What I Did

I conducted an online survey and held one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders to gauge everyone’s opinions. I then researched the work of other seafarer missions around the world to benchmark how they operated. The capstone project led to initial findings which revealed the urgent need to increase the ratio of volunteer ship visitors. Volunteers were recruited, and a training program launched. Through continuous improvement, there is now a sustainable volunteer-centric program in place.

Why I Did It

In Rose George’s book, Ninety Percent of Everything, George explains that “Shipping is the Invisible Industry that puts clothes on your back, gas in your car, and food on your plate.” There are 1.5 million seafarers who make this all possible and the seafarer missions in 430 ports around the world provide a ministry of presence. In the Port of Philadelphia, this has been ongoing since 1843. I served eight years in the Merchant Navy, and I have compassion for the welfare of seafarers.

Who I Worked With

Seamen’s Church Institute of Philadelphia and South Jersey

What We Accomplished

CHANGE FOR ME

In 2018, I celebrated the 50th anniversary of the year that I became a seafarer, joining my first ship in the Port of Houston. I have had the opportunity to bring my inherent leadership skills and resources to help a non-profit. The capstone projects has given me the chance to give back, enabling my interfaith action to be practiced by serving as a volunteer port chaplain in the service of others.

CHANGE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Making the transition away from a volunteer-light ship visiting team to a volunteer-centric focus that is cost-effective. Restoring the holistic purpose of the seafarer mission, which is to serve all seafarers, proactively without prejudice.

CHANGE FOR THE PROBLEM

Restoring stability by turning around a threatening operating deficit that risked the future sustainability of a mission that began in 1843.

Key References

- Maritime Labor Convention – 2006 ilo.org
- Merchant Navy Welfare Board, mnnwb.org
- North American Maritime Ministry Association, namma.org
- International Seafarer Welfare Assistance Network, seafarerswelfare.org
- Seamen’s Church Institute, sciphiladelphia.org

Delivering “Ditty” bags to seafarers – 2017

Seafarer Interfaith Holiday Celebration – 2017