



Delivering Hope

Republic of Georgia is grateful.

Our third shipment to Republic of Georgia arrived last September and went to the Tianeti region north of Tbilisi, Georgia's capital. A few weeks later we received an abundance of recipient photos (see samples above) from Giorgi Atashvilis and Irakli Saralidze, Director and Deputy Director for Union of Investments and Humanitarian Projects. Diapers, food, and blankets were given to the most vulnerable people in the region via a special distribution ceremony officiated by the Mayor and Deputy Governor. Giorgi and Irakli wrote that everyone showed great appreciation and thankfulness for the well-packed boxes of quality clothing, and expressed hope for more containers to come. We plan on doing so soon! ■

A Changing of the Guard

Branch Manager Cliff Kraft retires.

In the late 1990s, the Holy Spirit called Cliff Kraft out of retirement into a whole new adventure working for the Lord. The 'spark' came from a Lutheran missionary who introduced Orphan Grain Train in a presentation about Kyrgyzstan. After several discussions and much prayer, a dedicated group in 2002 committed to opening a PA branch of OGT. 'Fast forward' to 2023 and Cliff looks back on what he describes as "21 joyful, yet challenging years" of managing the Mid-Atlantic Branch. Through all of it—moving to multiple locations, organizing container shipments, raising funds, growing our volunteer base, speaking to new groups, launching meal-packing events, and counseling board members—Cliff had only one goal in

Shipments Outlook

Shipments are determined by specific requests from our international and domestic destination partners.

Our first-ever shipment to Liberia left November 8th. Several guest volunteers helped load the container, such as OGT Field Work Director, Peter Gnan, and Rev. Jeremy Loesch from Our Redeemer in Newark, DE. Students from Chester



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mind: help those in need. The hallmarks of his leadership include: boosting volunteer spirit by stressing that OGT's mission begins with sorting and packing, offering prayers for safe and swift delivery of containers,



seeking Divine guidance during every board meeting, and always signing news articles with "To God Alone be the Glory!" Thank you, Cliff, for unwavering leadership, patient mentoring and faithful service!

Succeeding Cliff is Rob Hall, a volunteer since 2005 and the Assistant Manager since 2015. He comes well-equipped with years of experience to take MAB to a new level of serving others. We pray that the Lord guides Rob as He did Cliff, and look forward to a future rich with His continued blessings. ■

Mid-Atlantic Branch

An Exchange of Blessings

"I will bless those who bless you ..." Genesis 12:3a

Relationships with guest volunteers often yield unexpected blessings. Special-needs young adults from the **Transitional Living Program** (below) work an hour at the warehouse every Wednesday, through which they gain real-life experience and we are blessed to guide them through different tasks. After several visits, they now look forward to Wednesdays and rush in to greet us with bright smiles and even small gifts. They especially enjoyed a delivery of stuffed toys from the Avon Grove Charter School's *Leo Club*. Boxing up the toys brought as much joy to them as to our regular volunteers, reminding us that the worker, and not just their labor, is precious.



Similarly, volunteers who receive donations for *themselves* are profoundly thankful. Young people from **Mighty Writers**, a literacy charity in Toughkenamon, PA, received bicycles, toys, and several boxes of clothing. To express their appreciation for the support received, they volunteered at the warehouse. These connections exemplify the essence of our mission to "bring Christ's name and character to all people". We pray these relationships continue to grow. ■

'Matching' Miracles

Supporters give generously.

Thanks to you, we raised \$4,808 on Boscov's Friends Helping Friends Day, the second-highest total in nine years of participating. Dedicated volunteers, advantageous store table assignments, and generous shoppers all contributed to the event's success. Likewise, our Fall Grant Match campaign exceeded expectations. Anonymous benefactors contributed \$13,500 in matching funds, but our donors surpassed the goal, raising a combined total of \$34,030. We are humbled by the Lord's great gifts, given through you. These funds will ensure that God's work through MAB continues. ■

Nourishing Body and Spirit

Lutheran church resumes packing meals for the needy.



Since the Covid Public Health Emergency ended last May, MAB is encouraging organizations to resume meal-packing events. Hope Lutheran Church and School in Levittown, PA, gathered with neighboring churches and a Girl Scout troop to prepare over 20,000 meals. Fifty participants partnered with Kids Against Hunger Philadelphia, demonstrating the event's dual purpose in packing meals for the hungry while cultivating in-person fellowship. A rewarding day for all! Contact Rob Hall for help planning *your* meal-packing event: rob.hall.OGT@gmail.com or (484) 459-9217. ■

Inspiration from Malawi

Bibles bring much joy.



We welcomed Bishop Harvey Chabinga to the warehouse last November in a rare opportunity to meet one of our aid recipients. He expressed heartfelt thanks for all the aid shipped to Malawi, especially for food, chairs and shoes, in a wonderful presentation to our volunteers. After returning home, he reached out with a request for funds to purchase and distribute Bibles printed in their native Chichewa language. Harvey was overjoyed that we agreed and quickly bought 60 copies, giving them all to pastors in Mozambique who had been struggling with too few Bibles in their churches. The joy and gratitude on the faces of these gentlemen is unmistakable, reflecting the transformative power of spreading the Word in their community. ■

Shipments Outlook

(Continued from page 1)

County's **Transitional Living Program** eagerly wheeled 30 bicycles into the container (below), and Merchant Marine Academy midshipman, Alexandra Hewlett, worked almost single-handedly to fit bikes, chairs, medical equipment and toys atop boxed goods and KAH meals. It was a true testament to teamwork!



