant House (a predecessor of SIH), helped found the German Seamen’s Mission in the Port of New York, a service we continue to this day.

Tragically, on March 26, the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore was struck by a container ship. The accident killed six construction workers, all of whom were immigrants. In the aftermath, 7 ships operated by 120 seafarers were temporarily trapped, and to this day many of the crew members on the accident-causing ship continue to be held in the US as litigation progresses. With Baltimore International Seafarers Center (BISC), and Chaplain Vitalii and – returning from retirement – Chaplain Rev. K. Robert “Bob” Schmitt, SIH was able to provide relief to those affected.

In April, it was party time! Thanks to our honorees Katie Higginbottom, Randi Ciszewski, and Tim Nolan and the support of their friends, the Setting the Course Reception was a success! 180 attendees ensured through their contributions that we would be able to serve 13,556 seafarers in the Ports of Albany, Baltimore, Duluth, New Haven, and New York & New Jersey, and with accommodations in NYC.

Then in August, we bid fair seas and following winds to two SIH icons: Arthur William Clark (1944), a long-time SIH board member and treasurer for over 20 years; and Port Chaplain Rev. William C. Fensterer (1930), who for over 50 years provided unparalleled service to mariners.

We exulted, when, in September, the Ghanaian family, who we supported at the Lighthouse, found their own home. All four miraculously survived the dangerous journey through the Darian Gap and almost drowned before legally applying for asylum and working hard to become self-sufficient. Throughout 2024, we assisted 33 asylees and provided them with a safe place for a

MISSION

Seafarers International House (SIH) is the Lutheran response to the urgent needs of vulnerable seafarers and immigrants.

SIH offers hospitality, social assistance, and advocacy to a multi-national and multi-faith community in the Ports of Albany, Baltimore, Duluth, New Haven, and New York & New Jersey, and in New York City.


combined 1,508 lodging nights.

After the November elections, we pray that legal immigration will remain possible and vow to stand with people who are persecuted or experience violence elsewhere.

At Christmastime we rejoiced! With the help of all those listed on page 5, we delivered a record setting 3,507 satchels to seafarers out at sea spreading love around the globe.

With this bittersweet year in mind, I would like to close this report with excerpts from Madeleine L’Engle’s poem *First Coming*:

*He did not wait till the world was ready,
till men and nations were at peace
He came when the Heavens were
unsteady
and prisoners cried out for release. ...*

*... We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!
Peace,* 


Pastor and Executive Director

2024 Program Impact

19,066 immigrants and seafarers directly benefited from SIH services (up from 18,004).

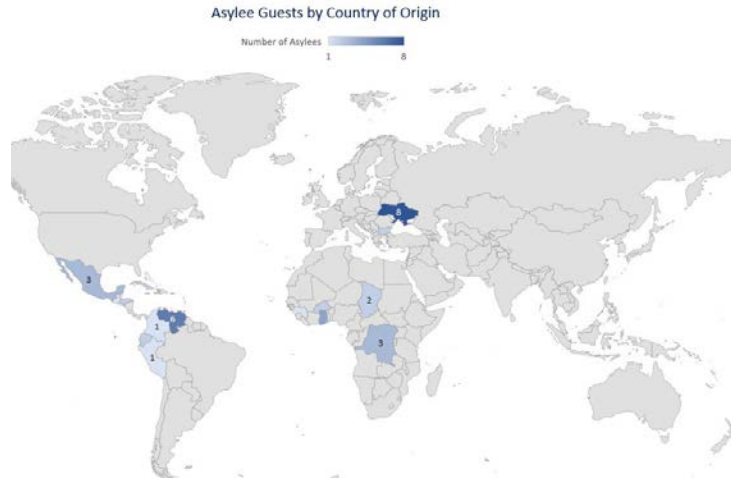
2,225 lodging nights provided to 140 seafarers in Manhattan.

13,556 seafarers were visited and counseled on 1,232 ships, receiving essentials they requested.


1,830 seafarers were transported to a mall or medical facilities.

3,507 seafarers, regardless of faith, received Christmas-at-Sea satchels filled with warm clothing and holiday greetings prepared by volunteers to recognize their sacrifices. Up from 3,216 last year!

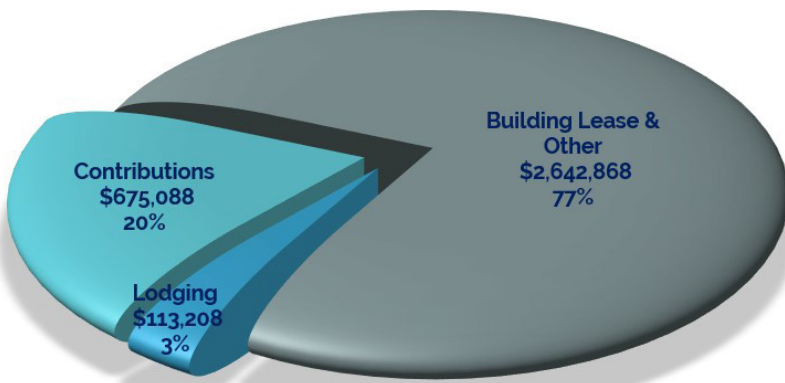
33 asylum seekers received lodging for a total of 1,508 nights. They hailed from Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Colombia, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Ukraine, and Venezuela.



