

Friend Ships Unlimited (a.k.a. Park West Children's Fund, Inc.)

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April 2012 – Activities Report

Dear Friend Ships Family,

More than twenty-six years ago God selected Sondra and I, two people without any maritime background, to head up Friend Ships, a large ship ministry. When He called us into service, we had only been Christians for a few months and had no ministry experience at all. The only job requirement seemed to be that we have a willing heart. He made a simple request of us - *trust Him*. With that, we were offered the promotion of a lifetime—to work for and serve the greatest, most powerful force in existence. Can you imagine our great God, with all His magnificent authority, asking people like us to trust Him? How could anyone say no?

I must admit that it wasn't always easy to see where all the people, equipment, funds, goods and favor would come from to live out this big dream, but then God gave us you, our support team, to pray for us and to supply what we needed.

Friend Ships is a simple faith ministry. All in all, we generally have about a hundred full time believers working as crew and land-based staff. All of us work without pay and this includes everyone, even captains and pilots, engineers, mechanics, cooks and office personnel. We have the privilege to work along with the most amazing people—our full time crew and you, who are not full time, but who God has selected to help us— you who come to take on projects, encourage us, deliver goods, donate finances, pray for us and in a thousand different ways help us or hold up our hands— you who have such great faith to stand beside us and say “Let me take this part; this portion is mine.” We want to express to you how critical your help is to us and how grateful we are to each one of you who send a check, lift us up in prayer, donate supplies or services, and come to Port Mercy or to Roatán to help.

The Friend Ships teams, wherever they are in the world, meet every morning to pray, thank and worship God before starting the day. You might say, in a way, we are a small church. We ask and require nothing of one another except faith, willingness to love and a desire to spend ourselves on behalf of the poor, the needy and those who are lost. We have no organized fund raising system and yet this small group, along with you, our support team,

owns ships, trucks, hundreds of boats and vehicles, a ministry camp in a foreign country, even our own port and a great helicopter. We've gathered millions of pounds of cargo, filled ships that cross oceans, built hospitals, clinics and schools; shipped and airlifted the blessings of God, responded to natural disasters, distributed more than sixty million pounds of food to needy families in the U.S., brought aid in times of war and severe famine, engaged in outreaches across the globe, received millions of gallons of fuel and spent it all on the ocean highways bringing life and Jesus to the masses. Best of all, we've witnessed thousands coming to know the Lord.

Not in our deepest dreams could we achieve any of this through our own power, through our own ability. It is so vastly beyond us. So who can explain this? It simply cannot be and yet, these ships continue to move across oceans and fulfill the impossible. No one could hope to do what has been done over these past twenty-six years without the great hand of our mighty God. He wants to do it because as the Word says in Samuel 2:8—

He lifts the poor from the dust— Yes, from a pile of ashes— And treats them as princes sitting in the seats of honor. For all the earth is the Lord's and he has set the world in order.

The month of April has been productive, as always. We were able to donate three semi loads of medical supplies, valued at approximately \$300,000, to ministries who are utilizing it to help the sick in Haiti and Mexico. The team in Roatán hosted a huge Easter children's event and the Sea Hawks regularly minister to the local community. StoreHouse One in Los Angeles and Lake Charles have collected and distributed 30,000 pounds of food into the local communities. Our boats, Pearl and Divine Wind, continue to make their way to Roatán where we have two Pastor's conferences scheduled in early May.

Thank you for helping us to make it all happen month after month. We love you. We appreciate you. Thanks for listening to the Lord and being part of the Friend Ships Family.

Love,

Don & Sondra

Don and Sondra Tipton and the Friend Ships Crew