

International Seafarers' Centre The Bridge; location Oostvoorne open!

Friday, October 7th, the International Seafarers' Centre, location Oostvoorne (ISC-LCO) has been opened with great interest. Numerous invites gathered at the end of the afternoon at Cultural Centre 'De Man' to attend the opening of the brand new seafarers' centre. In this townhouse the foundation has a foyer and their own room at their disposal. There is also a separate entrance to several rooms that can be rented for receptions and other activities.



Photo 1. Bernt Koning & manager Edwin van Os.



Photo 2. Driver Toon van Hemen in front of the bus

Guests can use the non-commercial bar, the kitchenette, Wi-Fi and the parking. The last few weeks we have worked hard to furnish the basement of the building. With the collaboration of amongst others the town of Westvoorne, the contractor, the subcontractors and the suppliers we succeeded to get the centre ready for the official opening. The seafarers centre has their own bus - a donation of the foundation 'Stichting Welzijn Zeevarenden Rotterdam' - to transport the seafarers from and to the harbour.



Photo 3. Reception of all invitees



Photo 4. Mrs. Annie Gruisen invites all speakers.

The foundation of The Bridge has been made possible by the initiator Bernt de Koning, who as chairmen of the foundation International Seafarers' Centre LCO, has spent the last four years to realize the seafarers' centre. Thanks to the support during the start up phase of the Rotterdam Port Welfare Committee, port Authority of

Rotterdam, town of Westvoorne and a group of different financiers he finally succeeded.

Last year a seafarers' centre opened in Brielle, under the Danish flag, and together with the Flying Angels Club in Schiedam, we now have three centres to welcome the seafarers in and around the harbour of Rotterdam.

The opening ceremony took place at Cultural Centre De man. Mrs. Annie Gruisen, secretary of ISC-LCO, invited several speakers: Bernt de Koning who shortly told us about the history and foundation of the ISC-LCO; then alderman Mrs. Paméla Blok – van Werkhoven, harbour master of Rotterdam René de Vries and chairman of the NZC, Mr. Hans Kapteijn.



Photo 5. The official opening: Mrs. Gruisen, René de Vries, Bernt de Koning and Paméla Blok – van Werkhoven.



Photo 6. Impression of the reading table and the computer table.

With the exchange of several gifts and the making of a knot in an old fashioned hemp rope, the opening of the ISC-LCO was formally conducted.

Searching for volunteers. Since three weeks Edwin van Os together with 22 volunteers is managing The Bridge during 3 days a week. In these three weeks we have already welcomed 170 visitors. The target audience are the seafarers of ships that are in the harbour with an average of 55 hours; mainly bulk carriers and tank ships. The last few days people from several countries have visited us, like China, Philippines, India, Georgia, Russia, Germany and Poland. They are all amazed when they enter our beautiful village Oostvoorne; so quiet and peaceful and all these nice people and houses! 'Where is the super market and till what time can we go shopping?' The first remarks and questions of the seafarers who sometimes didn't see anything else for weeks then the horizon, the waves and a remote loading dock in Brazil.

To have the seafarers' centre opened 7 days a week, instead of the 3 days now, we need about 40 volunteers, who all help out once a week from 16:00 till 22:00 hours. Volunteers who are interested in accompanying the seafarers are invited to contact the LCO Foundation, phone nr: 06-32274725.

For transport look at the website :

www.isc-thebridge.com or phone 0031-32274725
