

Volunteers shipping container of goods to Iraq

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Volunteers had out supplies to children on the front lines of Mosul, a city that's been torn apart by war. In the next few weeks, a local group plans on shipping a 40-foot container of supplies to the region. / FRONTIER ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL PHOTO

While most people will be wrapping presents in the days leading up to Christmas, local volunteers will be preparing a shipping container to send supplies to Iraq.

In the coming weeks, volunteers with the Compassionate Resource Warehouse will be packing a 40-foot shipping container bound for Erbil in the Kurdish region of Iraq to meet the needs of the people from Mosul.

The city is currently under siege by the Iraqi Army and other forces that are seeking to liberate it from ISIS occupation. Thousands of people have fled the city and the fighting, and are being placed in refugee camps in surrounding areas.

The group, who are calling on Victorians to help, will be sending maternity packs, which include clothing for babies, disposable diapers, soup, and soap, along with first-aid, school, office and household supplies.

Clothing for the winter months, such as jackets, toques, mitts and socks will also be included. The supplies will then be distributed by Youth With A Mission, a group who will be helping out on the ground in Mosul.

The organization hopes to ship the container in the second week of January and is calling on the community to donate necessary supplies and enough funding to send the container overseas, which costs roughly \$15,000 US.

"It's an awesome privilege to be able to work with an organization like Compassionate and see the amazing work that's being done there," said Esquimalt resident Barbara Brandon, a volunteer with the organization who helped coordinate the shipment.

"You see a need and you want to be able to help people."

The organization was originally founded by Saanich's Dell Marie Wergeland in 1999 after a trip to Honduras to help victims of Hurricane Mitch. While there were hundreds of donations that poured in, she quickly came to realize much of it wasn't what the community needed. When she returned to Victoria, she decided to send a container of goods that would fit locals' needs.

And she hasn't stopped since. In the 16 years since the organization began working with various Canadian charities to find out what areas are in need, volunteers have delivered 430 containers to 67 countries across the world, 21 of which were delivered this year.

Seeing people's faces once they receive the containers continues to warm Wergeland's heart. She's seen people squeal with joy, dance in the street, and stand and weep when they receive goods from the container.

"The emotions are quite real over there. It's not just that they received something, but that somebody cares. There is hope," Wergeland said.

The warehouse will be open Wednesday, Dec. 28 and Friday, Dec. 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information visit crwarehouse.ca or for drop off instructions call 250-381-4483.