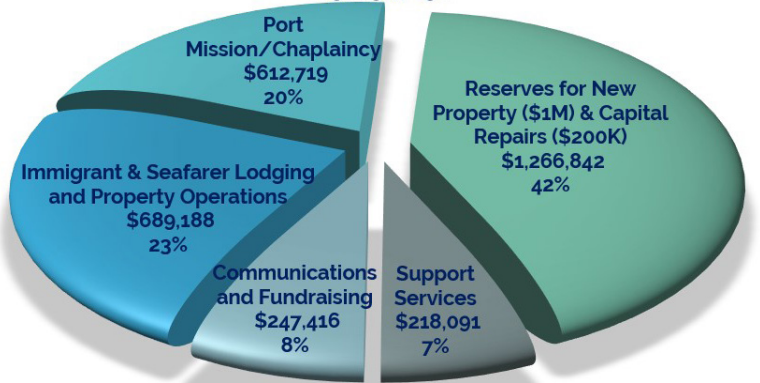
2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

In accordance with our 2024 - 2028 strategic plan, operating gains continue to help to build reserves for a new property (\$1M) with mission-based guest rooms and offices. These gains also allow for capital repairs on the guesthouse (\$200,000), which is leased to Breaking Ground, a NYC-based non-profit which provides transitional housing to the community. Lease revenue provides only a portion of necessary means to support our mission to seafarers and immigrants. Donations remain a vital pillar of income to support our services and future expansion. Program services and reserves accounted for 85% of expenses with only 15% spent on support services and fundraising. These figures reflect *unaudited revenue and expenses and are subject to change*. To request the audited 2024 financial statements please send an email to henryk@sihnyc.org. 

Operating Revenue 2024 (pre-audit)
\$3,431,164



Operating Expenses & Reserves for New Property 2024 (pre-audit)
\$3,034,256



GIFTS IN MEMORY OF



The construction workers on the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore †
by Ute Brinkmann
Rev. Eric Faret
Claudia K. Heinsohn

Frederick Andersen † by Leigh Silveira

Carla Howery † by Marlin E. Strand

Anton E. Salvesen † by Lynn R. Salvesen Wirth

Bobbie Jean Daughdrill Starns †
by Dr. Ann Siegle Drege and Rev. Marsh Drege



Thomas Catero †
by Lynne and Jeff Weinlandt



Arthur William Clark †
by Sterling Gilreath and
Henryk Behnke
Susan Smyth Bell
Dr. Ann Siegle Drege and
Rev. Marsh Drege
Mary B. Heller



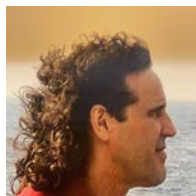
Bernard James Cooney †
by Sterling Gilreath and
Henryk Behnke



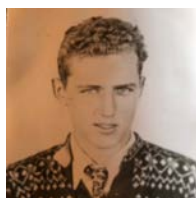
Rev. William C. Fensterer †
by Sterling Gilreath
and Henryk Behnke
Dr. Ann Siegle Drege and
Rev. Marsh Drege
Mary B. Heller
Eugene A. Koene
Aylett & J. Nicholas Suhr, Esq.
Julie M. Traum



Giuseppe De Matola †
by
an anonymous supporter



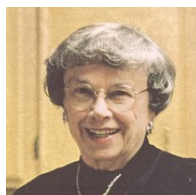
James Edward Held †
by
Kate Hunt and Enrico Esopa



Einar B. Knudtsen †
by
Joan E. Worrall



Michael G. Mann †
by
Marcia Kaplan-Mann



Marilyn Burke Maurstad †
by
Nellie and David Jarvis



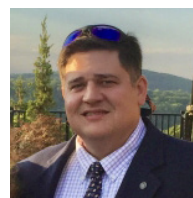
Rev. Martha L. McCracken †
by
Sheila and Frank Giglio



Deacon Jacquelyn "Jackie" Mize-Baker †
by
Karl Baker



Stanley Wyatt and Joan Moore †
by
Theresa Moore



Captain Timothy Murray †
by
Capt. Christopher Pitfick



Captain George Quick †
by
Gwen and Captain Donald Marcus



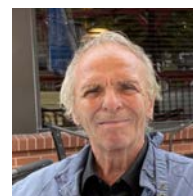
Paul Micah Robinson †
by Sterling Gilreath and
Henryk Behnke



