

NOVEMBER 2021

IMAS NEWSLETTER

ISLANDS MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SOCIETY

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS



From 2002 to 2021, IMAS fundraisers have donated medical equipment valued over \$560,000 to our beloved islands. It is with your generous support that we have been able to continue our efforts and make a difference. The COVID pandemic has altered our lives. There has been a lot of loss, and we want to acknowledge this challenging time. With this said, we are grateful for your continued support and thank you for all you do for the community. We were able to pivot and create new fundraising activities since our in-person events were once again not able to take place.

Please read on for exciting updates about upcoming projects, recent donations, fundraising events, the launch of our new website and much more.

MISSION STATEMENT:

IMAS, a not for profit corporation, is a humanitarian foundation created in the USA to support the health services for the people of the islands of CRES, LOSINJ, ILOVIK, SUSAK, MALE & VELE SRAKANE, & UNIJE in Croatia

APPEAL 2022

MAIL your DONATION to:

IMAS
P.O. Box 314
Manhasset, NY 11030

OR DONATE ONLINE AT:

<https://imasus.org/donate/>

A 501 (C) 3, REGISTERED IN NYS

Your donation is tax deductible



EXECUTIVE BOARD 2021-2022

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Dusanka Marusic

Executive Vice President
Ines Kucic

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Justin Calabrese

Secretary
Fedora Rucconich

Assistant Secretary
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Treasurer
Loredana Beg

Assistant Treasurer
Anton Benvin

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Dusanka Marusic

Dear Friends of IMAS,

During these difficult times, our critical mission continues. We rely on you, our loyal supporters, to contribute if you are so able to help our islands' hospital and remote health service providers. I am happy to report we donated generously to the not-for-profit facility, Wellness Center in Veli Lošinj, "Lječilište", in February and again in October 2021 for lung and heart diagnostics. They provide services for locals and tourists specializing in physical rehabilitation, respiratory therapy as well as massages and dermatological cosmetic services.

Our Annual Appeal was off to a good start with our 2021 Newsletter. From \$20 to \$500 dollar donations, we make every dollar count. Donations of any amount are always welcome and you can donate directly at any time by check or credit card via our website.

With our newly launched website, our former president Zdenko Beg included a link where you can donate on the site conveniently.

Please visit www.imasus.org for updates on our events, and to sign up to stay connected.

You can also follow us on Facebook at our IMAS Cres-Lošinj page.

In these unprecedented times, without being able to hold our in-person fundraisers, we had to be innovative and think outside the box.

Franko Neretich and Jasna Dobrila sold one hundred 2021 wall calendars, featuring beautiful vintage postcards of the island towns and village life.

Our newest Board member, Julie Butkovic, helped us discover the power of Zoom and hosted a virtual "Comedy Night" to share some laughs.

Doris Karcic initiated a used Shoe Drive. A company actually paid us for your old shoes! Thank you to everyone who cleared out their closets last winter. Doris also solicited donations on her Facebook page during Giving Tuesday.



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
2021-2022**

Zdenko Beg*

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Marco Pinezich

Klaudio Simicic

Julie Butkovic

Mari Zgombic

ADVISOR : PETER BUDINIC

*FORMER PRESIDENTS **

These are just a few of the many ways our Board continues to raise funds and plan for the future. We are moving forward little by little, until the time we can be together again and resume our in-person, larger fundraising events.

Please support our rescheduled Dinner Dance on April 24, 2022, with honoree George Karcic, at La Fortuna Restaurant in New Jersey.

We are looking forward to celebrating our 20th Anniversary on the islands of Cres-Lošinj next summer with YOU.

Please keep us in your prayers and hearts when making donations.

May you and your families stay safe,

Dusanka Marusic

**NEXT DONATION \$10K+
STEAM STERILIZER FOR
DOM ZDRAVLJA**



The Tiche 60 liter Autoclave Steam Sterilizer will sterilize surgical items. It has a 60 liter capacity with four trays allowing for multiple items to be cleaned during the cycle. A built-in printer records the entire procedure, with an automatic print-out providing a permanent record of every sterilization cycle. A water purification system ensures the sterilizer is protected and the quality of the water is constantly monitored through a sensor.



2022 UPCOMING EVENTS TO CELEBRATE

IMAS' 20TH ANNIVERSARY

SAVE THE DATES!

Our rescheduled dinner
dance will take place on
April 24, 2022 at 4pm
La Fortuna Restaurant
in New Jersey.

Artist, George Karcic, is our
honoree.

We hope to see you there!

