



Philanthropy Witness



The Official Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

May/June 2015

Philoptochos Supports Orthodox College Students

Atlanta Annunciation Cathedral Philoptochos Ministry For Orthodox College Students



Pictured above: Father Paul Kaplan, Dean of the Annunciation Cathedral in Atlanta and Father Christos Mars, Cathedral Presbyter and college students from the greater Atlanta area who meet together at monthly OCF gatherings.

Atlanta Philoptochos **College Outreach Ministry** serves as a home away from home for college students enrolled in Atlanta area schools and as a resource for local college-aged parishioners who are studying out-of-state.

The ministry provides students in the Atlanta area with transportation to any church service (especially during Holy Week), pairs them with host families when they can't go home for the holidays and offers them a free monthly luncheon after Divine Liturgy during the academic year. Other ways of making students feel welcomed in their adoptive parishes include treating them to tickets to annual parish fellowship events such as the March 25th and Palm Sunday luncheons and

the Pascha picnic. Additionally, transportation and free admission tickets are provided to the annual Greek Festival.

For local parishioners who are in college out-of-state, information is forwarded to a Philoptochos chapter near their school so that area Orthodox parishes can welcome them. Throughout the year they receive mailed birthday cards, emailed iconograms for their Name Days, copies of a quarterly digital newsletter and text messages for the Ecclesiastical New Year, the Nativity Fast and the Lenten Season. Final exam care packages sent in December and April include snacks, paper icons and bookmarks, as well as personalized letters from GOYANs.



Atlanta Philoptochos College Outreach Ministry is a fully **Pan-Orthodox** organization, always looking for new ways to reach out to all area Orthodox college students. With a network of communities working together, this ministry can continue to grow.

Go to: www.atlgoc.org/young_adult/campus.html for additional information, including the **College Outreach Form**.

- Atlanta OCF Chairmen, Anna Kostopoulos and Patty Vastakis

Orthodox Christian Fellowship Commitment

The mission of Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), the official campus ministry program under the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States, is to keep Orthodox students connected to Christ and His Church during their college years. Philoptochos continues to be a proud partner with OCF, striving to support fellowship on college campuses whose members experience and witness the Orthodox Christian Church through community life, prayer, service to others and study of the faith. Our youth are the church leaders of tomorrow, so it is imperative that we keep them connected to our faith. Various ways to do that are:

- Promote the **First Forty Days: High School to College Transition initiative**, which continues to grow and flourish, welcoming 400-450 new college freshmen over the past two years. Select an OCF Chairman in your chapter to be responsible for collecting and submitting contact information of each college bound student in your community.
- Submit that list to the OCF Office, 50 Goddard Ave., Brookline, MA 02445 or go to www.ocf.net/firstfortydays to submit the names.
- This list will then enable the OCF office to contact various OCF chapters at colleges throughout the country to match the student with the chapter.
- The **REAL BREAK** program, which provides students the opportunity to understand the true meaning of seeing Christ in others, has had an increase in student participation and this year was held in March with domestic and international trips planned for 100 students
- **Sponsor a College Student Sunday** in October, 2015. More information will be sent in September.

In August 2014, National Philoptochos provided OCF with \$20,000, which was used to underwrite the **Summer Leadership Institute**. Thanks to the generous support of Philoptochos chapters through their National OCF commitment, OCF's Summer Leadership Institute was able to successfully train and prepare 14 Student Leadership Board members for a year of service and leadership as OCF's top student leaders. The Leadership Institute remains completely free to all students attending.

At the May 2015 National Board Meeting, a donation of \$16,000 was made by Philoptochos for this year's Summer Leadership Institute to be held August 11-15.

All of these are tangible results and provide evidence of the impact Philoptochos funding has had on these important programs. To find out more about these programs please visit www.ocf.net.

- OCF Committee Co-Chairs, Pam Argyris and Theone Dickos

Chapter Elections Reminder!!!

Chapter elections should be conducted in the month of May. If you have not had elections yet, please do so as soon as possible. If you have, then we offer congratulations to all newly-elected Philoptochos Chapter Board Members!

Upon receipt of your ratification letter, the Board should convene at a special meeting to elect your chapter officers.

If you have any questions or concerns about the next steps in your chapter's election process, please be sure to visit the National Philoptochos website: www.philoptochos.org. Under the "Resources" tab at the top, click on "Membership & Elections" in the drop down menu. There, you will be given complete information about the steps needed to be taken following chapter elections.

