

Holland America Line and the Port of Seattle Partner to Help Area Charities

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Holland America Line and the Port of Seattle have announced Ship to Shelter, an innovative new community-giving program that is the first of its kind in the nation. Holland America Line will collect valuable and reusable goods from their ships sailing from Seattle this summer, and donate them to Seattle area charities serving people in need.

The Port of Seattle, partnering with United States Customs and Border Protection, Cruise Terminals of America and Northwest Harvest, will work with the Seattle-based cruise line to donate items from the ships weekly and the goods will be distributed to shelters and homeless programs throughout Washington State.

In addition to the weekly donations of individual-sized toiletries, Holland America Line will periodically provide items such as towels, linens, dishes, cookware, silverware, televisions and mattresses.

"Giving back is part of the corporate culture at Holland America Line and it is part of our corporate social responsibility," said Stein Kruse, president and chief executive officer. "Over the years Holland America has worked with non-profits around the world to donate reusable goods in a socially conscious, environmentally friendly method. These items are periodically replaced on our ships and can be put to use for a good cause."

The program kicks off April 29 with ms Oosterdam, which will be docked at Pier 30, providing hundreds of items to Northwest Harvest, where they will be stored and then distributed to needy individuals and families. Each week, a Holland America Line ship will be in port to donate items. On May 16, ms Amsterdam will provide toiletries as well as dishes, 150 cooking knives and 300 sheet pans. Mike Regis, Procurement and Outreach Director, Northwest Harvest, said, "The missions and shelters will be incredibly grateful to receive these items as they are very difficult to come by and not something we see in the donation stream very often."

Holland America Line will continue to donate other items from various Seattle-based ships sailing to Alaska from May through September, helping Northwest Harvest provide very basic but much needed necessities to shelters throughout the state.

Port of Seattle officials are pleased to participate in the pilot program. "The cruise industry provides great economic benefit to our region," said Tay Yoshitani, chief executive officer, Port of Seattle. "We are very pleased to partner with them in a program that also provides environmental benefit -- finding uses for goods that would otherwise be thrown away. And the Ship to Shelter program exemplifies the Port's commitment to social responsibility -- finding way for us and our partners to give back to the community and ensure that everyone benefits from the business of the Port."

Northwest Harvest is the only statewide hunger relief agency in Washington State. The non-profit organization receives no city, county, state or federal funding for operating expenses and relies solely on contributions from individuals, businesses, foundations and other organizations. "There is an incredible need for basic toiletry items in the homeless community, especially in our women's shelters," said Shelley Rotondo, executive director of Northwest Harvest. "We often take the availability of these items on a daily basis for granted. The Ship to Shelter program will help fulfill this need for many."

The Ship to Shelter pilot program incorporates strategic partnerships between the Port of Seattle, Northwest Harvest and Holland America Line to provide valuable goods that are no longer needed on cruise ships for reuse by needy individuals as well as providing an environmentally positive solid waste solution.

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