



**inside:** Focus on our Africa region,  
seafarers' reflections on the  
past year, and more

# A time to reflect Lent 2024

14 February – 28 March 2024



**In the long, hard months at sea, your care truly matters. This Lent, please help us to continue to reach seafarers and their families.**

Our Lent Appeal will be mailed to supporters soon.  
If you are not on our mailing list but would like to be, please email:  
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## Welcome to the first FAN of 2024

This will be my last year at The Mission to Seafarers as I retire at the end of September. Throughout my time, as for so long before, FAN has been a mainstay of regular communication with our magnificent army of supporters.

We are so very grateful to you all.

It has provided something of a commentary on more than a decade (I have been Secretary General for almost 12 years) on what have been tumultuous years internationally. We've experienced the pandemic, the Ukraine War, and recent terrible events in the Middle East.

“ **The world's crises hit seafarers first and hardest** ”

I often say that the world's crises hit seafarers first and hardest, and this has been so true in recent years. Even now there are threats to shipping emerging on those vital shipping routes around Suez and the Gulf. Through it all, FAN has recorded the extraordinary ways in which our teams have responded.

These have also been times of significant change and development for us, without compromise to our core values and purposes. 2023 was an especially exciting year in port and programme development, and in fundraising. I hope that this edition will give you some flavour of the work you have made possible, with a special focus

“ **2023 was an especially exciting year** ”

on Africa, amongst much else. Our work is your work, and it could not be done without you.

Thank you – and enjoy your read!



**The Revd Canon Andrew Wright**  
Secretary General

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Editors: Nina Edy & Abiola Oladunni  
Design: Yeomans Marketing  
FAN magazine  
+44(0)20 7248 5202  
[contactus@missiontoseafarers.org](mailto:contactus@missiontoseafarers.org)  
[www.missiontoseafarers.org](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org)

The Mission to Seafarers,  
First Floor, 6 Bath Place, Rivington Street,  
London EC2A 3JE

Registered charity no: 1123613 (England and Wales) and SCO41938 (Scotland)





# Building Relationships in Africa

As the Mission's work in Africa continues to go from strength to strength, our Regional Director Revd. Cedric Rautenbach reflects on opportunities for expansion and current challenges in the continent.

We currently have a presence in nine ports spread throughout five countries in Africa: Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa. We've seen some big changes in the region and in particular in Durban, where we are developing a regional hub.

Over the past year, we've been working closely with seafarers to ensure it gives them exactly what they want. You'll find a bar, restaurant and online shopping facilities. However, it's the garden that seafarers really love. After months on board, you'll often find seafarers taking off their shoes to walk on the grass or even to lie on it.

## NAVIGATING THE CHALLENGE OF SAFETY

Unlike many ports in Europe and Asia, it's more challenging for seafarers to access local amenities here in Africa. Sometimes it's an issue of transportation and distance, and sometimes it's just not safe.

Back at the start of my ministry in 2014, we would get ships arriving with bullet holes on the bridge. There are still some incidents of what we consider old-fashioned piracy in remote ports in West Africa and places like Port Harcourt in Nigeria. Thankfully, these are not the norm.

On a day-to-day basis, I spend most of my time meeting the immediate needs of the crews: chatting over a cuppa, offering advice, praying and even delivering shopping.



## MIRACULOUS IN THE MUNDANE

Sometimes, it feels like we're doing nothing, but it's in these moments where God is at work. By simply being there, you develop an intuition, so you get a sense of when you need to stay and when you should go.

On a recent visit to a Chinese vessel, I noticed a young seafarer who was intently watching us. Something prompted me to ask the young man if he was a Christian. He just nodded, so I offered him a Chinese Bible, and he started touching the pages like it was the first Bible he'd ever seen. It was incredible.

We were also called to assist a vessel where a stowaway had been found on board, and the captain was at loggerheads with the local authority. In practical terms, there was very little we could do, and the captain just vented his anger at us. When he'd finished, he thanked us for our help. I was a little shocked. I thought, 'What have we done?' And he told me 'You've listened to me.'

## LISTENING IS SO IMPORTANT

Our deep understanding of the industry means that when major justice and welfare incidents occur, we are the first port of call. When ships are abandoned, or crews need help to deal with tragedy on board, repatriation or sickness, they come to us. Our teams have built relationships over the years with lawyers, shipping authorities and local immigration officers, so we can help resolve situations quickly.