Your timely and correct submissions will help the ratification process!

*Philoptochos Committed to
Rebuilding of Saint Nicholas Greek
Orthodox Church and National Shrine*



The Mission Statement of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, in part, calls upon its members to aid the widowed and victims of disasters, to promote the philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and to promote Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions. Thus, during a two-day meeting of the National Philoptochos Board in New York City, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America offered moving remarks about the Philoptochos mission and the importance of keeping alive its history of philanthropy and strengthening its work in the Church. In his exhortation on May 6, 2015, His Eminence spoke directly to the hearts of the National Board when he recounted the importance of re-building Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and the National Shrine at Ground Zero. Emotions ran high as National Board Members remembered a fateful act of terror when thousands of innocent people lost their lives in a single day. What better way to promote our faith than through the resurrection of this sacred place of healing and worship which will stand for all the world to see as an expression of our Greek Orthodox faith and love for humankind?

Saint Nicholas National Philoptochos Initiative Chairs, Jennifer Constantin, Arlene Siavelis Kehl and Anne Michals offered remarks and reported on the progress of Philoptochos' efforts throughout the country to raise funds for the

rebuilding of this Greek Orthodox House of Worship. After a moving introduction by National Philoptochos President Maria Logus, which included her personal journey through the initial days following the terrorist attack, Jennifer Constantin offered a brief review of funds collected to-date. Anne Michals delivered an overview of the many fundraising events happening in Metropolises and Chapters throughout the country, which reveal Philoptochos' passion for the building project. She offered inspiring and creative ideas for the continuation of Philoptochos fundraising efforts. Arlene Siavelis Kehl gave a summary of the well planned events of the day that would begin shortly after the close of the meeting's morning session. At the conclusion of the presentation, National Philoptochos President Maria Logus presented His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios with a check for \$200,000, the first of many donations as part of the Philoptochos fundraising initiative.



National Board Members then boarded buses for Ground Zero. They were escorted to the Trinity Building where they were met by Father Alex Karloutsos, Assistant to the Archbishop for Public Affairs at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and a member of the Rebuilding Committee for Saint Nicholas, Steven Plate, Deputy Chief of Capital Planning and Director of Construction at the World Trade Center and Nick Koutsomitis, the Architect of Record for the building of Saint Nicholas. The emotional and informational presentation began with commemorating September 11th and included an

EarthCam time-lapse movie detailing the construction process for the World Trade Center and surrounding 16.5 acres of property at Ground Zero. National Board Members learned that the World Trade Center site will include six new skyscrapers, the memorial pools dedicated to the victims of 9/11, the museum, the transportation hub and the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. With construction of Saint Nicholas beginning in June 2015 and the process taking approximately 18 months, the opening of the church and shrine is prayerfully anticipated to be Sunday, April 16, 2017, at which time the first Eastern Orthodox Easter Service will be celebrated. The VIP walking tour, guided by representatives of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, included a trip to the 'Oculus' transportation hub and the other significant structures now in various building stages at the World Trade Center site.

After a tour of the 9/11 Memorial Museum, which commemorates the lives of those who perished through photographs, biographical information, artifacts and audio recordings was complete, National Board Members headed to Gallagher's for a dinner reception. There they were met by Paulette Poulos, Executive Director of Leadership 100, who spoke about a remarkable day soon after September 11, 2001, when she joined His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, of Blessed Memory, to view the destruction of Saint Nicholas Church and the World Trade Center. It was the Archbishop's dream to see the Church rebuilt and to bring life back to Ground Zero. Joining the dinner was Anthoula Katsimatides, Actor, Producer, Writer and Board Member of the National September 11th Memorial and Museum, who lost her brother John on 9/11. John, a faithful man, who at times would light candles in Saint Nicholas Church, worked for Cantor Fitzgerald, the company who suffered the largest loss of life that fateful day. Anthoula spoke about the life of her brother, whose body was never found among the ashes at Ground Zero. This is truly hallowed ground, a cemetery, and Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine will commemorate the thousands of lives lost and serve as a beacon of hope and healing for the world.

