

AGAPE Dinner held for Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy

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Calvin Coolidge, 30th American President, once said: "Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence --- Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "press on" has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race."

And there is good news in the Bible for those who stand firm, persevere, and struggle till they succeed: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). It was in this spirit of persistence that the National Philoptochos President Aphrodite Skeadas flew in to Chicago to address the Philoptochos members at the Agape Dinner sponsored by the Chicago Metropolis Philoptochos on Tuesday, February 15th to benefit the *Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy*.

On July 7, 2010, at the National Philoptochos Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, it was unanimously decided to establish a permanent home for our National Office and name it *Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy*, to be located in New York City. Since then Mrs. Skeadas has expressed the need and purpose of the Center, appealing for support and contributions to further the mission of Philoptochos and expand services. More than \$1 million in contributions and pledges have been raised to date.

Mrs. Skeadas affirmed that her experience in working with Philoptochos members has been, that whenever a need arises there is overwhelming response, and for the Philanthropy Center, the response has been awe-inspiring and humbling. The *Philoptochos Center* will be purchased and supported by the Ladies of the Philoptochos, who have served the Organization with love and compassion and a vision for the future. Mrs. Skeadas stated that this year we are celebrating the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Philoptochos, and her dream and wish is for Philoptochos to fulfill another 80 years, and beyond.

Ms. Skeadas expressed her special fondness and love for the Chicago Metropolis community, because, she said this was the place where she was first named President of the National Philoptochos and every time she visits Chicago good things happen and she is confident that it will be the case this time too. She expressed her deepest appreciation for the valuable work done by the Chicago Metropolis Philoptochos, calling their members "heroes."

Chicago Metropolis Philoptochos President Joanne Stavrakas, in her remarks, expressed her appreciation for Ms. Skeadas' kind words, and said that "Aphrodite may consider the Chicago ladies as heroes but we think of her as a super-hero for her untiring efforts as our National President, her energetic and unequivocal consummate leadership, making everyone she meets feel as "someone uniquely special."

Mrs. Stavrakas also expressed her deepest appreciation to His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos, for his guidance and support and to her Board members and Metropolis Chapter Presidents, members, and guests whose support and caring generosity makes our mission more meaningful. A special mention of

gratitude and appreciation for Mr. and Mrs. Demetrios Kotsakis for their generous support and “agape for Philoptochos.”

In attendance were past Presidents of the Chicago Metropolis, Georgia Barris, Susan Regos, Mary Ann Bissias and Ms. Helen Theodosakis, who, drawing upon her vast experience, delineated the history of the Philoptochos, expressing our gratitude for the hard work and sacrifices of the women who laid the foundations of the Philoptochos and gave us a platform to serve those in need and enabled us to leave a legacy for our daughters to continue to build and assist the most vulnerable in the community.

His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos led the participants in prayers, assisted by Rev. Fr. Nicholas Nikokavouras. The atmosphere in the beautifully decorated room of the Rosewood gave an aura of love and friendship, especially since it was the day after St. Valentine’s Day, with ‘hearts’ placed on every table, one could feel the spirit of caring, sharing, and giving. The food as usual was sumptuous and enjoyed by everyone.

This inspirational evening came to an end leaving the participants with high hopes for the future and enthusiasm to build a Center of Philanthropy that all of us can be proud of.