

## FRANCOIS VISITORS HELP HURRICANE VICTIMS

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**Atlantic Canada** – In mid September tropical storm Florence wreaked havoc on a small community on the south coast of Newfoundland with winds of over 150 kilometres per hour. One home was ripped in two and half of it tossed into the ocean by the winds. Liz Durnford, her husband and two-year-old son had left the home just minutes before this event.

Then came the M/V Polar Star, not once but twice, to visit this “*outport*” community during two Atlantic Canada cruises. The M/V Polar Star is a 105 passenger expedition cruise ship that has for the past several years visited annually. Francois is a favorite destination of the ship and always charms the passengers. M/V Polar Star decided she wanted to help.

On each of the two cruises an onboard auction of donated items plus a donation box brought in funds. Polar Star Expeditions, owner and operator of the ship kicked it off with a donation from the company. The first cruise raised \$2,010 and the second cruise raised \$2,309.50. In addition, the community of Francois hosted a “kitchen party” for the cruise passengers of both cruises and the proceeds were donated to the affected family. Some passengers also made additional private donations. M/V Polar Star would like to thank Norstead Centre in northern Newfoundland who donated handmade crafts to the auction.

Liz Durnford joined the passengers onboard for a BBQ and spoke to the group about the emotional experience of losing her home. “We were delighted to be able to give back

to this community that has always welcomed us so genuinely and the passengers responded amazingly to the cause!” says Mark Whittington, Expedition Leader.

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## BACKGROUND

M/V Polar Star was built in Finland, and served in the Swedish Maritime Administration's fleet of icebreakers under the name of Njord. Today, the M/V Polar Star, an expedition cruise ship, is owned and operated by Polar Star Expeditions, formed in 2000 and a company of Karlsen Shipping. When the M/V Polar Star was purchased in 2000, she underwent a complete retrofit and upgrades, and was then renamed after her namesake that served Karlsen's Arctic cruise program.

Karlsen Shipping, the parent company, is an old Norwegian family business originating from the northwestern coast of Norway. It is now headquartered in Halifax, Canada and is solely owned by Martin Karlsen. With over 100 years experience in many aspects of the marine industry, Karlsen Shipping has operated primarily in the Polar Regions.

The M/V Polar Star is large enough to voyage to remote areas in comfort, yet small enough to enter remote destinations that other vessels can only sail past. The ship explores nature's most breathtaking wonders, local culture and history, and its voyages offer magnificent wildlife on a journey that is spirited with a sense of discovery. The M/V Polar Star carries ten Zodiacs (small inflated watercraft) allowing passengers access to unique locations.

The M/V Polar Star boasts an exceptional on-board team. The Captain and the crew are recognized as some of the best in the industry, and focus on the ship's operations and safety. Polar Star's Expedition Leader, together with the Captain and officers, plans the day's itinerary. A group of talented men and women: naturalists, lecturers, guides, and zodiac drivers assist the Expedition Leader daily to create a full and varied learning experience.

Within the ship's informal and relaxed atmosphere, the hotel Manager and team will treat you with their superior warm service and gracious hospitality.

Polar Star's clients have expressed that the M/V Polar Star has some of the "industry bests" on board including an extremely spacious bridge with an open bridge policy; a large observation lounge/lecture hall with seating for all passengers and 180°+ viewing; one of the best standard cabins (the K3); and a superior amount of outside viewing areas. In addition to the forty-six passenger cabins, the common areas include: a shop, a charming library, a bar, and a fitness facility. The dining room seats all passengers in one sitting, and the varied international menu is prepared fresh on-board.

Polar Star Expeditions' commitment is "to create meaningful and memorable cruise expeditions to remote destinations – alive with the energy and power of untouched nature". With a capacity for one hundred passengers, the M/V Polar Star's on-board experience is ideal—there is a contagious shared spirit of adventure. Polar Star Expeditions offer their clients the opportunity to intimately view and engage with the environment. Every day offers first-hand excitement whether it is an exotic community; a playful pod of whales; a group of polar bears lounging; or a colony of penguins busy about their day. As well as educational and historical, a voyage on the M/V Polar Star is a magical, thrilling, and enchanting journey.

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