*Feeding the Hungry Initiative:
250,000 Meals
Quick Guide for Philoptochos Chapters*



WHO? Choose a city, town, neighborhood or program that has a need

- Look in your local area first
- Check out churches or community partners with existing programs
- Is there a food pantry or homeless or battered women's shelter that could use assistance?
- Some communities have a large number of children in the federal hot lunch program and you could partner with a weekend backpack charity
- Perhaps a local YMCA or Boys and Girls Club in your area provides meals and you could join in
- Get GOYA and other organizations from your parish involved. It's a great way for a family to help as a team

WHAT? Prepare and/or serve meals

- Breakfast, lunch or dinner
- Hot or cold food, packaged food or restaurant donations
- Examples: chicken noodle soup, tray of homemade pastitso and salad, PB & J and homemade brownies
- Create a food pantry in your church

- Hold periodic drives to collect nonperishable food and partner with a facility in a needier location

WHERE? Find a venue for preparation

- Cook the various components of the meal in individual kitchens and come together in another location
- Assemble meals together at church and serve the needy there
- Prepare food at the church and then transport to another location

HOW? Develop a Plan

- Have the parishioners and Philoptochos members formulate a plan together
- See how someone else in your community does it
- Have a newer chapter member do research and present it to your general membership
- Partner with youth who want to do hands-on philanthropy to fulfill community service requirements with their schools and scouting organizations
- You have the tools, you have the faith, give them the means!

FUNDING? Determine what resources are available to your chapter

- Funds designated specifically for this purpose, donations only or individual/family sponsored events
- Create a sign-up sheet with needed items listed and post in the Community Center for coffee fellowship
- Calculate the cost of one day of meal outreach and request donations in memory or in honor of a loved one

WHEN? Just do it!

- Start small and go from there
- The greatest need is often at the end of each month when money is tight
- Try to establish a set time -- such as the third Tuesday every month -- so guests know when to come

Need help and don't know where to begin? Your Philoptochos sisters are here to assist you every single step of the way. Contact us at 250thousandmeals@philoptochos.org.

Watch our progress on Philoptochos.org at Feeding the Hungry: 250,000 Meals and on social media via [#250thousandmeals](https://www.facebook.com/250thousandmeals).

Las Vegas Program Increases Philoptochos Membership by 30%

Retired Presbytera Helen Andrews, of the Panagia chapter of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Las Vegas, Nevada was tasked to create and chair a welcoming committee on behalf of Philoptochos in order to increase and enhance chapter membership.

Presbytera Helen's welcoming committee was comprised of four people from both Philoptochos and the congregation to staff it every Sunday. Two served as greeters who welcomed and spoke with the parishioners as they came out of the Church. Conversation was followed by a visit to the information table, where two other committee members greeted visitors and collected their contact information.

Information gathered was given to the Chapter President and Membership Chair who followed up with a personal phone call to each female visitor and an invitation to all Philoptochos meetings and events.

This new initiative was very successful. The Philoptochos chapter was blessed with the addition of many new members who subsequently became very active. Over a two-year period, membership increased over 30%! Many friendships were formed and strengthened from this personal contact program. In addition, our chapter was enhanced and was strengthened in its ability to fulfill its philanthropic mission.

Please keep in mind the goal of 5% membership increase for every Philoptochos chapter.

National Philoptochos Fifteenth Children's Medical Fund Luncheon



The Metropolis of Boston, under the High Patronage of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America and under the spiritual leadership of His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios is honored to host the Fifteenth Children's Medical Fund Luncheon Saturday, October 31, 2015 at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel. We are pleased to announce that on Sunday, November 1, 2015 His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America will celebrate the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios, His Grace Bishop Sevastianos and Rev. Dr. Demetrios Tonia, Dean at the Annunciation Cathedral of Boston for the Feast Day of Sts. Cosmas and Damianos, the Philoptochos Patron Saints.

As we look back on each previous Children's Medical Fund Luncheon we know that the success of these luncheons rested on the shoulders of the most generous Philoptochos stewards and each and every one of our beloved Philoptochos chapters across the United States.

Invitations to the luncheon will be sent in July and we will be honored if you are able to join our chapters and Philoptochos sisters with some of your members for this memorable luncheon and for the Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

We also turn to you at this critical time to request your full support for this Children's Medical Fund

Luncheon. You will receive a Sponsorship Form and we hope every chapter is included as a Sponsor in the program demonstrating our love for the children. You will also receive Gift Auction tickets with gifts donated by our Metropolises and National Board members. Please share the Sponsorship Form with your parish and parishioners in case they wish to make a donation as well as the tickets.

