

Megayacht crew takes donated medical goods to Belize City

By Yvette Burks

After two years of logistics and planning, a megayacht delivered more than \$16,000 worth of donated medical supplies to the Belize Emergency Response Team in December, courtesy of the efforts of YachtAid Global.

Founded by Capt. Mark Drewelow in San Diego, YAG puts donated items on yachts heading to Third World countries to deliver to the coastal communities they visit.

"We have a client base that is typically already into charitable giving and they have a platform capable of delivering goods to the needy in locations that are already on the route plan," Drewelow said.

The act involved the volunteer efforts of several companies, several kind-hearted crew, and a big-hearted yacht captain who agreed to transport the goods.

The Triton accepted the deliveries of the items from all over the United States and Chef John Rubino, who has worked with Drewelow in the past, picked up the more than two dozen boxes and delivered them to the megayacht headed to Belize.

YAG and BERT coordinated not only with the supply companies, but with customs officials in Belize for easy processing of the materials, which were delivered on Dec. 31.

"Achieving a process that caused

zero impact on the yacht, captain, crew and operation in general, will ensure that there will be more of the same coming your way," said the captain, who asked that he and the yacht remain anonymous.

Drewelow attributed the initial spark behind the entire effort to Carolyn Thurton, owner of Ventura Agency in Belize City, who suggested two years ago that YachtAid Global work with BERT.

"She was instrumental in working with BERT and Belize customs to develop the protocol on how to handle

the goods' entry in a streamlined fashion," he said. "If we did not have Carolyn involved, it would not have happened."

BERT specializes in pre-hospital emergency response in and around Belize City. It responded to 2,622 emergency calls in 2008.

Yvette Burks is the director of BERT. For more information, visit www.bertbelize.org. For more information about YAG, visit www.yachtaidglobal.org. Comments on this article are welcome at editorial@the-triton.com.



Crew shared meal with kids

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sloops from La Hatte on Dec. 26.

"We subsequently traveled back to the village of La Hatte on a fishing sloop," Troy said. "There was a further service of thanksgiving, this time conducted in the village church and attended by only the pastor, fishermen from the village, and us.

"I was particularly touched when one of the fishermen approached me on the beach and quietly handed me the most beautiful sea shell I have ever seen as a personal token of thanks."

Repairs to the storm-damaged boats gave the crews more time to visit the island and get to know the villagers, before sailing back to Tortola.

"I came away with an abiding and humbling sense of the generosity of spirit of the people we had traveled to and amongst," Troy said. "I was rewarded many times over for giving a little of myself and my time."

Carol Bareuther is a freelance writer in St. Thomas. Comments on this story are welcome at editorial@the-triton.com.

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