

Care Packages to Cuba

Fall Interim Business Meeting
2 Tenth Month 2021

Hi Phoebe,

This is Johannes Werner. Mercedes Soca and I make up the subcommittee in charge of organizing shipments to Cuba.

Thank you for offering to help. Jack Braden suggested we bring you up to speed.

In August, Mercedes organized a first shipment of 12 pounds of medicine to Friends in Havana, as accompanying luggage with returning Cuban travelers from Russia.

We now want to put this on somewhat more organized footing, by sending packages via Crowley, a major shipping line that sends two container ships a month from Port Everglades to Mariel in Cuba. They work with state shipping company CubaPack, which delivers our packages at the recipient's doorstep.

These shipments take long - sometimes more than three months - to get to the final recipient, but they are for now the only plannable way of sending much-needed medicine and food from the United States to Cuba. And they deliver to the door of the recipient.

Here's the link to the Crowley Cuba package

service: <https://lp.crowley.com/en/cubaexpress?hsCtaTracking=b2c3af6f-61d1-4075-81f2-18221a87e34e%7C663e89b8-722b-4a3e-99db-e4c6d8075b2c>

Crowley would allow us to ship a batch between 12 and 21 pounds. If we start with a 12-pound shipment (minimum), shipping and related costs will be just under \$200 (including USPS mailing to the Crowley warehouse in Miami). A 21-pound shipment would end up costing us just under \$300 in shipment costs.

The recipient must also pay a custom processing fee of 50 Cuban pesos (24 pesos = \$1) per 3-pound bag upon pickup or delivery, which we should reimburse them.

If the recipients prefer pickup at the CubaPack warehouse in the Havana boonies (this could cut some waiting time), the shipping cost would be \$48 for a 12-pound shipment, and \$84 for a 21-pound shipment, but we would have to add around \$60 for taxi.

We are, in theory, ready to begin buying medicine, food, or toiletries. We are seeking feedback from Friends in Cuba what it is they most need, and we are also finding out from them how these packages/bags should be organized to allow for fair distribution.

Any suggestions on how we should proceed?

One last thought: We could save some time and shipping cost if we were to buy our donations online and have them shipped directly to the Crowley warehouse in Miami. However, I was also thinking that buying the goods in person and packaging them here (in Sarasota, for example), would allow mobilizing volunteers, which creates a more direct relationship with Friends in Cuba, and could prompt a few more donations.

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