As we look to the future, we want our presence to continue to grow. Plans are already underway to expand into Mozambique and Cameroon in collaboration with the German



SEAFARERS CENTRE IN LAGOS, NIGERIA AFTER REFURBISHMENT

Seamen's Mission, and our seafarers centre in Lagos has recently received an upgrade following in the Durban centre's footsteps, which has just been redesigned with significant input from the seafaring community.

While we are excited, we are also aware of the challenges that remain out of our control. Restrictions on shore leave and privatisation of many ports are making it increasingly hard for seafarers to leave ships and our chaplains to get onboard.

Rest assured, we will continue to do what we do best: build strong relationships across the maritime industry. The welfare of seafarers is our priority, and as long as they need us, we will be there.



PORT CHAPLAIN, MARK CLASSEN (L) AND HIS WIFE EVA CLASSEN (R) WITH A SEAFARER, IN RICHARDS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA

“ You'll often find seafarers taking off their shoes to walk on the grass ”

# 2023: Seafarers' Retrospective



## BUSAN, SOUTH KOREA

This past year provided us with more opportunities to work and meet the financial needs of our family. The Mission to Seafarers is a huge help, offering free internet access and affordable SIM cards that we can use onboard. Our aspirations for 2024 are good health, peace, and more opportunities at sea so that seafarers like us can provide for our families.

## ROUEN, FRANCE

We met a young Ukrainian deckhand at our centre in Rouen who is continuing in the footsteps of his father. Only four months into his role, he is enthusiastic about the prospect of seeing the world and continuing his college education so he can advance his maritime career. He also empathises with crew that are separated from their loved ones for extended periods.

– MtS team in Rouen



## HALIFAX, CANADA

As the year 2023 is about to end, I had many ups and downs, but the support of my family, friends, colleagues, and co-workers helped me to survive. Technology has increased communication with our family and made us closer. The Mission to Seafarers helps us address our loneliness when the crew onboard could not go ashore.



## WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

Thanks to the fact that many countries have eased COVID-19 restrictions, seafarers are getting a chance to go ashore and explore new places. Crew changes are happening at almost all ports, and we can go home on time. On behalf of my colleagues, I sincerely wish to express my gratitude towards the team at the Mission to Seafarers in Wellington, New Zealand.



# Developments in Europe's largest port



**As Rotterdam is set to become one of the Mission's key regional hubs, Regional Director for Europe, Revd. Steve Morgan shares an insight into our work in the port.**

Let's be frank: the Port of Rotterdam is monstrously big. We have a port centre in Schiedam, which our new centre manager has transformed with the support of our brilliant committee, but this alone is not enough.

## GEOGRAPHICAL CHALLENGES IN ROTTERDAM

The port is 55km long, so, we're investing in vehicles that will work like mobile seafarers' centres, taking support and services directly to seafarers. We're also collaborating with other welfare agencies and port committees to ensure we reach as many seafarers as is humanly possible.

While only 1.25% of seafarers are women, due to the size of Rotterdam a significant number of females travel through the port each week. One of our aspirations is to recruit a part-time female chaplain to shape our support in this area.

“I've been overwhelmed by the desire for collaboration”

“Geography is a big challenge in Rotterdam”

## THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

Currently, I find myself in Rotterdam one or two times a month and, I have to say, I've been overwhelmed by the desire for collaboration.

We're working closely with the International Seafarers' Centre – The Bridge, the Port Welfare Committee, the Dutch Protestant Church, the Deutsche Seemannsmission and the Nederlandse Zeevarendencentrale – an umbrella organisation for seafarers' welfare organisations in the Netherlands.

The team we have in place will be bolstered by our new chaplain and chaplaincy team lead, who we hope to have in place soon. We also hope to recruit two chaplaincy interns, to ensure we have a large, well-resourced team on the ground.

## A REWARDING CAREER

We often focus so much on the challenges of seafaring that we forget what a wonderful industry this is. At the end of last year, I spent two hours on board a ship in Rotterdam with an engineer officer who was brimming with pride about his work.

I hope the Mission can be instrumental in supporting seafarers, so five or ten years down the line they have the same enthusiasm as the officer I met.

# Expansion in Brazil

**The Port of Açú in Brazil now has a fulltime chaplain, thanks to support from our partners Anglo American. Revda. Dilce Paiva de Oliveira reflects on her first six months.**

There are just two of us here in Açú, me and my husband who is a volunteer. We started visiting ships in June 2023. Before that we had a period of training and learning about security protocols for accessing ships in the Port of Açú.

