Committee on Aging

Co-Chairs: Katherine Kotsis and Carol Stamas
Liaison: Evangeline Mekras Scurtis
Members: Lekita Essa
          Katherine Siavelis
          Harriet Stoukas
          Billie Zumo

The Committee on Aging is gratified to announce that Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta has paternally given his blessing for the Senior Ministry Handbook of the Atlanta Metropolis to be shared with all our Philoptchos sisters. The handbook provides best practice guidelines for Senior Ministry in their respective parishes. It was developed by Lekita Essa, a member of our committee, along with members of the Senior Ministry Committee of the Metropolis.

The goal of the handbook is to provide resources that address the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and personal needs of our members 50 years and older. Services that can be offered include transportation, meal preparation and delivery for shut-ins, visitations, opportunities for interaction with children as well as Priest visitations. Various programs are suggested such as family ties ministry, exercise programs, speakers, and day trips to name a few. Age groups to address include active adults, those slowing down and shut-ins.

A section of the handbook provides specific ways to start or enhance your senior program. Some possibilities for activities and speakers are hearing screenings, book clubs, dietician or nutritionist workshops, game night and computer classes. It is also recommended that a year-end review be conducted along with planning for the coming year. Examples of other senior programs available across the country are additionally included.

Plans are to upload the handbook in its entirety to the National Philoptchos website. Once that occurs, we will notify our membership.

In Christ’s Love,

Committee on Aging
Aid to Greece and Cyprus

Chair: Aphrodite Skeadas
Liaison: Evan Mekras Scurtis
Members: Elaine Cladis Aspasia Melis Maria Stavropoulos
Vickie Demos Anne Michals Eleni Stamboulidis
Christina Hiotis Eleni Psaras Deana Bahlatsis Thomas
Thea Martin Vicki Scaljon Kalli Tsitsipas

The mission of the Aid to Greece and Cyprus committee, which was adopted by the esteemed National Board on November 10, 2017, aims to assist, support and enhance the quality of life for our struggling brethren in Greece and Cyprus.

The horrific economic crises continue to paralyze a great number of people who live under heartbreaking and impoverished conditions and are deprived of basic necessities. For too many there is a profound loss of dignity and little hope for a bright future. The need for aid continues as the suffering is incalculable. Thank you for taking action.

The Committee has defined three paths of targeted fundraising for the Heart to Heart Campaign: (1) Philoptochos Chapter Events; (2) Pop-Up Kafes; and (3) Individual Solicitations.

(1) In March, 2018, in celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation and inspired by the spirit of the heroes of the Greek Independence, an appeal letter signed by President Maria Logus and the Aid to Greece and Cyprus Chair was distributed to our Philoptochos Chapters nationally asking our Stewards to renew their commitment by offering a fellowship fundraising event in their community for the benefit of the people of Greece and Cyprus.

(2) The second ongoing program initiated one year ago was the development of the Heart to Heart Pop-Up Kafes. The concept of the Pop-Ups was to facilitate the expression of love and charity utilizing limited resources, both in time and dollars. This program was designed to offer awareness of the Greek and Cypriot plight while sharing a cup of coffee and a sweet in a light and festive environment – without extensive planning and preparation, at minimal cost to the host, incorporating community spirit, for a brief period of time, at a chosen venue. It is analogous to being with friends for a fun visit – but with a purpose.

(3) Individual solicitations may be personal appeals made to individuals wishing to donate to this mission.

In complete transparency, proposed charities in Greece and Cyprus are reviewed, evaluated, and vetted carefully by the National President and Executive Board of Philoptochos.

In year 2017, a total of $110,000 was disbursed from the fundraising efforts made by the faithful Philoptochos women and their friends. The funds provided relief for underprivileged children, families and elderly seniors, and offered housing, shelter, electricity, meals, medicine and emergency supplies. In addition, enhanced after school programs, extracurricular support and educational and social counseling were offered to children.

