



Finding Comfort and Shelter

Seafarers Center a Home Away from Home

Feb. 13, 2014

Imagine being aboard a ship for two weeks while crossing the Pacific Ocean to the Port of Long Beach, millions of dollars' worth of goods under your care. That's the often lonesome work of seafarers, who dedicate their lives to delivering our cargo.



They spend months at sea, away from their families, sometimes without any means of communicating with their loved ones.

So it's no surprise that the International Seafarers Center is an immediate stop for seafarers to go to relax when they arrive in port. "The Seafarers Center was founded when seafarers reached out and there was nobody to help them," said Tony Urrutia, a Long Beach Harbor Department financial reporting and controls officer who has volunteered at the center for over 15 years.

A non-profit organization that began on a bus, the Seafarers Center provides a multitude of services such as trips around town, free wi-fi, a computer room, basketball courts and ping pong tables. Today, the center is located in a building donated by the Port of Long Beach, at 120 S Pico Ave., just south of the Gerald Desmond Bridge.

These services are offered at no cost to seafarers; the center relies entirely on contributions and dedicated volunteers to provide these services to the men and women who serve on cargo ships.

At the 2014 annual State of the Port address, both Urrutia from the Port of Long Beach and James Dillman from Metro Ports were honored for their years of commitment and service to The International Seafarers Center of Long Beach and Los Angeles. Dillman is President of the Seafarers board and Urrutia is Treasurer of The International Seafarers Center.

In addition to these many services, the International Seafarers Center is also working to provide financial relief to the families impacted by Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated the Philippines last year. Many of the seafarers who come to the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles make their home in the Philippines.

To find out more about the ISC and their Typhoon Haiyan Relief Fund, please visit: <http://www.iscpolb-la.org/>

Also view this video on the ISC: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_51H-oHE2I

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