

Humanitarian Mission to Lesvos, Greece



Donor Report

Donor Report Update:

It has been five weeks since our return from Lesbos, Greece.

We are deeply grateful to each and every one of you who generously supported our humanitarian mission. We are honored to have had the opportunity to act on your behalf and to offer warmth, food, clothing, shelter, transportation and medical aid to hundreds of people washed ashore on Lesbos. Your kindness was passed on, person to person, face to face and hand to hand.

Please accept this donor report, recapping our progress in Lesbos, as a deep and meaningful thank you for all that you have helped us achieve.

Our Mission Goals:

To provide refugees with...

Clothing

Medical Aid

Food

Translation

Rescue & Recovery
and Shelter

...on behalf of our donors.

Our Team



Colin and Latifa Woodhouse



Alexandra Woodhouse



Dr. Diane Lombardy

The Mission:

To provide humanitarian assistance to Refugees in need



Clothing



We are grateful to Patagonia for their generous donations of boxes of winter jackets!



We outfitted this family with Patagonia jackets in preparation for their journey to Europe. It took them 3 weeks but they made it without a hitch. This became known as the “Patagonia Effect.”

Clothing



Refugees line up for dry clothes and shoes at Camp Moria after being bused from the shore. Many boats arrived very late in the night and early morning.



A sneak peek inside the Dry Clothes Tent during a brief lull in activity.

Clothing



This classy young lady insisted on choosing the brightest colors available and dares anyone to copy her.



Alexandra helping a young boy find the right size shoes. Fitting and selecting clothing could be difficult. As grateful as these people were for all the help, to accept used clothing and unfamiliar styles was to accept their new status as a refugee, a citizen of **No Land**. It's an emotional transition. Luckily, Alex excelled at making each person feel special, able to convey that these clothes were hand picked and sent just for them. Her thoughtful, caring touch did not go unnoticed.

Clothing



These are just some of the items we purchased in Lesvos - here you can see a trip where we bought 40 new pairs of durable sneakers and 10 water-resistant backpacks, two essential items for families who will walk many miles while carrying their possessions in plastic bags.

Clothing



Working in the Dry Clothing Tent gave us an opportunity to provide warm, quality clothes to hundreds of people, to learn about their dangerous journeys, to offer encouragementAND.....

... to give and get a little bit of *LOVE!*



Medical Aid

We were very fortunate to have Dr. Diane Lombardy join our team. Diane, a pediatrician, was able to link up and register with the Britain-based non-profit **Healthpoint**, which is staffed exclusively by volunteers. Joined by nurses, doctors and medical students from England, Scotland, Pakistan, Palestine, Spain and the United States, Diane and the Healthpoint team served 24/7 as the largest medical facility on Lesvos. At the request of Medical Director, Dr. Hadia Aslam, **we agreed to replace their computer and printer** that had crashed, thereby keeping internal communication and volunteer coordination running seamlessly. **We also purchased medical equipment specifically needed for infant care.**



Diane, in Healthpoint's medical tent on Afghan Hill surrounded by an exceptional group of medical professionals, translators and compassionate human beings.

Offering Medical Aid in Healthpoint Clinic at Camp Moria

Latifa and Nurse Nick from Colorado with a newly arrived Afghan family.



Diane explaining the dosage for a patient, Latifa translating.



Dr. Kaise bandaging the hand of a patient



Medical Aid: Kara Tepe

After we arrived on Lesbos, we stopped by to visit Kara Tepe where Syrian families were housed. While at the camp, we dropped in on **Doctors of the World-Greece**. When the supervisor heard that Diane was a Pediatrician, he blurted out, “That’s like finding gold! We desperately need a Pediatrician; when can you start!” Diane started the next day and worked at Kara Tepe for 2 days attending to more than 200 patients. When her shift ended, Diane returned to Camp Moria to work the evening shift at Healthpoint Clinic. These were long, tiring- yet invigorating days. We were so emotionally charged all of us had difficulty getting to sleep.



Medical Aid

Andre-*"The Fixer"* - also asked if we could help him repair "Kino", **We Act Sweden's Portable Health Clinic**, which was needed immediately at the Macedonia border where thousands of Refugees were trapped and in dire need of medical attention. We were pleased to provide the funds to pay for Kino's repairs and to get her and their Swedish medical team up to the Macedonian border..

Andre (left) with another volunteer from *We Act Sweden* posing next to "Kino", their portable health Clinic



Shelter In Camp Moria

Once at Camp Moria, we soon realized that on “Afghan Hill” (located adjacent to the Camp Moria Processing Center) all tents, food, tea, dry clothes and medical services were provided by volunteers. This cold, damp, slippery place is where Afghans and other single men from Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran and North Africa sheltered in unheated tents. After three days of driving rain, it grew into a muddy swamp with ankle deep mud and a pond that volunteers named “Lake Moria”.



