

Seafarers' House Celebrates 26th Anniversary

Maritime Leader to be Honored



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While most people have a general understanding that vital products largely come to us by sea, they often fail to realize the dedication of the mariners - working long hours, thousands of miles from loved ones - who deliver those necessities to us.

However, Seafarers' House, a charity and advocacy organization based out of Port Everglades, has devoted the last 26

years to improving the quality of life for mariners and ensuring seafarers have a voice in public policy. MarEx had a chance to speak with the organization as it celebrates its anniversary and commemorates, Joseph Farrell, Jr., CEO of Resolve Marine Group, for his dedication to mariners.

Lesley Warrick, Seafarers' House Executive Director, and Father Ron Perkins, Port Chaplain for the organization, greeted MarEx and gave us a tour around the 4,200-square-foot facility, complete with a multi-religious chapel, multi-cultural convenience and electronics store and a money exchange center. Though the organization has humble beginnings as a four-phone, 400-square-foot hospitality center, today, Seafarers' House welcomes more than 150,000 mariners annually. The organization offers everything from one-on-one practical and spiritual support to wire transfer services so the mariners can send money home to their families overseas. The mission also receives assistance from maritime and non-maritime companies including cruise lines, cargo companies, faith-based communities and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"There isn't a day that goes by that something doesn't impact my life because of a



Pastor Paul Schweinler (left) and Father Ron (right) with mariners aboard the *Orhan* after a Lenten mass.

seafarer or a port worker, and no two days are the same,” said Father Ron Perkins. “The best part of my job is hanging around the ‘casa’ on the weekends and seeing seafarers Skyping from all over the world to their kids and their wife or husband, and you hear all this laughter—it’s a beautiful thing.”

Seafarers’ House has been recognized all over the world, and Warrick was recently honored as the Seafarer Advocate of the Year during Lloyd’s List North America Maritime Awards in February. Last October, the organization launched its Legacy League Endowment with a goal of raising \$1 million aimed at ensuring long-term financial stability and enriching its seafarers’ programs and resources.



Father Ron greets a young mariner currently at port.

Speaking about the goals and challenges the organization faces, Warrick commented, “The more we get out there and talk to others, the more we realize that a lot of people don’t really know how much seafarers impact their lives. Ninety percent of everything you buy or use in your everyday life has been touched by a seafarer. So one of our biggest and most basic goals is just to get the word out and educate people on this industry and the people in it.”

As part of its ongoing fundraising and awareness efforts, Seafarers’ House will hold its annual International Golden Compass Award Gala on May 2, where they host a silent auction to raise money for the organization and honor those in the industry who have achieved distinction through maritime-related work.



Mariners relaxing by the pool table while their vessel is at Port Everglades

This year, Joseph Farrell, Jr. has been selected as the recipient of the Seafarers' House International Golden Compass Award.

"Joe is the kind of person who truly understands seafaring life," said Warrick. "He has such a positive impact on the maritime industry as a whole and is constantly advocating on behalf of mariners."

Farrell has been in the maritime industry for more than 45 years and has served in both the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard. Over the past 35 years, he has managed to transform his one-tugboat company into a well-known international salvage business with ships located all over the world. His company currently has six rescue tugs, two salvage support vessels, crane barges and salvage barges, and employs more than 250 people. Resolve recently oversaw the wreck removal of the containership M/V *RENA*, which ran aground off the shore of New Zealand, and the *Resolve Earl* was one of the lead tugs that towed the *Costa Concordia* from Giglio Island to Genoa, Italy.

Farrell and his company are also involved with Seafarers' House in a variety of ways, such as offering support for events and projects and aiding in the financial component of the organization. "Seafarers' House and what they do for mariners is amazing," says Farrell. "It's a great place for mariners to go and be taken care of when they are so far away from home. It really speaks volumes for our country."

"To receive the International Golden Compass Award is an amazing honor," Farrell continued. "I've been the recipient of various things in the past, but what Seafarers' business model is—what they're founded on—is giving back. So in a way it's almost more of an honor to be awarded from a group like that. It's a very humbling experience."

Seafarers' House will host its 2015 International Golden Compass Award Gala Saturday, May 2 in Fort Lauderdale. For additional information including sponsorship opportunities, please visit <http://www.seafarershouse.org/aboutus/events/2015-golden-compass-gala-and-award-dinner>