The partnership with Anglo American is exciting in so many ways. As Revd. Ian Hutchinson Cervantes the Mission's Regional Director for Latin America reflects, “The model pioneers a way for the provision of pastoral and welfare services, in ports where there is nothing for seafarers at present.”

Seafarer welfare work is something very new for the Port of Açú, and these first months of work have been about building the Mission's identity. Many crews already know about Mission to Seafarers from other ports and are very happy to know that they can now count on us here.

## PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

We have had invaluable support from Anglo American and Ferroport, the company

which takes care of Anglo American's operations in Açú. This support gives us the full conviction that although we are alone in this port, we are not alone in this mission. We are part of a large family that prioritises a better quality of life for seafarers and, consequently, the development of more qualified workers.

We are renewed in spirit when we receive a sincere thank you for being here. More than once we've heard an enthusiastic thank you from the captain for the visit or for taking part of his crew out for a trip.

We have already made significant progress in terms of helping seafarers to secure shore leave. But we still have a lot to do and despite the challenges, we are motivated by the joy we witness while ship visiting.

“The partnership with Anglo American is exciting in so many ways”



REVDA. DILCE PAIVA DE OLIVEIRA (CENTRE) WITH SEAFARERS

# Festival of **Nine Lessons and Carols**



**Our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is always a highlight for the Mission. This year, we were delighted to be joined once again by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, as we remember the sacrifice made by seafarers.**

We are grateful to our sponsors Shell, Rightship and Ardmere Shipping, who helped to make the event held at All Hallows by the Tower in London such a success this year. Guests enjoyed the music of the Lloyd's Choir, who once again led the congregation with a selection of Christmas carols.

The service recognised the sacrifice made by seafarers at this time of year. It was also an opportunity to acknowledge the generosity and dedication of the Mission's supporters, staff and volunteers who ensure we deliver world-leading welfare services.

This year we were joined by Revd. Cedric Rautenbach, the Mission's Regional

Director for Africa. He spoke movingly about the challenges in the region and the impact the Mission is making in the lives of seafarers.

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, President of The Mission to Seafarers, who was accompanied by Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, kindly gave her time to read the fourth lesson. At the reception held at Trinity House, she also spoke about the importance of the personal interactions the Mission delivers through its seafarer centres and ship visits.

Speaking after the event, the Revd. Canon Andrew Wright, Secretary General said, "This was a wonderful evening that fulfilled our ambition of honouring all the men and women who serve at sea. We pay tribute to their commitment all year round, but it is particularly important to remember them at Christmas, when so many will be far away from their families."

# **Christmas** in Ports Around the World

Throughout December, our chaplains were busy spreading Christmas cheer in ports across the globe.

## **HUMBER**

This year, the teams from Drax Group and Dan Shipping, alongside the Mission volunteers packed 300 gifts, which were delivered to seafarers in Immingham.



## **SINGAPORE**

The team in Singapore, in collaboration with the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union, organised a heart-warming Christmas celebration for crew stationed on ships at Jurong Port.



## **RICHARDS BAY**

The Richards Bay Combined Seafarers Centre distributed gifts to seafarers in their region. One Romanian Chief Mate was particularly moved by the gesture, saying, "I've been sailing for 32 years, and this is the first time I get a Christmas gift while at sea."



## **BELFAST, SOUTH TEES, AVONMOUTH DOCKS AND ROYAL PORTBURY**

Chaplain Revd. Mark Reid and a ship visitor delivered gifts at the Belfast port while volunteers extended the festive spirit to seafarers in Royal Portbury, Avonmouth Docks, and South Tees.





# Port Round-Up

From providing leisure to seafarers to organising sports weeks, a lot has been going on in our ports across the world.

THE MISSION OPERATE IN 200 PORTS IN OVER 50 COUNTRIES. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [WWW.MISSIONTOSEAFARERS.ORG/OUR-PORTS](http://WWW.MISSIONTOSEAFARERS.ORG/OUR-PORTS)



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If you would like to make a donation, please fill out the form below, and complete your contact details at the bottom of the page.

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### 1 SEATTLE, US



In October, the team intervened in multiple welfare cases, aiding a tugboat crew member in need of medical assistance and supporting a port security worker subjected to a 36-hour shift without breaks. These cases are evidence of the invaluable practical and emotional support we provide.

