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Searcy Arkansas

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Top Stories

Aid shipment ready from Judsonia to Georgia: Enough furniture, hospital equipment to

Saturday, February 5, 2005 10:36 PM CST

fill 4 huge containers

By Pat Hambrick
Contributing writer
The Daily Citizen

Orphaned children and hospital patients in the Republic of Georgia, a part of the former Soviet Union, will soon be sleeping in beds once used by Harding University students, as well as using sheets, blankets and many other items donated by various institutions.

John Kachelman, minister of the Judsonia Church of Christ, is coordinating the nationwide shipment of humanitarian aid to the Republic of Georgia. Two large containers, which will be sent to orphanages and hospitals, are being loaded for shipment from Searcy this weekend and will be picked up on Monday by the State Department.

Two more are on the way. The shipping containers look much like semi-trailers.

Kachleman said, "The containers are carried like semi-trailers but they are really 'boxes' that are lifted off the frame and placed into the ships."

Jennifer Kachelman was stationed near the rear of one of the containers and checked off each item on the inventory list as it was loaded for shipment.

"We have to make sure the items are on the inventory and get checked off as they are loaded. If they are on the inventory and not checked off, the people on the other end will think they have been stolen," she explained.



Dean Curtis, right, John Kachelman Jr., center, and trusty Chad Coleman, left, load a mattress into a container truck on Friday. The container is one of four filled with medical supplies that will go to the Republic of Georgia sent by the Judsonia Church of Christ. (Greg Benenati/The Daily Citizen)

Did you make any New Year's resolutions this year?

Yes, I make them every year, and I'm usually pretty good at keeping them.

Yes, I make them every year, but I'm not very good at keeping them.

Yes, this is my first year to make resolutions.

Yes (other)

No, I don't make resolutions because I can't keep them.

No, I don't make resolutions because I don't believe in that sort of thing.

No, I didn't make any resolutions because I couldn't think of anything to resolve to do.

No (other)

The large warehouse where items have been stored awaiting the time for shipment was a busy, noisy place on Friday afternoon as several men began loading the large containers.

Harold Bridges, Dean Curtis, Gene Donnell, his grandson Jeremiah Donnell, and John Kachelman, all of Judsonia, as well as four trustees from the White County Jail, were in constant motion as they moved desks into the trailer, then packed spaces between the bookshelves with boxes containing other donated items.

In order to use every available inch of space, plastic bags containing sheets were stuffed into any empty space.

Bridges drove a forklift when needed. The warehouse echoed with the noise of the forklift, sounds of the blowers of two large infrared heaters, of the wheels of dollies being pulled across the concrete floor, and the heave-ho grunts and conversation of men as they lifted heavy furniture into place.

Kachelman said on Saturday morning that eight trustees and more members of the Judsonia congregation were helping load, and he expected some members of the Harding Academy football team to arrive shortly.

"This is certainly a community effort we have going on here," he said.

Bill Bingham of Searcy donated the use of the forklift, as well as large heaters to knock the chill out of the large warehouse, which had retained the coldness of the previous night. The heaters were turned off as the sun and warmer air filled the warehouse and the men warmed up from their exertion.

Bingham and his wife went to the Ukraine with Kachelman last October, though they have not been to the Republic of Georgia. The Bingham's have also been on mission trips to South America, and he talked of how different our elections are from those in other countries.

He said that while our elections sometimes are heated and partisan, a few days after the election everyone rallies behind the elected president.

"We go on. They don't." Bingham said riots and conflicts continue after the elections in many countries.

"Democracy is a very fragile idea. It dawns on you when you are in some of these countries just how fragile it is."

Bingham also saw first-hand the needs of the hospitals and orphanages in the Ukraine and said he would really like to be on the other end of this shipment so he could see the faces of the people receiving these much needed items.

There were 10 large wooden crates. One, for example, listed an inventory of 91 bed pads, 28 fitted sheets, 27 gowns, 28 blankets, 100 towels, 15 infant wear, and 70 flat sheets.

Some of the 71 large cardboard boxes also contained linens, while others contained coats and medical supplies, among other things.

These men will also load 750 bags of linens and 585 loose items, including beds, desks, night tables, mattresses, hospital beds, dental chairs, and an incubator, to name a few.

The shipment is valued at \$205,626.54.

Two more large containers will be dropped at the warehouse on Feb. 18 for loading.

Kachelman has received word that an institution that has heard of his humanitarian aid work plans to donate 6,000 hospital beds.

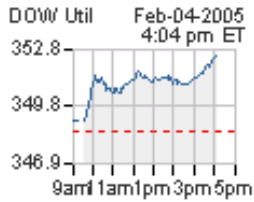
"We have no definite assignment for the 6,000 hospital beds but those I place will probably go to the Ukraine," Kachelman said.

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Index	Last Trade	Change
NASDAQ	2086.66	29.02 ▲
DOW	10716.13	123.03 ▲
AMEX	1470.68	20.04 ▲
Russ 2000	637.44	8.12 ▲
SP 500	1203.03	13.14 ▲
NYSE	7217.43	69.11 ▲
DOW Util	352.79	4.15 ▲

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Kachelman has also been asked by the State Department to coordinate aid for tsunami victims. He asked White County residents to help supply personal hygiene kits and was very pleased with the response.

Approximately 300 kits were assembled in White County. Kachelman's contacts in other areas assembled more for a total of about 850 kits to be shipped to Sri Lanka.

"The emergency kits should be going out on Wednesday. We have been able to secure free transport by FedEx. These will go to Dulles Airfield in Washington and then to Sri Lanka. We will be collecting for a container to be sent to Sri Lanka but there is no definite time on this yet," Kachelman said.

Bingham said he thought one reason for the good response is that it was something individuals can do directly for the people of Sri Lanka.

Kachelman is in direct contact with members of a Church of Christ congregation in Sri Lanka. One recently e-mailed him about conditions there.

She said they were going to Hikkaduwa the following day to "help 20 ladies with kitchen utensils, slippers for the women, shoes for the children, mosquito nets, vacuum flasks and under garments for the ladies. These are families who are not in the camps and they are staying with their relatives and friends.

"To tell you the truth, these people are not getting anything. No one knows about them. I hope you will understand the situation of the camps: no privacy. One toilet for more than a hundred people, no ventilation in the tents, child abuse, girls are harassed."

It is this direct contact with the people that makes the shipments Kachelman coordinates different from much humanitarian aid. His shipments do not go to the government of the countries but directly to congregations in the communities for distribution.

Kachelman explained earlier that in many countries much of the humanitarian aid shipments are stolen before they ever reach the people for which the aid is intended when they go through the government channels.

He has to work with the government of the countries where aid is shipped, but he does not work through them.

Local people know who needs the help and sees to it that the shipment gets to where it is needed, said Kachelman.

Anyone wishing to help load the next two containers on Feb. 18 may call Kachelman on his cell phone at (901) 626-4538.

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