Summer 2022, we plan to
continue the 20th
Anniversary celebration on
the island of Lošinj.
Tentative date July 30th

MORE DETAILS TO BE
SHARED SOON!

FENO ASTHMA TESTING MACHINE DONATION FOR LJEČILIŠTE IN VELI LOŠINJ

We thank the **Belanich Family** for their generous donation

Our benefactor was born and raised in Seattle, Washington and is a Real Estate developer. He does philanthropy here and in the Old Country, helping charities and funding restoration of Churches in Veli Lošinj and Ilovik. His noble donation for the Lječilište in Veli Lošinj is made in honor of his dear parents.

His father, Joseph Belanich, was born in Ilovik in 1894 and died in Seattle in 1986. His mother, Mary Budinich-Steffich, was born in Seattle in 1906 and died there in 2000. She came from a prominent Lussingrandese family. They visited the Islands numerous times, loved Lussingrande (Veli Lošinj), spoke our dialect and had a lovely sense of humor.

This donation allowed IMAS to deliver the FeNO device on October 5, 2021.

A FeNO test measures the amount of nitric oxide in a person's breath. This determines the degree of inflammation in the patient's airways.



It is quick and non-invasive and easy to use for both children and adults. To take the test, the doctor will have you blow into a handheld device that will track your results. It is performed at the doctor's office, and the results are available right away.

Tracking FeNO levels in someone with asthma, can help in a variety of ways:

- Determines if your current management plan is working properly and if your medications need to be adjusted
- May identify what type of asthma you have
- Can track your airway inflammation over a period of time and can tell your doctor if you have been taking your medications correctly

LJEČILIŠTE IN VELI LOŠINJ

2021 DONATIONS

TWO RESPIFIT - PULMONARY MUSCLE REHAB EQUIPMENT

\$6,845

TWO PULSE OXIMETERS

\$571

TEN THRESHOLD IMT - HOME LUNG EXERCISERS

\$285

MYOCARDIO INFRACTIONS POINT OF CARE TEST KITS

\$3,162

FENO ASTHMA TESTING MACHINE

\$12.882

IMAS Board Members visited the facility this summer and met with the grateful staff. They are very pleased with the FeNO machine that is already being utilized. The facility is well maintained and offers many services to the people of our beloved islands.

WELLNESS CENTER 'LJEČILIŠTE' HISTORY



The Sanitarium was first put to use in 1886. Karl Stefan, a member of the Habsburg dynasty, chose the site as his summer residence because of the beautiful landscape, vegetation and extremely favorable climatic conditions. He purchased land and built a villa that was used as his family's private residence for 20 years. He had six children and found the natural healthy conditions at the location to be very beneficial for all of them ; mild Mediterranean climate with many hours of sunshine, clean sea, air and large complexes of pine forests.

The facility is now known as VILLA ELIZABETA.

Under Yugoslavia, its main focus was the treatment of lung and skin diseases. At the beginning of this year, a dedicated Pulmonary clinic began and IMAS has helped with equipment there. Other specialties include Dermatology, Physical Therapy, Podiatry and Beauty Treatments. Their program for therapeutic Covid recovery has also been very successful.

The grand opening of the new facility took place in 2013. The great granddaughter of Karl Stefan and some family members came from Vienna to attend the ceremony.

A state of the art, brand new building recently constructed is called MAGNOLIA. It has a physical therapy center, new pool and all medical services take place there.

There is also a new restaurant/eating facility with a beautiful terrace just built in the original Villa Elizabeta. They are also in the process of redoing the family chapel that is attached to the house.

This is a not-for-profit facility, where all funds are spent for the benefit and improvement of the facility and its services. Most patients do not have to pay out of pocket because services are covered by their health insurance with a referral from their doctor.

With respect to children/minors, the patient's family can stay with the child. Physical therapy is free and includes room and board.

Private pay patients are also accommodated at a modest cost.



DOM ZDRAVLJA MALI LOŠINJ UPDATES

IMAS Board Members met with the Hospital Administration this summer. They met with the new director, Dr. Tanja Mikuličić and Alenka Mrsic, Mag. Med. Tech (glavna sestra/head nurse).

Dr. Mikuličić's background is gynecology but COVID is a current priority. She was enthusiastic and committed to making the hospital a better place for the town.

She gave a tour of all the floors of the hospital, including the Dialysis Department, patient area, the X-ray room with a 3 year old digital X-ray machine, the emergency room and much more. There are ~10 local dialysis patients right now, plus tourists who come on different days.

The hospital is very well organized and maintained.

The dental office is being renovated and the dental chair IMAS donated should be installed by the end of the year.