### 3 TUTICORIN, INDIA



As part of the activities run through our Family Support Network, 133 children who are enrolled in our tuition centres enjoyed a trip to the District Science Centre at Tirunelveli. The youngsters were also given an insight into life at sea with a visit to a training vessel belonging to the Fisheries College at Tuticorin.

### 2 HALIFAX, CANADA



Bicycles are now available for seafarers to borrow and use to ride around the beautiful port city of Halifax during their shore leave.

### 4 COLOMBO, SRI LANKA



Over the past few months, the team in Sri Lanka have been working more closely with seafaring families. As we look to develop our work, we've established a dedicated family area at the Seafarers' Centre in Colombo, to provide in-person support.

### 5 BANGKOK, THAILAND



One seafarer got very special surprise when Fr Dave and his team presented her with a special birthday gift. The seafarer's mother sought the Mission's help is sourcing and delivering a present for her daughter who had been away since January and would not be home until May 2024.

### 6 KOBE, JAPAN



We saw our first transport of Russian crew. They stayed a while at our office and discussed their experiences on getting ashore in some countries, as well as the much longer journeys they now needed to take when they joined or signed off their vessels. They appreciated our assistance but more so the chance to walk around freely. It has been good to enjoy this post-Covid return to helping seafarers experience 'normal' life away from their ships.





# The Mission to Seafarers Ambassadors Programme

Capt. Neale Rodrigues shares his journey from a young cadet welcomed by the Mission to his recent appointment in our Ambassadors Programme, underscoring his commitment to seafarers' welfare.

My first interaction with the Mission to Seafarers was as a young cadet venturing ashore in the port of Vancouver in Canada. The Flying Angel Seafarers Centre on Waterfront Road gave me a warm welcome, which was replicated in many ports, and which I continue to value and appreciate.

I was therefore honoured to be invited to join the Board of Trustees of The Mission to Seafarers, a role that I continued in until January 2023, and most recently to be part of the brand-new Ambassadors Programme.

The aim of the initiative is to bring together key supporters who are



CAPT. NEALE RODRIGUES WITH THE MISSION'S MUMBAI TEAM

passionate about seafarers' welfare. This group will use their skills, enthusiasm and networks, individually and collectively, to further the work of The Mission to Seafarers.

## VITAL NETWORKS

The Mission relies on its supporters who work with and assist its work in many ways, from corporate partnerships, volunteering as ship visitors, supporting the Mission financially, promoting the Mission at conferences and charitable events, and so much more.

The shipping industry relies heavily on relationships, and a number of our current and potential Ambassadors are likely to be regular travellers who are connected to those who would benefit from or support the Mission's vital work.

It's this important work that the new programme aims to advance as Ambassadors are vital for introducing the work of the Mission to their own networks.



CAPT. NEALE RODRIGUES WITH TOM BOARDLEY, CHAIRMAN OF THE MISSION BOARD

IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR'S PROGRAMME, PLEASE EMAIL JAN WEBBER: [JAN.WEBBER@MISSIONTOSEAFARERS.ORG](mailto:JAN.WEBBER@MISSIONTOSEAFARERS.ORG).



## The Mission to Seafarers, Busan, turns 50!

On Saturday, 28 October, a celebration service was held at the Anglican Church of Busan Cathedral to honour the Mission's 50th year of service to seafarers in the Port of Busan. The service was led by The Most Revd. Onesimus Park, Busan Diocese's Bishop. Revd. Canon Stephen Miller, the Mission's Regional Director for East Asia, read the sermon and readings were given by team members from across the region.

A reception dinner followed and was also attended by many distinguished guests, including The Most Revd. Onesimus Park, Busan Port Terminal's representatives, Friends of the Flying Angel, and many more.

The event coincided with the MtS East Asia and Regional Directors' conferences, which meant those in town for these meetings could join the festivities. Congratulatory messages from MtS President, HRH The Princess Royal and Kitack Lim, Secretary-General, IMO, were also read and shown.

The Mission to Seafarers, Busan, established in 1973, has passionately supported countless seafarers over the five decades it has existed thanks to the current team, Port Chaplain Monica Park, Center Manager Mariana Kim and volunteers, as well as all the teams who came before them. We thank them all for their hard work and dedication to serving all seafarers at the Port of Busan who need assistance or a home away from home and building this ministry from the ground up.