With the Grace of God, we are hopeful this program may continue to raise funds in order to help heal fractured lives and bring awareness to the ongoing economic misfortune, affliction and suffering in Greece and Cyprus.
Hellenism and pride in Orthodoxy continue to flourish on line! From products handmade by innovative Greek Americans to icons, greeting cards, and foods, one can find many items on line via GOOGLE.

I highly recommend Legacy Icons, Ancient Faith and Gallery Byzantium to name just a few of many websites that offer items of interest to us, such as prayer ropes, crosses, icons, incense, etc. Check Amazon for hundreds of Greek cookbooks including those with gluten-free recipes.

Explore the internet for our Orthodox monasteries. I highly recommend Dormition of the Mother of God Orthodox Monastery in Michigan. The monks of the New Skete Orthodox Monastery in Cambridge, New York breed champion German Shepherds and have an obedience training program for all breeds, maintaining that that our pets cause us to have a “greater of love of God’s creation”.

Are you on Instagram? Examine Greek Living, Wisdom of the Holy Fathers, Elenais Cooking, Eastern Orthodox Greek Chic Handmades, Blue Mati and many more!

Many hotels in Greece now post gorgeous photos, not only of their properties but other areas of Greece. Look at Grankanaliavillas, Mykonos, Hotel Grande Bretagne, and Greek Gateway.

Interested in Greek history? Old Greek Photos has a comprehensive selection of incredibly interesting photographs. Also, visit Mysterious Greece and Santorini, Heaven on Earth.

Lest we forget: Greek Words, Hellenic Army and our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese website. Surfing the web for information on our traditions, religion, and lifestyle is educational and gratifying. The amount of information now “out there” is astounding.

I am enclosing a wonderful photo with this report that will make you proud from Old Greek Photos.

Respectfully submitted,

Vickie Skandalakis Scaljon, Chair
Arts and Education Committee
Greek Orthodox Priest Theofanis Tratolos
Lt. General Matthew B. Ridgway, U.S. 8th army commander, kisses the cross held by Chaplain Theofanis Tratolos, Greek Orthodox priest attached to the Greek battalion fighting in Korea, during the latter’s celebration of independence Day on the central front in Korea on March 31, 1951. Ridgway
The Autism Committee shall serve as a forum for promoting education to the Greek Orthodox community to heighten autism and autism spectrum awareness. The funds raised by the individual chapters provide assistance to those within the autism spectrum.

The past two years the chapters have contributed over $90,000 to the Autism fund. In 2016 Philoptochos provided funds to the following programs:

- $7,800 – Autism Clinic and Training Center, University of Illinois at Chicago
- $10,000 – Autism Program in Cyprus
- $10,000 – Developmental Connections, Ashburn, Virginia

In 2017 Philoptochos gave funds to the following:

- $15,000 – Syndesmos Agia Atoma Me Aftismo, Cyprus
- $29,812 – Assistance to individuals within the autism spectrum

Presvytera Toni Mihalopoulos, St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Chicago, presented a program, “Pick Up Your Cross”, to the National Philoptochos Board. It is a program designed to teach special needs individuals, including those within the autism spectrum, about the Orthodox Church. Lessons have been developed for clergy and laity who work with these individuals. Other parishes provide special teaching liturgies for individuals within the autism spectrum and those with other disabilities.

The committee thanks the Philoptochos chapters throughout the United States for their continued support of the autism commitment.

Respectfully submitted,

Marian Catechis, Chair
Autism Committee
Cancer and Other Major Illnesses

Chair: Martha Driscoll
Liaison: Jeannie Ranglas
Members: Bessie Drogaris
Diana Jianas

Funding
Cancer and Other Major Illnesses supports those National Social Services cases that are submitted by clients whose needs are affected by cancer and other major illnesses.

From January 2016 - May 2018, sixty (60) medical cases were supported from this fund. Cancer cases accounted for thirty-nine (39) and the other twenty-one (21) cases included cardiac/heart transplant, MS, kidney failure, TBI, Parkinson’s disease, prosthesis plus other medical areas.

