



Top: Father Ciprian Ioniță, President of Federation Filantropia, visited the vulnerable families receiving new appliances. Bottom: Ana says that she sees God's love through the hands of those who brought her help.



Vital Warmth for Ana and her Grandchildren

REBUILDING AFTER CYCLONE BORIS IN ROMANIA

In the fall of 2024, Cyclone Boris devastated communities across central and eastern Europe, including the county in eastern Romania where Ana lives. Her home, where she cares for her two grandchildren, was badly damaged by severe flooding. Living on a small pension, she feared what might be coming next.

Local authorities had helped Ana repair her home, but with winter approaching, she still had no essential household appliances—and no source of heat. But Ana still had her faith. “I trusted that God would not leave us alone,” she says. Her prayers were answered. IOCC and local partner Federation Filantropia, the main humanitarian organization of the Romanian Orthodox Church, her family among those in critical need. Local church representatives visited these families and listed the appliances each one needed.

continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE:

Rebuilding After a Cyclone in Romania

Preserving a Mother-Baby Bond in Lebanon

Hurricane Rebuilding Update

From the
**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**



Dear friends,

Autumn has arrived, and with it, a new church year is underway. Once again, thank you for your faithful support, love, and prayers. Please continue to join us in praying for peace in the Holy Land. Be assured, you are making a real difference in the world—as you’ll read about in this issue of *News & Needs* where you’ll meet Ana, from Romania, and learn how you brought hope to her and her family in the aftermath of Cyclone Boris. This issue also includes important updates on projects here in the US and in Lebanon.

I am happy to share that the 2025 edition of IOCC’s *Prayer Journal* is now available. Designed for children in grades 3-8, this free journal features stories of your faith in action around the world. You can order it for your group or Sunday School class at iocc.org/prayerjournal.

We are also looking forward to IOCC Sunday on November 23: a special opportunity to highlight IOCC in your parishes and celebrate the impact your faith and support are making.

All of us at IOCC wish you and your family a blessed Church New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

cover story continued

Ana received a new washing machine and a new heating stove, along with 600 logs of firewood, to see her and her grandchildren through the winter.

“I never imagined we would receive so much,” says Ana. “To have warmth in the house, to be able to wash the children’s clothes...”

The project team came to Ana’s house to ensure that everything was delivered and properly installed. “The firewood keeps us warm through the cold nights, and I can’t describe how much that peace means to us,” she says. “I pray that others who receive this support feel as blessed as I do. It’s not just the things—it’s the message that we are not forgotten.”

Ana’s family was one of 30 that received high-quality household equipment. Providing heating stoves and washing machines not only improves living conditions, but reduces the need for financial assistance, helping families gain independence.

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

PRAYER JOURNAL

IOCC’s Prayer Journal is a resource for young people that offers a glimpse into the lives of children and families we’re helping around the world.



Order yours today at iocc.org/prayerjournal

Preserving the Mother-Baby Bond Beyond Walls

OVERCOMING BARRIERS: IMPROVING TWO YOUNG LIVES IN LEBANON

It's hard to imagine a more difficult beginning for 17-year-old Samia (not her real name) and her newborn son.

Samia gave birth while serving time at a juvenile detention facility near Beirut, Lebanon. She was frightened, unprepared, and isolated from her family. Concerned for mother and baby, the facility's staff asked the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health for help.

The Ministry referred the case to IOCC, which runs a mother-and-child health and nutrition program in Lebanon. Meanwhile, Samia's son was transferred to Beirut Government University Hospital for urgent medical care.

The IOCC team was particularly concerned about establishing the mother-baby bond through breastfeeding. Due to security concerns, however, the team could never be sure what times Samia would see her son at the hospital—so they couldn't schedule personal visits.

IOCC came up with a solution. The team gave a manual breast pump to the hospital staff, so Samia could continue feeding her baby, even when they were separated. Facility staff also arranged for IOCC's child-feeding and early childhood development



Swift support by IOCC allowed Samia to continue building a strong bond with her newborn (not pictured).

counselor to meet with Samia. She coached her on breastfeeding techniques, gave advice on maternal nutrition, and showed Samia what to look for as her son grew.

“I was scared and didn't know if I was doing anything right. I only remembered what I saw my cousin do with her baby, and I tried to copy that. But it's not the same when you're alone,” said Samia.

Samia's son is improving, and her confidence has grown as well. “When they gave me the pump, it felt like I could still be there for my baby, even if I couldn't hold him,” she said.

The mother-child program has helped nearly 12,000 people, including Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees living in Lebanon. It's one of a number of efforts IOCC has supported in Lebanon since 2001, including free health consultations, clean water networks, and psychosocial assistance.

International Orthodox Christian Charities, Inc. (IOCC), is the official humanitarian relief and development agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America.

IOCC, in the spirit of Christ's love, offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide, without discrimination, and strengthens the capacity of the Orthodox Church to so respond.

iocc.org



IOCC Volunteers Transform Ms. Pat's Storm Damaged Home

HURRICANE HELENE REBUILDING UPDATE

For three generations, Ms. Pat's family has lived in a modest home in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. It was the neighborhood store when her grandfather bought it and then converted it into the family home. In late September 2024, Hurricane Helene struck, and Ms. Pat's home was one of the thousands that were badly damaged.

Six inches of water flooded her home after rainfall gushed down the hillsides. "We had no electricity or communication, and you couldn't even get out because the power lines were down in my driveway, and I had a terrible, terrible problem with mold," she explains.

With no power and her floor flood-damaged, Ms. Pat had to cook outside. "I had a small charcoal grill," she

says. "I started cooking whatever I had. When neighbors stopped by, I gave them whatever I had." A few months after the storm, IOCC volunteers stopped by and offered their help to put a new floor in.

"The next thing I know," says Ms. Pat, "flooring turned into helping me do more demo (demolition) work that I needed, helping me with plumbing issues to everything in the kitchen and dining room, and insulation." IOCC also put her in touch with mold removal specialists, and a qualified volunteer rewired much of the house.

Ms. Pat is one of many people impacted by Hurricane Helene who have received help from IOCC volunteers this year. In 2025 alone, more than 275 generous individuals have volunteered to be part of an IOCC Action Team. These teams have made repairs to 42 homes across eastern Tennessee and southwest Florida, helping communities in need get back on track.

Ms. Pat is deeply grateful for the help she has received from IOCC and passes on the kindness by offering help in her own community. She takes elderly neighbors to the doctors, as well as helping these same neighbors with their lawnmowing and weeding.

"I don't even know that there is a word for what IOCC gave to me," says Ms. Pat. "It's a miracle to me to have so many wonderful people and organizations out there doing all of this for so many people."

If you are interested in volunteering to be a part of an IOCC Action Team, please visit iocc.org/actionteams to learn more.



Ms. Pat is very grateful for all the work IOCC volunteers put in to repair her storm damaged house. She passes on the kindness by helping in her own community.