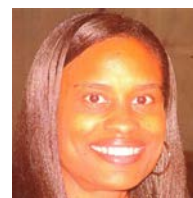
Rev. J. Gordon Swanson †
by Anne Swanson
Gail Swanson Frost
and Paul Frost



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by
Thomas Larkin



Franz Josef Unterreiner †
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Henryk Behnke



Sandra "Sassy" Douglas Robinson Weathers †
by Sterling Gilreath and
Henryk Behnke



Robert Paul Wilkinson †
by
Kevin Gowen



GIFTS IN HONOR OF

2024 Friends of Seafarers

by Kate Hunt and Enrico Esopa

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Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Fairport NY

by Bethlehem Lutheran Church

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by John David Crews

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Tim Nolan

by The Pasha Group
Signal Mutual



HOMEPORT SOCIETY

Members of the Homeport Society have included Seafarers International House (SIH) in their retirement and legacy plan by listing SIH in their will or making SIH a beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a qualified retirement plan.

- Barbara and the late Rev. Dr. Dennis Anderson
- Sterling Gilreath and Henryk Behnke
- Susan Smyth Bell
- Paul K. Erbes
- Dr. Ann Siegle Drege and Rev. Marsh Luther Drege
- Pauline and Harry Forse
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- Laura and Hans Vogel
- Carolyn and Edward Wagner
- Rev. Margay Jo Whitlock



LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS

Lighthouse Keepers make monthly gifts providing a reliable income stream to support Seafarers International House's mission.

- Barbara Anderson
- Susan Smyth Bell
- Stephen Bennett
- Joy and Dennis Blazak
- Conor Patrick Brooks
- Frederick Bindel
- Ute Brinkmann
- Rev. Serge A. Castigliano and Rev. Susan L. Lunning
- Wendy and David Cegelka
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- Martha Sather
- Deborah and Rev. Dr. K. Robert Schmitt
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- Andrew Steele
- Joan E. Worrall
- Peggy and Fredrick Wuertele
- Guan Yang



Always welcoming the stranger: Port Chaplain Pastor Jonathan Westerlund with crew members of the ONE Stork in August 2024 fittingly with Lady Liberty. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free".

For more information email henryk@sihnyc.org or call (212) 677-4800 extension 7203.

CHRISTMAS-AT-SEA: A HOLIDAY INITIATIVE

We broke another record delivering **3,507** Christmas-at-Sea satchels filled with warm clothing and holiday greetings to seafarers. On their behalf, thank you to all participants, donors, Amazon Wish List contributors, and knitters:

Mariline S. Alicea
 Judith Ammerman
 Pamela J. and Willem A. Angenent anonymous
 Estelle Balistriero
 Lauren Balliet
 Carol and Rick Beier
 Susan Smyth Bell
 Frederick H. Bindel
 Paul and Deborah Flannery Brooks
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 Jaime Carolan
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 Christ Lutheran Church, Whiting, NJ
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 Concordia Luth. Church, Concordia, NH
 Covenant Luth. Church, Ridgewood, NY
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 Michael Edward Declement
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 Zoi Fanourgiakis
 Douglas Faunt
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 Grace Lutheran Church, Gouldsboro, PA
 Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, IL



It takes a village: Volunteers from the Propeller Club of the Port of New York & New Jersey and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey gathered at SIH offices in November to assemble satchels. Most satchels were mailed to us, or we picked them up.

Grace Lutheran Church, Shillington, PA
 Grace Lutheran Church, Uniondale, NY
 Melba Grieshaber
 Pauline J. Hansen
 Rev. Peter Hartney
 Mary Montemurro Held
 Jennifer Herbert
 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (Women's Group), East Orange, NJ
 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ
 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Trumbull, CT
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 Immanuel Lutheran Church, Oxford, CT
 Immanuel Luth. Church, Philadelphia, PA
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 Marcia Kaplan-Mann
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 The Lee Family
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 Lugene Mitchell-Hamilton
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 New Jerusalem Luth. Ch., Fleetwood, PA
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Thank you for helping us welcome the stranger and aid them in their need.

\$50,000 and over

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Marisol and Rev. Ramon Collazo
Michael Edward Declement
Natalie Deffenbaugh
Dr. Karen Beres and Dr. Lance Drege
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Sandra A. and Dr. Charles H. Swenson
Julie M. Traum
Trinity Evangelical Luth. Ch., Lehigh, PA
Ana M. and Captain Jorge J. Viso
Joan Worrall
Rev. Peggy and Frederick Wuertele
Zion Lutheran Church, Egg Harbor City, NJ
Zion Luth. Ch. (WELCA), Saddle River, NJ
Zion Luth. Church (WELCA), Renovo, PA

\$100.00 to \$249

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