Dom Zdravlja is able to diagnose and treat many medical problems. They can also start the diagnostic work up and forward accurate information immediately to Rijeka because of the available equipment in Lošinj. This reduces the time a patient needs to visit or stay in Rijeka.

IMAS Board Members also met with officials in the Mayor's office in Mali Lošinj. They were very interested in our activities and expressed their support of our efforts.

Sock aides were delivered to Dom za starije osobe "Marko A. Stuparić" Veli Lošinj (senior care facility) and a demonstration was given by Zdenko Beg on how to use them. They were surprised at how simple and helpful they actually are. This was a project that was very important to our dear deceased founding member, Anita Pagan. Many thanks to Marco Pinezich for shipping the aides gratis.

IMAS is the largest single private donor to Dom Zdravlja in Mali Lošinj.



2nd from left: Dr. Tanja Mikuličić, along with staff members



Thank you IMAS Board Members Ivanka & Miroslav Eror, Fedora Rucconich, Maria Cividini, Liliana Muskardin, Zdenko Beg & Marina Pilic for the meetings you attended on the islands.



FUNDRAISING EFFORTS TOTALING \$6.4K

In February, we hosted a **virtual Comedy Night** fundraiser with very talented, local comedians selling **54 tickets**. It was a fun event that brought much needed laughter to all who joined in, while helping us raise funds.

Chairperson: Julie Butkovic

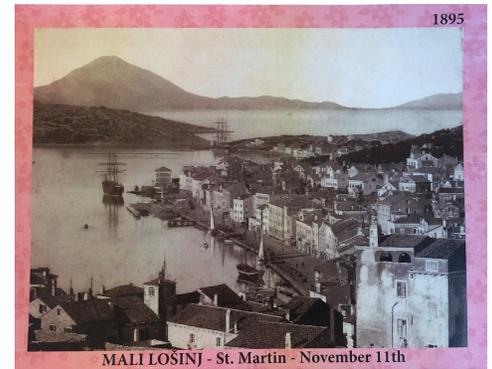


In March, we held our **Shoe Drive**, in partnership with Funds2Orgs, collecting **2,690** lightly worn shoes. The organization ships the shoes to micro-entrepreneurs in countries like Haiti. In turn, they sell the shoes in their communities. Because of the lack of high-quality education and sustainable job opportunities, many people sell merchandise. And that includes shoes to create small businesses, also known as micro-enterprises. Funds2Orgs gives funds to organizations like IMAS for our fundraising efforts, and in turn, we can purchase medical equipment for the islands.

Chairperson: Doris Karcic

Antique pictures from our islands covered the pages of the **2021 Vintage Calendar** we sold around the Holidays. It made for a great gift and many loved seeing these old, unique and historical pictures.

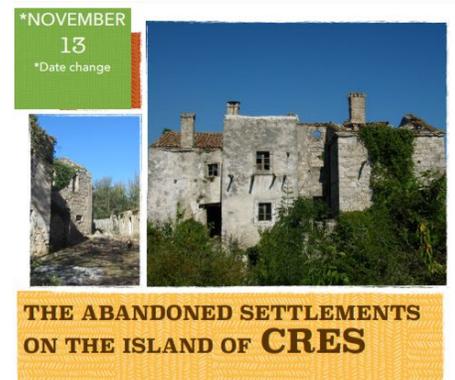
Chairpersons: Franko Neretich & Jasna Dobrila



We raised funds on **Facebook** on **Giving Tuesday**. This is usually the Tuesday after Thanksgiving and is a movement to create an international day of charitable giving at the beginning of the Christmas and holiday seasons. A special mention to **Doris Karcic** for organizing and promoting on Facebook!

This November, we hosted a **Zoom** presentation that covered **The Abandoned Settlements of the islands of Cres**. The talk was given by Dr. Slaven Bertosa, Professor of History at Juraj Dobrila University in Pula, Croatia. This is another creative, social distanced way we are raising funds this year.

Chairperson: Marina Pilic



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED!

IMAS WEBSITE LAUNCH



The official IMAS website launched with a background on our history, how the organization began, information on all our previous medical equipment donations and a brief overview of the islands we help. It is now easily accessible to make online donations and stay connected.

Thank you to the website committee, Zdenko Beg, Doris Karcic and Astrid Kuljanic, who worked with web designer, Joe Maracic, to create the comprehensive site.

Please visit <https://imasus.org/> and help us spread the word!

AMAZON SMILE

You can now support IMAS every time you shop on Amazon! Please visit <https://smile.amazon.com> and add IMAS as your charity of choice. Then log on to this same site, that is now linked to your Amazon account, and help us make a difference.



