NEWS & NEEDS
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Your gifts helped give Hanan the skills she used to change Sahar's life one project at a time.













Hanan and Sahar Fix Up Each Other's Lives

IMPROVING HOMES AND LIVES IN JORDAN: **LIVELIHOODS**

Hanan and Sahar were both facing hardships. But neither of them could have foreseen that with a little support from IOCC, they would dramatically better each other's lives.

Hanan, a widow from Jordan, is the primary breadwinner for a family of six. She had no stable income, few marketable skills, and was largely dependent on charity. "This was a very difficult situation," she recalled, "especially after my husband's death."

Sahar leads a family of five, including a daughter and son who have hearing disabilities. She also struggled with the added challenges of income instability and poor housing. "The hardest thing was that the house door wouldn't close

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Dear friends,

Autumn is already upon us. As our thoughts turn to the holiday season, please remember in your prayers those who face conflict and economic hardship, especially in the Middle East and Ukraine.

In this issue, you'll see the impact of your generosity as we take you to Jordan to meet Hanan and Sahar, two women who helped turn each other's lives around, and share the stories of a refugee Ukrainian mother in Poland, and the rebuilding of a family's legacy in Tennessee.

I'm happy to share that IOCC's new *Prayer Journal* is now available, filled with stories of your faith in action around the world. It's a full-color booklet designed especially for children in the third to eighth grade and we're pleased to offer it at no charge. You can order it for your group or Sunday school class at **iocc.org/orderprayerjournal**.

And please, mark your calendars for IOCC/Humanitarian Relief Sunday this November 22nd: a day to spotlight IOCC in your parishes and celebrate the difference your faith and support are making around the world.

Yours in Christ,

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director & CEO

"When I renovated Sahar's home, her happiness became my happiness because I saw how her life had changed."
- Hanan

cover story continued

properly," Sahar said. "I have a deaf son and daughter and if someone entered the house, they wouldn't hear them and might not be able to scream for help, so I didn't feel safe."

Life began to change when a friend of Hanan's sent her a link to apply to join an IOCC vocational training course, funded by the Austrian Development Agency and Diakonie ACT Austria. There, she learned home repair and maintenance skills. She also created a business plan and received a start-up tool kit.

IOCC then matched Hanan and her new skills with Sahar and her dangerous, dilapidated home. Hanan fixed the entrance door, eliminated problems with dampness, and repainted the apartment. She also added lighting and renovated the bathroom.

"They [IOCC and Hanan] truly changed my life. I now feel safe and enjoy keeping my home clean and organized. My home feels brand new," said Sahar.

"This training was the opportunity of a lifetime," Hanan said. "I was a woman who depended on others, but I have become independent. I work hard and have gained confidence in myself. Even my image in the eyes of my children has improved.

"When I renovated Sahar's home, her happiness became my happiness because I saw how her life had changed. That was all possible thanks to what we learned through IOCC," said Hanan, smiling.

Maria Finds a Way to Give Back

STARTING A NEW LIFE IN POLAND: **EMERGENCY**

Fleeing your home due to warfare is traumatic enough. Now imagine needing to start a new life for yourself and your son in a country where you don't speak the language.

That's what happened to Maria (not her real name) when she left Ukraine. "I arrived in Poland," she recalled, "without knowing the language and without certainty about what the future would bring."

Maria was provided housing with other Ukrainian families by the Orthodox Parish of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos in Ługi, and by the Parish of St. Archangel Michael in Brzoza. She also learned about further support from IOCC and local partner ELEOS Polska—the humanitarian organization of the Orthodox Church in Poland.

"I received housing and financial assistance, and Polish language courses. This helped me gradually regain stability, rent my own apartment, and gain the language skills I needed to work in Poland," she explained. "The support also covered my son, giving our family a sense of stability."

Maria, who holds multiple degrees, was eager to continue her studies in psychology—and find a way to support others who shared her difficult circumstances. Today, she carries on her postgraduate work while serving as an advisor, helping other Ukrainian refugees handle issues like integration into Polish society and legal residency.



Maria now helps other refugees like herself navigate life in Poland as an advisor.

"I feel safe, independent and needed," she said. "I believe that thanks to the support of people of goodwill and my own determination, I was able to rebuild my life and create a better future for myself and my son."

IOCC'S FIVE SECTORS

IOCC's work spans the globe and covers five key sectors of humanitarian relief and sustainable development:

- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
- Sustainable Livelihoods
- Food Security and Agriculture
- Health

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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.

ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Saving Mom's House

RESTORING A LIFELONG DREAM IN TENNESSEE: **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

Denise's mother raised her four children alone. After many years of working long hours for a low wage at a local factory, she realized her dream of paying off the mortgage on their home.

All that work was threatened, however, when Hurricane Helene struck in 2024. The house's rear extension and deck were destroyed. The basement was piled two feet deep with silt, and the main floor had been submerged in two feet of water. The house would need to be almost completely rebuilt.

Denise had some renovation experience and was determined to rescue their family home of 55 years. "Mom paid for every penny of that house herself and raised four kids," Denise remembered.

IOCC and community volunteers arrived to help. Together, they cleaned out the basement, rebuilt the rear extension and the back deck, and even managed to save the nearly 90-year-old hardwood floors.

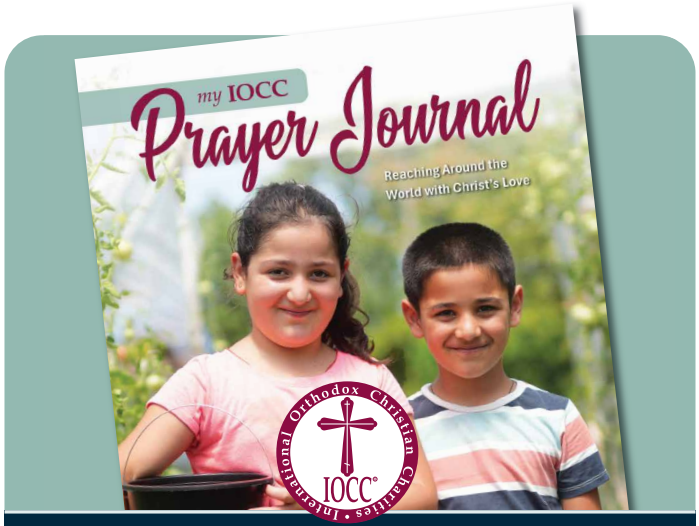
Denise's mother passed away in March, before the repairs were completed. But she knew the work was underway. Denise takes comfort in knowing that her mother's legacy has now been fully restored.

She is deeply grateful to her community and to IOCC for all the help she received. "What we did, with the help we got from everybody, I just wished I could get everybody in a room and thank them and hug them."



AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps and IOCC Action Team leaders with Denise (right) outside her mom's house.

Please scan this code or go to iocc.org/buildsite to visit the rebuild site with Fr. Stephen Mathewes.



Order your 2026 Prayer Journal today at iocc.org/prayerjournal!