Shelter In Camp Moria

With disastrous timing, the Ferry lines launched a 3 day strike which caused a huge backup of refugees throughout the entire island. In a facility which normally accommodates 3,500 people we had over 7,000. **We made a donation to “Better Days for Moria” to purchase firewood** which was burnt in barrels on Afghan Hill. Men gathered around the barrels to warm themselves, dry their wet clothes and share stories. Colin worked with other volunteers and refugees to make Afghan Hill a safer and more welcoming place.



Shelter-Improving Camp Moria



Moving rocks, rocks and more rocks
-doctors, volunteers and guests all
pitching in.

Latifa: Translator-Extraordinaire!

On Afghan Hill Latifa seemed to be needed everywhere and always at the same time. Her fluency in Farsi and Pashto, and her understanding of Arabic and Urdu were in great demand. She translated in the Healthpoint Medical Center, in the Information Center, in the Dry Clothes Tent, on the grounds of Afghan Hill and in the Detention Center. So severe was the shortage of translators on Lesvos that when we visited other NGOs, she was invariably asked to stay and work with them.

Latifa gave voice to the voiceless and without her our experience working with refugees would have been much less rewarding. She was able to peel away the differences between us so that we might better understand and respond to the humanity of these resilient people who had traveled so far and under such terrible conditions in hopes of reaching Europe.

It was Latifa who introduced us to the son whose mother died of hypothermia as he carried her on his back in the mountains of Turkey. It was she who told us of the woman from Herat whose son was last seen fleeing gunfire at the border of Iran. And it was Latifa, who shared the grief of two young men who had waited 8 days in vain for their boyhood friends whom they last saw when their boat capsized. When they finally left for Macedonia, it was to Latifa that they stopped to say goodbye. People sought her out and gathered around her to tell her their stories and to seek her advice and good wishes before they continued on their journey.



Latifa: Translator-Extraordinaire!



Food for the Refugees

We were able to team up with two nonprofits that provided food and sanctuary to hungry travelers.. We met Andre during our first morning on Lesbos. When we asked him what he doing on the island he said, “Oh, I cook at Camp Pikpa.” This is a special camp for unaccompanied children, disabled refugees and those recovering from wounds, sickness and the loss of loved ones. It wasn’t long before we realized that Andre’s non-profit, **We Act Sweden** actually cooks and distributes thousands of meals a day for volunteer food operations on Lesbos. Andre is the “Fixer”-the go to guy- when you need something no one else can find; a spare generator to light up a new refugee camp, a truckload of food, a mobile kitchen, industrial washing machines, specialized medical equipment, a portable health clinic and on and on. We welcomed an opportunity to support Andre and **We Act Sweden** in their efforts to provide free meals to thousands of refugees in Lesbos and on the border with Macedonia where refugees were most desperate.

Your support served more than 6,250 meals to refugees!



On the border
with Macedonia



Food for the Refugees

Inside We Act Sweden's Portable food truck



Their delicious vegan lentil soup



More Food for the Refugees

One day Latifa and I visited **Mercy Corps** on behalf of families who had run out of funds and were stranded on Lesbos. **Mercy Corps** was able to help families we brought to them and suggested we meet with Tony, a Social Anthropologist and key staff member with a local non-profit called **ILiaktida**. **ILiaktida** provides a wide range of services for disabled people and vulnerable families – both Greek and Refugee families . When we met with Tony, we were surprised to learn that he had negotiated 30 free tickets per week from ferry companies, arguing that they needed to give back to the refugee community since they were profiting nicely by transporting thousands weekly. We linked Tony up with organizations needing tickets.

Tony took us to meet an Iraqi woman staying in one of their apartments with her three small sons. She was waiting for her husband's application for family reunification to be processed which meant a long stay on the Island. Of the fifty families ILiaktida served, half were refugees. "We do not discriminate when it comes to need" said Tony. "We also want our clients to develop survival skills and a big part of that is shopping for food and cooking for themselves."

Tony and I went to the butcher selected by his organization and we paid for two weeks worth of meat for over 50 families.



