



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE^{OF} AMERICA

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, Inc.

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NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS CHILDREN'S MEDICAL FUND LUNCHEON HONORS ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS OF AMERICA AWARDS OVER \$184,000 FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND RESEARCH

DATELINE -- The Twelfth *National Philoptochos* Children's Medical Fund Luncheon, was held on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2009 at the Boca Raton Resort in Boca Raton, Fla. with over 500 people in attendance from throughout the United States. The event entitled "**Let Us Rejoice and Embrace the Children,**" was organized by the National Philoptochos and the Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos under the high patronage of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America and with the spiritual blessings of His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta.

The Children's Medical Fund Luncheon unites supporters from across the United States every two years to raise funds for critically ill children. At the luncheon, National Philoptochos President Aphrodite Skeadas presented donations totaling \$184,353 to the following area hospitals and programs:

Dr. John T. MacDonald Foundation, Inc., Coral Gables, Florida; Children's Hospital, Medical University of South Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; Carolinas Healthcare Foundation, Levine Children's Hospital Carolina Medical Center, Charlotte, North Carolina; University of Alabama, Birmingham, Alabama; University of Florida Shand's Children's Hospital, Gainesville, Florida; Lee Memorial Health System Foundation, Children's Hospital of South West Florida, Fort Myers, Florida; Visiting Nurse Health Systems, Inc., Visiting Nurse/Hospice of Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia; The Wilmer Ophthalmological Institute at the John's Hopkins University and Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland.

The Luncheon program featured the inspiring remarks of Archbishop Demetrios; dynamic presentations by President Aphrodite Skeadas; a stirring welcome from Metropolitan Alexios and heart-warming testimony from the guest speaker, Mr. Mike Emanuel, Fox News White House Correspondent, and parents whose children have been assisted at the area hospitals. Children brightened the program with special musical performances by the Saint Mark's Church Youth Choir of Boca Raton and Poetry Readings that included a dedication to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. The program was aptly guided by Ms. Cynthia Demos, the Emmy Award winning CBS newscaster, who served as Mistress of Ceremonies.

"The innocence of children touches our hearts deeply through their simple acts of kindness and expressions of love and the pureness of children's love offers a great blessing to us in Philoptochos as we fulfill our mission to assist those who need us most," said Aphrodite Skeadas, National Philoptochos President.

During the Luncheon and on behalf of the 27,500 National Philoptochos members throughout the country, Mrs. Skeadas made a presentation in recognition of Archbishop Demetrios' Tenth Anniversary of his enthronement as Archbishop of America and she thanked His Eminence for his inspirational leadership, guidance, love and support for Philoptochos.



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President Skeadas also thanked the Luncheon General Chair and Atlanta Metropolis Philoptochos President, Evangeline Mekras Scurtis, and the Luncheon Co-Chairs, Helen Ballerano and Patricia Sourlis, as well as the entire Luncheon Committee from throughout the country and offered special recognition to the entire Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos.

A heartfelt *thank you* was expressed to all the benefactors and sponsors for their generosity and to all the Philoptochos Chapters and members for their continued and generous support for the Children's Medical Fund Luncheon and the Philoptochos mission, "giving every child the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential by providing a positive impact on the quality of their lives." Additionally she recognized the 2007 Luncheon Chair, Valerie Roumeliotes, for the successful Luncheon held in the Metropolis of San Francisco.

Guest speaker Michael Emanuel offered a heartwarming, personal story of faith, love and support through his family's journey as they faced a corneal transplant for their son Savas. Following Mr. Emanuel's remarks, President Skeadas announced the donation of \$20,000 in honor of Michael Emanuel's son Savas to The Wilmer Ophthalmological Institute at The Johns Hopkins University and Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, for their Pediatric Corneal Transplantation Program.

In his closing remarks Archbishop Demetrios thanked all those responsible for the beautiful luncheon, the guest speaker Michael Emanuel and the mistress of ceremonies, Cynthia Demos, the great benefactors and supporters, the hospital and research representatives for their dedicated work on behalf of children, attendees, and especially the wonderful program that featured the children and youth of the Metropolis of Atlanta. Archbishop Demetrios reemphasized the importance of this unique luncheon and the mission of Philoptochos to constantly increase in participation and fundraising to support the education and health of all children recognizing that in some countries children do not reach the age of five. He stated that Philoptochos is an army of nobility and the jewel of our Church and that Philoptochos must continue to do what God does by loving people. His Eminence urged the Philoptochos to continue and to exceed its present accomplishments.

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