

Super Wealthy Yacht Owners Rally Together To Help Disaster Victims With YachtAid Global

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jimdobson/2015/03/31/super-wealthy-yacht-owners-rally-together-to-help-disaster-victims-with-yachtaid-global/>

3-31-15 **Jim Dobson** Contributor

I write a lot about the most decadent over-the-top luxury experiences and also regularly focus on the the richest people in the world, but it is also important to highlight the amazing charitable work being done by some of the greatest superyacht owners and crews in the world.

Through the efforts of YachtAid Global, they have been orchestrating the delivery of disaster relief, development and conservation aid to coastal communities worldwide. The organization was founded in 2006 and is a registered nonprofit providing tax benefits to donors. They utilize a network of volunteers who coordinate logistics, patrons who sponsor supplies and yacht owners and crew that offer to transport them. They deliver to schools, medical clinics, cultural centers and other organizations in remote and isolated locations including Alaska, Indonesia, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, French Polynesia, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Belize, Vanuatu, and more. They work with an impressive roster of yachts to provide the owners and crew with an outlet to give back in a unique way that does not change the course of their cruise.



Superyacht Dragonfly helps victims in Vanuatu



So many recent disasters have inspired yacht owners to spring into action. Cyclone Pam was one of the most powerful storms ever to make landfall with the islands taking a devastating direct hit. Hardly a tree stood straight after Pam came across the South Pacific nation, where some 260,000 people live. Vanuatu, which lies east of Australia, is an archipelago comprising 83 small islands, 65 of them inhabited and many remote and lacking infrastructure.

YAG's mission simply is to seek out and find like-minded Captains and Owners to participate in their humanitarian efforts, There are so many yachts that travel close to areas in need whatever the cause. It's the organizations suggestion to deploy private yachts as a transport vehicle for donated aid a relief supplies. With YAG assisting in disaster relief, literally any region is accessible because yachts can move easily into isolated areas that are mostly unreachable by the larger ships of relief organizations.

Superyacht **Dragonfly** owned by a tech billionaire, recently arrived in Vanuatu following a three and a half day trip. She loaded supplies and a medical staff and departed for the Shepherd Islands. Nearly all of the villages there were completely destroyed, and news reports stated the locals were drinking salt water in an attempt to survive. Even Roman Abramovitch's former Superyacht **Umbra** recently used a helicopter to air drop water to Vanuatu.



Among the superyachts that have contributed to relief efforts are; Richard Branson's 100 foot catamaran **Necker Belle** that sprung into action after Hurricane Gonzalo hit St. Maarten last year and the luxury yacht **Big Fish** that delivered supplies aiding the victims of Cyclone Evan. The McMullen and Wing-built motor yacht left Auckland bound for Viti Levu and laden with \$50,000 of aid. The yacht helped 600 locals, specifically the hospital and school children who lost everything after the Chilean earthquake and subsequent tsunami tore up Robinson Crusoe island last year. The tiny island off the coast of Chile had most of its seaside village destroyed and, due to the remoteness of the village, it was difficult to get aid to the island.

The crew of the impressive 96-metre motor yacht **Vava II** owned by billionaire Ernesto Bertarelli, created the Vava II Global Challenge, in order to raise money for YachtAid Global (YAG) through creative athletic challenges. December 18 saw the VAVA II yacht crew hand over their first aid package of their circumnavigation. The Autism Association of the Maldives were very grateful of the care package handed over to them onboard.



The 85-metre Oceanco mega yacht **Vibrant Curiosity** owned by German billionaire Reinhold Wuerth has been earning docking points since January 2012, while docking at an IGY owned superyacht marina. IGY Anchor Club points were donated to the relief fund to assist in docking costs for yachts delivering supplies to disaster areas.

In Cabo San Lucas where much of the coast was devastated, Yacht **Calex** arrived following Hurricane Odile to deliver important goods. The 47.55m motor yacht **Seven J's** also dropped cargo to the victims. The 111-foot superyacht **Seljm** collected aid items and money and delivered to Syrian refugees fleeing into Turkey and finally, while in the Maldives in December, Vava II's crew presented computer equipment to the Autism Association of the Maldives. OmniAccess, a marine VSAT and yacht internet service provider, made the purchase and delivery of the equipment to Vava II possible.



YachtAid Global is seeking donations of any kind and will be matching donations up to \$5,000. For more information on getting involved visit <http://yachtaidglobal.org/wp/>



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