Here's to the next 50 years!



SOME OF THE MTS EAST ASIA TEAM

## How you can support us

There are many ways in which you can support our work with seafarers around the world.

### Find out more about getting involved

Please tick the box below and fill out the contact details panel overleaf to find out more about:

- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Remembering The Mission in your Will
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Involving your company
- ☐ Giving in memory of a friend or loved one

We will send you regular updates about the work, needs and impact of The Mission to Seafarers.

- ☐ Please tick if you would like to stop receiving communication from us by post
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# Seafarers Happiness Index

The latest Seafarers' Happiness Index is the third successive report to show a decline in levels of happiness, painting a worrying picture for the industry.

The latest report shows an overall fall in seafarer happiness to just 6.6 out of 10. This compares to 6.77 in Q2 2023 and 7.1 in Q1 2023 with the greatest concern around the topics of connectivity, wages and workload.

## THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF CONNECTIVITY

Contact with home is vital, as one seafarer explained, 'After a day's hard work, a call to loved ones is like a quick energy booster'. However, seafarers have also spoken about the guilt and frustration they feel as they are more aware of issues at home that they can't influence.

An 'always on' approach has also increased workload demands on crews from shore. This was exemplified by one seafarer who said, 'Starlink [satellite internet] has been great for recreation, but meetings with the office have massively added to work and stress'.

## STAGNANT WAGES

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis is widely recognised, and many seafarers have seen no adjustment in their salary in line with inflation in recent years. The report also showed there is a perceived imbalance between pay and workloads, with many senior crew members feeling undervalued and underpaid.



In response, there have been requests for salaries to be adjusted to reflect the cost of living in seafarers' home countries. However, the industry will need to make significant changes to keep pace with economic developments.

## CONCERNING WORKLOAD LEVELS

Seafarers are under no illusion that life at sea is tough, but more and more they are feeling overwhelmed by the workload. Turnaround times are constantly being squeezed, and many seafarers feel they have been micromanaged from shore.

This is all negatively influencing seafarers' health, causing fatigue and burnout. The report calls for companies to examine workload, address shortcomings in management and manning, implement better planning and provide fair benefits.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The Revd Canon Andrew Wright, Secretary General of the Mission to Seafarers, is among those calling for major systematic changes in light of the report. 'It seems clear that happiness levels will not recover to acceptable levels unless we can address the systemic challenges that continue to undermine the welfare of our seafarers'.

THE SEAFARERS HAPPINESS INDEX MEASURES THE WELL-BEING OF SEAFARERS THROUGH TEN KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR WORK AND LIFE. TO READ THE REPORT IN FULL VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.SEAFARERSHAPPINESSINDEX.ORG/](https://www.seafarershappinessindex.org/).

# Partnership in Panama

The Mission celebrates five years of work in Panama and a recent partnership with the Deutsche Seemannsmission (DSM) to expand welfare services for seafarers in the country.

At the end of 2023, on the anniversary of the agreement between the Mission and the Panama Maritime Authority, a short ceremony was held at the International Maritime Organization to mark five years of a partnership that has seen the successful establishment of port welfare in Panamá.

Under the leadership of Revd. Ian Hutchinson Cervantes, we've developed a strong welfare presence across Panama's ports, as well as with government bodies and maritime authorities.

'I have been amazed to see the speed of progress in Panama since we began this work' said Andrew Wright, Secretary General of The Mission to Seafarers.

## NEW PARTNERSHIP

This new partnership is particularly significant given that the Panama Canal is one of the world's most important waterways connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans.

'14,000 ships pass through the Panama canal a year, so it's important that someone keeps an eye on the seafarers,' said Matthias Ristau, General Secretary of

the Deutsche Seemannsmission. 'We now want to tackle this together with our British colleagues and achieve the best for them.'

## BUILDING THE TEAM

An additional full-time chaplain, Andrea Meenen, has already been appointed. A wider volunteer base is also being developed to support and advocate on behalf of seafarers who pass through.

While there is no seafarers centre in Panama, this extended team is now able to provide ship visiting in the ports of Balboa, PSA Rodman, Manzanillo and Cristobal.

As Andrew continues, 'Our strategy commits us to build such partnerships. They ensure a joined-up approach to seafarers' welfare and fresh investment of people, skills and financial resource into crew welfare.'