NEW BOARD MEMBER

Julie Butkovic



"My heritage is from the islands of Croatia, with my Mom being from Cres and my Dad from Unije. I always enjoyed hearing my grandmother's stories about growing up on Cres, and so during the summer after my college graduation, I spent 40 days there completely falling in love with it and feeling right at home. There is nothing like the beautiful sea and air. My husband, Ivan, is from Malinska and we often spend time visiting his family on the island of Krk. I have a Business Marketing degree with a minor in Italian from St. John's University, and 15+ years of digital advertising sales experience. I also recently graduated from the Connecticut School of Broadcasting. My volunteering experience includes spearheading the Faith in Action Service Committee at St. Joseph's Catholic Academy, assisting the Children Have Dreams Too foundation and I am a specially trained Palliative Care Doula at Mount Sinai Hospital, providing support to severely ill patients and their families. I look forward to bringing innovative, virtual fundraising ideas to the IMAS organization, since in-person gatherings will be limited for the foreseeable future. I will do all I can to help raise funds for all the wonderful work IMAS is doing."

"Julie, true to her word organized our very first "Comedy Night" via zoom. She and her husband Ivan helped during our "Shoe Drive." We look forward to seeing what other new ideas she will introduce to our team." - Dusanka

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 MR & MRS SIME & DUSANKA MARUSIC
 ANTONIO & LIDIA MAVER

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 DEBORAH PAGANO
 NADIA & ANTONIO CASTELLAN
 LAURA GALOSIC
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 ZELJKO & ROSEANNE KARCIC
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 JULIA WALDRON
 ANITA LEGOVICH
 ZENO HROMIN
 JOHN VLACANCICH
 GUIDO & TERESA PETRANI
 MARIA RUBINIC
 MARINA SABLICH

We collected \$31,952 in direct contributions.
 Please include IMAS when planning your annual charitable gifts for 2022.

Thank you for your generous support!

ISLAND UPDATES & IMPROVEMENTS

Anecdotally, we've heard from many who visited the islands this summer that the tourist season was alive and bustling, lingering on well into September and early October. We are happy to know many returned to visit after a long time due to the pandemic. Here are some updates and news of latest happenings from the islands.



Cres had a beautiful Kaici event and also celebrated the opening of their new riva, subsidized by the EU. Many other islands also have new rivas, like Unije.



Ivan Ljubicic, Roger Federer's longtime coach, opened his tennis academy in Veli Lošinj this summer. Federer visited the facility with his family. According to locals, tennis presence on the island is over 100 years old. He chose Lošinj because of the beneficial climate, with over 200 days of sunshine each year, making it the perfect locale to train in the open. An ode to the island and its supreme air quality.



A new golf course is being built in Matalda (Punta Križa-Cres).



Currently, a solar power plant is being built on the island of Cres that will be the biggest in Croatia. The power plant's connection power is 6.5 MW, with the expected production of about 8.5 million kWh of electricity annually. This corresponds to the consumption of about 2,500 households.

Water pipeline works on Unije will soon be completed along with a 7 kW solar panel system on a desalination plant ready to be complemented with the new meteorology station installed in May, smart meters and sensoring, leading to smart utility management. A 1 MW solar power plant is also planned as part of the self-sustaining island Unije project.

CROATIAN RECIPES

Bajadera / Chocolate Wafer Bars

Ingredients

MAKES 50 BARS

1 cup water

3 cups granulated sugar

1 1/4 cups (2 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter or margarine

1 pound tea biscuits, crushed (or graham cracker crumbs)

2 1/2 cups shredded coconut

1/4 cup rum or brandy

3 torte wafers (square crispy wafers available at Croatian or European grocers)



GLAZE:

1/2 cup, (1 stick) unsalted butter or margarine
6 to 7 squares (6-7 oz.) semisweet chocolate

Preparation

1. Heat the water and sugar together in a saucepan over medium heat until the sugar dissolves
2. Stir in the butter, followed by the biscuit crumbs, coconut and rum
3. Mix well using a wooden spoon until combined and then remove from heat
4. Take one torte layer from the package and place on a serving tray
5. Spread half of the filling on this layer. Top with another torte layer, pressing down lightly all over the layer
6. Now spread the remaining filling over this layer and top with a third torte layer, pressing down gently

GLAZE Preparation:

1. Combine the butter or margarine with the chocolate in a double boiler, or bain-marie method or microwave. Allow to melt and then stir well to make a smooth paste.
2. Pour over the torte, and then place it in the refrigerator to allow glaze to set
3. Cut into squares before serving and **enjoy!**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS & SEE YOU IN 2022!