The Metropolis of Boston includes Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and parts of Connecticut. The Metropolis is blessed with many hospitals serving medically fragile children as well as universities and facilities that offer care, treatment, innovative research and cures for children and their families. Our goal is to raise over \$200,000 in order to distribute substantial grant awards to benefit children throughout the Metropolis of Boston.

Please email cmf2015@philoptochos.org if you have any questions.

- Frances Levas, Metropolis President, CMF Luncheon Chairman

Philanthropy Witness

The next *Philanthropy Witness* will be the September issue. The deadline for articles is August 14.

Have a safe and healthy Summer!

The PR/Communications Committee

The PR/Communications committee is available all year long at:

communications@philoptochos.org

Get E-Mails from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

If you would like e-mail updates from the Archdiocese, click on the link to see the various releases and to subscribe (or unsubscribe): <http://www.goarch.org/listserv/>.

Marriage and the Orthodox Church



The mission of the Family and Society/Interfaith Committee of the National Philoptochos is to integrate the spiritual life with the manifestation of our Christian Orthodox faith through involvement in the volunteer, charitable and educational activities of the Committee.

In addition, we seek to identify strengths, interests and concerns of our members to encourage participation in the life of the Church. One goal is to identify and recommend programs throughout the Archdiocese that fulfill this mission.

A survey by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America revealed that marriage enrichment programs, including those addressing interfaith marriage, were of great interest.

To expand on this, our committee asked Philoptochos chapters across the country to share successful marriage programs held by their parishes. We received many responses and reviewed them all. It was exciting to see what different parishes and chapters are doing in terms of marriage workshops and interfaith marriage programs. Some examples:

Annunciation Church in Elkins Park, PA presented "A Couples Day Out Workshop" led by Father Charles Joanides, Ph.D.

St. Paul's Church in Irvine, CA presented "Resurrecting and Renewing our Relationships: A Marriage Retreat" led by Father Tom and Presbytera Pat Tsagalakis.

St. John the Baptist Church in Euless, TX held a Couples Retreat, "The Holy Meeting of Joachim and Anna Apostolia" led by Fr. David and Presbytera Vasiliki Eckley.

Fr. Charles Joanides, offered additional topics that chapters and parishes could consider for marriage programs. Lectures, half-day meetings or weekend retreats that introduce Christ-centered strategies can enhance oneness in marriage.

- Develop marital education programming which builds upon the information couples acquire during the premarital education process.
- Coordinate with area Orthodox churches to sponsor speakers who offer a Christ-centered perspective related to some of the moral issues impacting marriages today.
- Create a panel discussion with other local churches that focuses on successful marriages, intermarriage, remarriage and step-parenting and/or divorce.
- Host a movie night featuring a film about marriage, such as My Big Fat Greek Wedding, with break out discussions on how difficult issues impact marital satisfaction.
- Create a support group to reinforce that the church family is there to help and understand.

Additional resources are available at marriage.goarch.org or interfaith.goarch.org.

- Family and Society/Interfaith Committee Co-Chairs, Pat Aleck and Josephine Avaneas

75th Anniversary Founders Fund Commitment

The 75th Anniversary Founders Fund was created in 2006 to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of Philoptochos and the lasting contributions and memory of its founding members.

This discretionary ministry commitment provides financial support to older adults and their families, as well as to long-term care facilities serving aging Greek Orthodox individuals throughout the United States.

In 2014, Philoptochos chapters throughout the country contributed \$32,307 to the 75th Anniversary Founders Fund. From these monies, National Philoptochos donated the following to these organizations:



\$10,000 was given to St. Michael's Home in Yonkers, New York for general operations to provide quality care to its residents.



\$10,000 was given to Hellenic Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Canton, Massachusetts to the Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Unit.

In addition, \$12,307 was given for assistance to individuals.

- Aging Committee Co-Chairs, Katherine Kotsis and Carol Stamas

E- Mail Address for Communications



The PR/Communications Committee would love to hear from you! Please send us Philoptochos related news or announcements or submit articles (up to 300 words) and photographs (in JPG form) to our new group email address, communications@philoptochos.org. If you have ideas you would like to share with the Committee, send them our way!

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