“ I have been amazed to see the speed of progress in Panama ”



SECRETARY GENERAL, ANDREW WRIGHT (CENTRE RIGHT) WITH MEMBERS OF THE PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY

“ We now want to tackle this together ”

# A Seafarer's Cry

This reflective poem was written by ETO Charlz F. Fontamillas, a Filipino seafarer and member of our Family Support Network. During a difficult period of depression while onboard, Charlz found solace through poetry. The carefully crafted verses give insight into the emotions he grappled with at sea.



How long will we sail until we say enough,  
To have the mindset and say "Ok, it's more than half"?  
Every morning we wake up, reflecting our sacrifice,  
Not enough, more than half, when will it suffice?

Was it your profession, your passion, or mere family tradition,  
To travel the world for free but with some limitations?  
How life rotates with eight months onboard and three months vacation,  
And be with your loved ones while you have training and certification.

Sleepless night on maneuvering over changing your child's diaper,  
To cook and serve for the guest or to share during family dinner.  
We do all around maintenance on deck, engine, galley and security,  
Just to pay someone to fix our house and stuff when we are at sea.

Onboard depression is real, and this is not for the weak,  
So loved ones, have ample time for us to speak.  
Let us be free for a moment and say what's on our mind,  
With every dollar you receive, there's a story behind.

From "Bro, what's up... can you lend me some? I promise I'll pay you back,"  
To "Bro, what's up... how are you? Be safe and healthy, don't worry I got your back."  
We deserve an active listener for our everyday's accomplishment,  
And top up with a touch of assurance and a kick of compliment.

At the end of the day, we are on our own wondering,  
Too many "what if's" but still decided to keep on going.  
Listen to our stories, our battles... A seafarer's cry,  
Soon... Will be "Hello, welcome home" and no more goodbye...

# Inspiring the Next Generation

Yrhen Balinis, seafarer, journalist and Goodwill Maritime Ambassador for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the Philippines, is inspiring a new generation of seafarers.

When I was just starting, I would be told, 'But you haven't even earned your stripes yet. What gives you the authority to tell us what to do?'

It was a valid point. I was just 23 years old when appointed as a UN Goodwill Ambassador! I did not have the lived experience.

Supported by Stefan Schmitt, I then started 'KAMI NAMAN', a roundtable discussion for younger people in the maritime industry.

## THE VALUE OF LISTENING

The aim was to provide a discussion forum with #FortheYouthinMaritime and to share the outcomes with the United Nations.

Unsurprisingly, the cadet-participants echoed concerns around training, career progression, work-life balance and shore leave.

These are all issues driving experienced seafarers away from the profession. For years, I have lobbied, advocated and



**Our collective efforts will change the industry"**



championed for the inclusion of youth at decision-making tables.

## GRADUAL PROGRESS

I am happy to see gradual progress. The CrewConnect 2023 conference saw a record number of Filipino cadet-delegates after they were given complimentary entrance.

Many other organisations are also recognising younger generations. As I move on from my position as a Goodwill Ambassador, I remain positive that they will continue to be receptive to the requests of the youth.

And if I can inspire anyone reading this piece and make them realise, 'I can empower my cadet/junior to do that,' then our collective efforts will change the industry for the better.



# Industry Support

Once again, we are incredibly grateful to our corporate partners and individual supporters who have found creative ways to support seafarers across the world.

## THE MISSION GOLF DAY 2023

In October, we hosted our annual Golf Day at Clandon Regis Golf Club. Special thanks to the team at Hayfin Capital Management for organising and sponsoring the event and for the support of the Baltic Exchange.

More than £15,000 was raised by 17 teams from across the maritime industry. All funds will be used to support our service, which genuinely helps the lives of crew members, by providing every thing from welfare to advocacy, mental health and family support.



“ We exceeded our fundraising target, raising a total of US\$1.3m”

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT MORE EVENTS AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, CONTACT KRISHNA AT [KRISHNA.MACHADODENNE@MISSIONTOSEAFARERS.ORG](mailto:KRISHNA.MACHADODENNE@MISSIONTOSEAFARERS.ORG)

## ADVENTURE RACE JAPAN 2023

We successfully completed our Adventure Race Japan (ARJ) fundraising challenge in May. Thanks to the incredible support from the maritime industry, we exceeded our fundraising target, raising a total of US\$1.3m through team registrations, corporate sponsorships and other fundraising efforts.



