

Volunteer to Spread Holiday Cheer!

Join

The Christmas at Sea Ship Welcome & Visit Force

The holiday season, the most festive time of the year, is here! The celebrations, food, fellowship and fun with family and friends bring excitement, joy, and a welcome break from the demanding challenges of the past few years.

More than 90% of the goods and gifts we consume during the holidays come by ships. Our holidays and daily lives would not be as bright without the essential work of seafarers. They are an invisible workforce who make great sacrifices, face dangers and isolation from loved ones for many months at a time. The holidays are especially hard for them. We owe them our gratitude. Let us not forget them. **Join the Christmas at Sea Ship Welcome and Visit Force.**

Each year Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate -at-the-International Maritime Center (SMGG-at-the-IMC) collects hand-knit hats and scarves, sewn drawstring bags, toiletries, and other small items for our annual Christmas at Sea Ditty Bag Program. These items are packed into “ditty bags” by volunteers. The filled bags are gathered by our chaplains and ship visitors for delivery to the ships that arrive in the Port of Oakland from December 1 to January 7.

This season we invite you to be like a “Christmas elf” delivering joy and goodness to deserving people: **Join the Christmas at Sea Welcome and Visit Force.**

There are several ways to serve on the Force:

SHIP VISITOR: Board commercial ships in the Port of Oakland to deliver ditty bags to ship crews as a way of saying *Thank You!* for all they do for us.

WELCOME DRIVER: Shuttle crew members in SMGG vans from their ships to local shops and nearby venues

WELCOME HOST: Greet visiting crew members and create a relaxing atmosphere at the Maritime Center.

New friendly faces, listening ears and open hearts help reduce loneliness and boost spirits.

To Join the Force: SMGG.ORG/GetInvolved



To the world, You may be one person; But to one person /you may be the world.

***The Christmas at Sea Ship Welcome and Visit Force
Frequently Asked Questions***

When Do the Ship Visits Occur? How Long is the Visit? Where are the Ships?

Our current schedule is Thursday - Sunday 11 am – 3 pm., December 1 – January 7. We generally visit two ships each shift. Ship visits last between 20-40 minutes per ship depending upon what is happening aboard the ship; please allow three hours for a shift.

We meet at the International Maritime Center at 4001 7th Street, Oakland CA and depart for the ships from there.

Do I have to Sign Up in Advance or can I just show up at the time?

Because there is a limit to the number of ship visitors allowed on board, please register in advance and we will assign a day and time that fits your preference and availability.

Is training required?

Yes. We require each visitor to take two short online training programs prior to your first visit and to participate in a short orientation on the day of your first visit.

Are there any Physical requirements?

Ship Visitors must be able to climb the ship gangway (equal to climbing 3 -4 flights of steep stairs) while carrying a 15-pound garbage bag containing a dozen small bags for the crews).

Is There a Uniform?

Each Ship Visitor wears a safety vest provided by the Seafarers' Ministry. Visitors must wear close-toed shoes that have soles with grips. Wear loose-fitting clothes.

Are There Any Other Requirements?

Ship Visitors must be at least 21 years old and have a valid CA drivers' license with a clean driving record. A TWIC card is preferable for identification. Volunteers who obtain a TWIC card are reimbursed for the TWIC card fee after making two ship visits. Before applying, please review the requirements here: <https://www.tsa.gov/for-industry/twic>¹

We need and welcome volunteers all year long.

We are only able to carry out our mission with volunteer help and support.

Volunteering with us is flexible. No matter how much or little time you have, or when it might be, we work with your schedule to make an impact together. Just let us know for more.

To Find out more: smgg.org/get-involved