Tony with the butcher

Rescue & Recovery

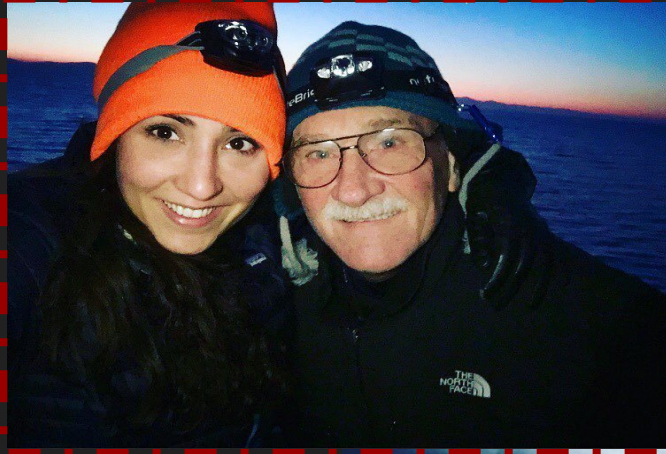
We were very fortunate to have an opportunity to get to know an extraordinary young man, Salam Aldeen, and members of the Danish non-profit he leads, **Team Humanity**. This organization has led the way in rescuing people crashing onto the rocky shores of Lesbos and from boats sinking in the Aegean. As a group, they epitomize those essential qualities of responsiveness, adaptability, and courage. **Team Humanity** appears wherever -and whenever- lives are most at risk, in the Aegean in dead of night, on the shore in gale force winds or on the Macedonia border where thousands huddle in cold, muddy fields.

We were pleased to support this terrific group of young activists. We provided **Team Humanity** with funds to buy food, and ferry tickets for refugees. We also purchased 40 pairs of shoes and 10 backpacks for them to give to refugees at the Ferry Terminals and on the Macedonian border.



Rescue & Recovery

Salam Aldeen, Leader of Denmark's Team Humanity



Alex and Colin during Shore Watch at 5 AM.



Dinghy death-trap

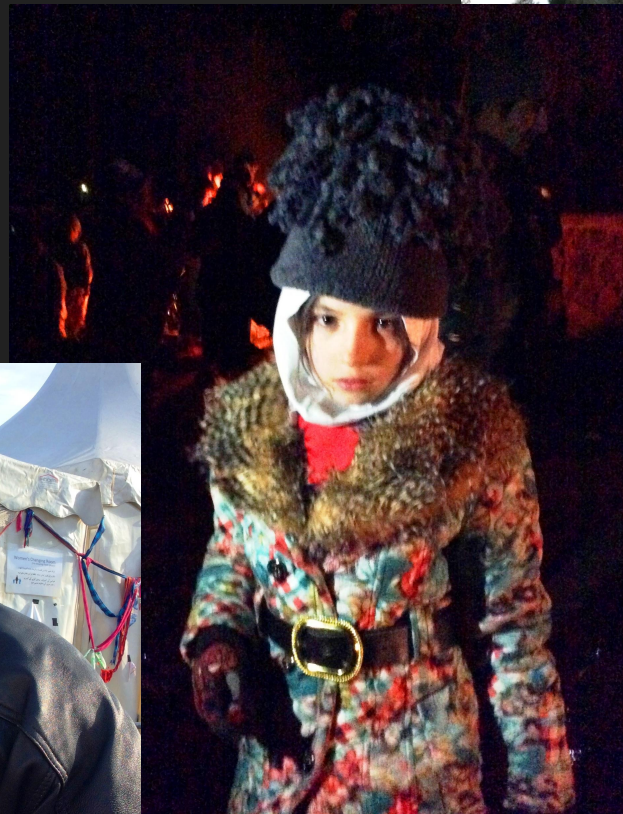


Rescue & Recovery

This family lost their grandmother and suffered severe frostbite.



Greetings from Camp Moria



“Europe, Open Your Hearts and Open Your Borders” Camp Moria



What now?

Unfortunately, in the time that we've been home, European states have decided to drastically reduce the movement of refugees and migrants into Europe. When our team was in Lesbos three nationalities deemed to be suffering from war; the Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans were granted temporary passage into Europe so that they might apply individually for asylum. On March 20th the passage of Syrians and Iraqis through the Balkan states into Austria and Germany was callously reduced to a mere trickle of a few people every few days. The Macedonia border is essentially closed. Afghans have been arbitrarily barred from entering Macedonia and cannot move on to Western Europe. It's hard to imagine that this global, humanitarian disaster could get any worse, but most tragically, it has.

People continue to arrive in Lesbos every day but now are regarded as criminals and are locked up and told they will be sent back to Turkey or their country of origin. For many this could be a death sentence.

Thousands of people are camped at the Macedonia border refusing to be shipped to military camps in Greece. The humanitarian catastrophe that occurred in Lesbos last Fall is now being replicated in Northern Greece. Travelers again suffer from hunger, poor sanitation, meager shelter, a lack of medicine, money -and most tragically-compassion. How can we force people to return to destroyed communities and bombed-out homes, to brutality, war and death? We cannot. We will, however, continue our efforts to bring compassion, love, comfort-and justice to these good people who deserve no less.



[Please check out our Facebook Page to learn more and receive updates!](#)

Please know that this is only the starting point that will propel more organized, wide-reaching and effective support in the future. We've already been in talks with many of our groups we worked with on the ground so we can continue our efforts.

We learned a great deal and we will now use this knowledge to evaluate how we might develop long-term sustainable efforts on the front-lines of the global refugee crisis.

From the bottom of our hearts,
THANK YOU for making this mission possible.