



Feb 15, 2018 13:05 GMT

Fred. Olsen guests donate over £8,000 to the British Virgin Islands Red Cross to aid hurricane recovery in Tortola

Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines was pleased to donate over £8,000 to the British Virgin Islands ('BVI') Red Cross in Tortola towards the island's hurricane relief efforts, when its cruise ship *Braemar* made a call on 27th January 2018. Tortola is one of the areas hardest hit by the destructive forces of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017, which lashed the Caribbean with wind speeds of up to 185mph.

Fred. Olsen's donation was raised by generous guests over the course of two Caribbean cruises on board *Braemar* in January 2018, to benefit those most in

need on the island of Tortola. The ship's Entertainments team hosted a number of fun and lively fundraising activities on board, including a very competitive Tug of War, art auction, raffle and 'Chain of Coins'.

The delegation from the BVI Red Cross were hosted on board *Braemar* in Tortola by the ship's Master, Captain Jens Gulowsen, along with Hotel Manager, Michael Emmenegger, and Cruise Director, Elliot Taylor and given a guided tour of the ship.

Receiving Fred. Olsen's donation of over £8,000 on behalf of the BVI Red Cross in *Braemar's* Neptune Show Lounge, Dawn Crabbe-Herbert, Finance And Administration Manager, said:

"There are still a number of people who are living in emergency shelters and a greater – but unknown – number of people who are living with host families, not yet able to return to their homes. The BVI Red Cross plan to use the generous donation from the passengers and crew of MS *Braemar* to purchase basic household items, such as beds, fridges and other furniture, so that they can return to a normal comfortable life.

"It is hard to imagine the power of a 5+ hurricane, but some families who went through that experience are still deeply traumatised. Houses stripped bare and soaked through, a family's entire possessions destroyed. Some things are irreplaceable and can only be mourned. Others can be replaced - and will be - with the help of your kind donations."

The idea to support Tortola – and in particular a devastated local school – came from various staff within *Braemar's* management team, which included Sandra Harvey, Fred. Olsen's Tours Manager, who is passionate about the Caribbean and the island.

Addressing *Braemar's* guests before the ship's call to Tortola, Sandra said:

"We are very pleased to be one of the first cruise ships to make a visit to the island of Tortola, after so many cruise lines have had to cancel their calls due to Hurricanes Irma and Maria in September 2017.

"The whole of Tortola was devastated after these tremendous storms and is still very much affected – recovery will be a very slow process – but the

agents and islanders are committed to working together to try to restore this beautiful part of the Caribbean.

"Braemar has called continuously in Tortola over the years and we are all very sad to know the predicament that the islanders are facing. They are heavily reliant on the tourism trade and we hope that, by making our cruise call, we can go some way in helping to improve the situation by bringing much-needed revenue to the island."

In addition to this latest fundraising on board *Braemar*, Fred. Olsen has also assisted the Caribbean's hurricane relief effort by donating brand new crew uniforms worth £33,000 to two of the worst-hit islands – Barbuda and Dominica. Fred. Olsen donated 1,465 new uniform items to the islanders before Christmas last year, including shoes, trousers, shirts and skirts, along with 2,263 items of used uniforms.

With its well-established Caribbean fly-cruise programme – and as a long-standing member of the Caribbean Tourism Organization ('CTO') – Fred. Olsen has also been keen to lend its support to the CTO's 'Hurricane Relief Fund'. Fred. Olsen has been raising funds across its fleet to assist those CTO member destinations affected by the catastrophic storms, and all monies raised will be disbursed directly to the Ministries of Tourism in the impacted member states to rebuild devastated communities and provide financial relief to those most in need.

Photo caption: Captain Jens Gulowsen, Master of Fred. Olsen Cruise Line's *Braemar* (2nd from left), presents the donation of over £8,000 to Dawn Crabbe-Herbert, Finance And Administration Manager of the British Virgin Islands Red Cross (3rd from left), alongside her colleagues Helen Frett, Director, and Peter Glasper, Emergency Support Manager (3rd from right), together with Fred. Olsen's Hotel Manager Michael Emmenegger (far left) and Cruise Director Elliot Taylor (far right), on board the ship in Tortola on 27th January 2018.

Fred. Olsen Cruise Line operates in the UK with four intimately sized ships for a more personal cruising experience.

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