Pastor Kollie, of Lutheran AID Ministries, received the container January 29th at their distribution point in Cotton Tree, Liberia. The aid will be given to orphans and disadvantaged or disabled youth through Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church and School. We pray they are blessed by the shipment.

Meanwhile, our commitment to serve communities locally is strengthening. We've added these three organizations to our list—**Mighty Writers**, **Misión Santa María/Madre de Dios**, and the **Neighborhood Service Center**—giving gifts of clothing, bicycles, hygiene supplies, toys and suitcases. These charities all work in the greater West Grove community offering literacy programs, social services and material aid for families and children. We hope to continue helping our local neighbors as more people learn of OGT and our mission. ■



Mighty Writers team poses with a bin of Legos.

Repeat Performance

Returning volunteers make an impact.

MAB welcomed back Lincoln University students (below) for their second *and third* work days. **Let's Feed Philly** team leader Silas Wharton emailed, "we had an amazing time helping make hygiene kits, sorting clothes, moving pallets, and learning more about OGT." **Christian Life Center** youth and adult teams volunteered on four occasions, sorting and packing donations and prepping bicycles for shipping. We're thrilled these teams make OGT a regular part of their volunteer schedule.

Bonnie Johnston and her team of seven unstoppable seamstresses have sewn a total of 250 dresses to date! The women love using their talent for the benefit of little girls, motivated by Christ's words in Matthew, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me." They already have another 125 dresses in progress for 2024 – terrific! ■



Digital Power *Instant messaging produces rapid results.*

Our donations supply dropped so low in January that volunteer Beth Hewlett Brown quickly re-posted a notice on Facebook requesting clothing. *Within the week, 10 visitors* brought in enough donations to keep our momentum going. Andy Hockenbrock, the local YMCA's Executive Director, also learned about us through Facebook. He had a room full of unclaimed donated clothing intended for residents of an apartment complex fire. After touring our warehouse, he gladly agreed to give us everything, filling almost half the empty donations bins!

Communicating needs, conveying scheduling changes, and sending news is accomplished more quickly and efficiently via digital communications. More of your funds are then available to help needy people because we save on mailing costs. If you would like to receive MAB news electronically, please make the switch to email. Contact carlaniesen@verizon.net. Thank you! ■



Relief for Human Need Worldwide



Mid-Atlantic Branch Office

89 Line Road
Malvern, PA 19355
610-644-4508
Email: mid-atlantic@ogt.org
Website: www.ogt.org

Warehouse:

8 Federal Road
West Grove, PA 19390

Hours of Operation:

Wednesday, 10:00—2:30
Saturday, 9:00—1:30

Our Mission Statement

In loving response to Christ the Servant, the Orphan Grain Train movement encourages and enables God's people to share personal and material resources in bringing Christ's name and character to needy people, both far and near.

Mid-Atlantic Branch Purpose

To build a Christ-centered team who can use their God-given talents to be a blessing to others through their service in the Mid-Atlantic Branch of Orphan Grain Train, fulfilling the Mission Statement of the OGT movement.

Genesis 12:3 - "I will bless those who bless you ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

"I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you." John 14:18

did YOU KNOW?

- ◆ **New Warehouse Hours** – Beginning in February 2024 we are **open every Saturday** from 9am – 1:30pm. Bring your donations and stay awhile! We welcome volunteers teenage through adult. Be sure to check our webpage for updates at <https://www.ogt.org/branches/mid-atlantic/>
- ◆ **Acceptable Donations Update** – Washcloths, bath-sized bar soap, toothbrushes, and sturdy combs are all now included. **Bicycles are 'on hold'** temporarily due to overstocked inventory. Visit our webpage (see above) for the full list of needs.
- ◆ **Fire Victims are Grateful** – Although many relief groups have left Maui, OGT continues to help. In addition to a third container of aid, \$129,000 was raised with Thrivent Financial on Giving Tuesday 2023! Many thanks to generous supporters.
- ◆ **Choose MAB** – Thrivent Financial members, please **direct your Choice Dollars to Mid-Atlantic Branch before they expire** on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2024. Good Friday, March 29th, is the last day to renew your distribution by phone.

what's AHEAD...

Divine Direction is Charting MAB's Course – Over the years, the Lord blessed MAB with dedicated leadership, willing volunteers, and generous supporters. He led us to our Jennersville warehouse and introduced



to us many new people eager to further His mission of helping those in need.

In line with this mission, a new **Strategic Planning Committee** was recently formed to develop long-term objectives for our branch. We welcome newcomer **Bob Larson** as Committee Chair; he brings a heart for Christian service and a wealth of business experience, ready to apply both in his new role. As we embark on this journey, we seek the Lord's continued guidance in showing us how best to utilize our material and human resources through Bob and the committee. Please join us in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit reveal God's will for us in the years to come.

To God alone be the Glory!