The highly anticipated challenge took place from 18–21 May on the Izu Peninsula, Japan, and we witnessed an exhilarating display of determination and camaraderie as 64 teams from 19 countries fearlessly tackled the Green and Black Dragon races in support of the Mission.

The event spanned three action-packed days, testing the resilience of participants amidst challenging weather conditions and mountainous terrain, while raising funds for seafarers' welfare.



# Celebrating Champions of Seafarer Welfare

**The Seafarer's Awards is a highlight of the Mission's year, where we honour individuals and organisations that have made significant contributions to enhancing the welfare and well-being of seafarers worldwide.**

The 6th annual gala dinner was held at the prestigious Fairmont Hotel in Singapore, where 500 maritime professionals gathered. It was a unique opportunity to ensure the welfare of seafarers is kept in sharp focus as they continue to face unprecedented challenges.

Nick Potter, General Manager of Shipping and Maritime for Shell in Asia Pacific and the Middle East, commented on the evening saying, 'It's an honour for Shell to continue to support the Mission to Seafarers' Awards since its inception,

celebrating seafarers' critical role in delivering energy around the world. As an industry, we have a duty to support these crew members in safeguarding both their physical and mental well-being'.

This year a special award was presented to Oleg Grygoriuk of the Marine Transport Workers Trade Union of Ukraine. This award was given in recognition of his efforts in leading advocacy for Ukrainian seafarers and their families following the outbreak of the war. Oleg was presented the award by Her Excellency Kateryna Zelenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to the Republic of Singapore.

“ As an industry, we have a duty to support these crew members”

# PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

**Psalm 107 is known for its seafaring connotations, but the words offer hope and encouragement for us all.**

'Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away.

'They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.'

## CONTEMPLATING THE STORMS OF LIFE

These are the famous 'seafaring' words of Psalm 107. They are great lines to ponder, full of the realities of working and living on board ship, capturing the fears and anxieties that can be so real.

Storms are one thing, but surely here we also think of those metaphorical storms which can strike us all, including seafarers: loneliness on board, worry about family far away, suffering real injustice perhaps, feeling stressed with no one to share it with, fearful in piracy – or conflict-risk areas.

In truth, this Psalm talks about many challenges, not just those at sea. Some reading this will be in those situations right now. It speaks to of those on the move. It speaks of refugees who have nowhere to call home. It speaks of those who find themselves imprisoned

in chains. It speaks of 'fools in their rebellious ways' who suffer affliction.

## A PROMISE TO CLING TO

Our lives are fragile and often immersed in sufferings of many kinds. This Psalm gets real about life, at sea or elsewhere, but it is also full of hope. It tells of the God who can make rivers out of the desert; the God who can still the storm to a whisper; the God who can bring people out of the darkness and break chains; the God who can lead people to a city where they can settle.

It does not always happen overnight. Our prayers may not be answered quite as we want. Life is life, as Job discovered. However, God in his love never abandons us. In times of 'desert' or 'storm' we can hold on to his promise of both 'water' and 'calm'. Wherever you are and whatever your circumstances, may you reach your 'desired haven'.

“ In times of 'desert' or 'storm' we can hold on to his promise”

“ God in his love never abandons us”





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**REGIONAL CONTACTS:**

**Africa** Regional Director: **Cedric Rautenbach** [cedric@mtssa.co.za](mailto:cedric@mtssa.co.za)

**Australia** Regional Director: **Sue Dight** [rd@mts.org.au](mailto:rd@mts.org.au)

**Canada** Regional Director: **Judith Alltree** [glutenfreepriest@gmail.com](mailto:glutenfreepriest@gmail.com)

**Europe** Regional Director: **Stephen Morgan** [steve.morgan@missiontoseafarers.org](mailto:steve.morgan@missiontoseafarers.org)

**East Asia** Regional Director: **Stephen Miller** [stephen.miller@mtsmail.org](mailto:stephen.miller@mtsmail.org)

**Middle East & South Asia** Regional Director: **John Attenborough** [john.attenborough@mtsmail.org](mailto:john.attenborough@mtsmail.org)

**Oceania** Regional Director: **Lance Lukin** [lance.lukin@mtsmail.org](mailto:lance.lukin@mtsmail.org)

**Latin America** Regional Director: **Ian Hutchinson Cervantes** [ian.hcervantes@missiontoseafarers.org](mailto:ian.hcervantes@missiontoseafarers.org)



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