Clients in eight Metropolises (Direct Archdiocesan District, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, New Jersey, and San Francisco) received grants supported by this fund.

Disbursements for assistance from the Cancer and Other Major Illnesses Fund:

Total disbursements 2016 - 2017.........................................................$96,465.00
Disbursements January 1, 2018 - May 31, 2018...............................$16,791.00

Breast Cancer
“Tomosynthesis” screening for women of dense breasts was featured in a personal account in the “Philanthropy Witness,” October 2017. In “Calling All Ladies, Especially the ‘Dense’ Ones...,” Elizabeth Driscoll relates how Tomosynthesis screening detected her early breast cancer and advocates how women with dense breasts may need further screening after a mammogram.

“As of June 2017, breast density notification laws had been enacted in 30 states. If you live in one of the 30 states, you will be notified annually of your breast density status with your mammogram results. If you do have dense breasts, then further screening may be warranted and you can advocate for further screening called Tomosynthesis. To check your state and to learn more visit:
http://www.areyoudenseadvocacy.org/dense/.”

Cancer Support Group
Beginning on January 11, 2018 the National Philoptochos Social Services Department conducted a Telephone Cancer Support Group for Orthodox Christians undergoing cancer treatment. For details, please see the report submitted by Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW and Theodora Ziongas, M.A. under Social Services.
Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon

Chair: Anastasia Michals
Co-Chairs: Alexis Limberakis, Eleni Constantinides, Evellyn Tsiadis
Members: Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos Board

The Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon is the principal fundraising event of the National Philoptochos Society, and since its inception in 1989, the biennial luncheon has raised over $3.7 million for children’s hospitals and research programs, as well as special programs that serve the needs of ill and fragile children, along with assistance to individuals and their families throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

On November 11, 2017, over 750 guests gathered at The Venetian in Garfield, New Jersey to support the Fund. Under the inspirational leadership of Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos President Anastasia Michals, Luncheon Chair, and her co-chairs, Eleni Constantinides, Alexis Limberakis and Evellyn Tsiadis, the event was a resounding success. During the luncheon, grants totaling $253,700 were awarded to 15 programs located in New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and the Philadelphia metropolitan area, all part of the Metropolis of New Jersey. The balance of the funds raised in association with this event will be disbursed to cover the medical expenses of needy children throughout the United States during the interim period until the next luncheon as well as to fund children's medical programs and projects at our National Philoptochos Convention. (Go to www.philoptochos.org/outreach/cmfsection for a detailed listing of grant recipients.)

The luncheon program featured the inspiring remarks of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, and a warm welcome from His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey. Maria Vinci Savetierre, Esq., Executive Director of Deirdre’s House, the Center for Morris County’s Child Victims of Abuse and Neglect, one of the grant recipients, provided an impactful, realistic picture of the issue of child abuse and emphasized that the children need not only medical and physical, but also emotional and spiritual care. Anita Baglaneas Devlin, an advocate for addiction recovery, delivered a moving keynote address on the national epidemic of opioid addiction.

Laura Evans Manatos, award-winning journalist, served as Master of Ceremonies for the event, and students from Westminster Choir College from Princeton, New Jersey entertained the guests with a musical interlude including the liturgical hymn, Ti Ipermacho (Mighty Defender), sung in the original Greek. Frances Levas, Luncheon Chair of the 2015 Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon, was the 2017 Honoree.

National President Maria Logus thanked the Metropolis of New Jersey for hosting the luncheon. In addition, the National Philoptochos and the Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos are deeply grateful to Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey for his support and to Mr. Demetrios Kourgelis, owner of The Venetian, for his extraordinary generosity.

As a result of the outstanding efforts of the Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos, the support of the National Board, and the generosity of the many sponsors who supported the event, the 2017 National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon netted record breaking proceeds exceeding $423,000. Axioi!

As a society we have no greater responsibility than the protection, health and welfare of our children. The Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon enables Philoptochos to provide continuing support to benefit these most vulnerable and fragile members of our society. With warm hearts, the record number of attendees left the 2017 Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon newly inspired by the work we do and the difference we make through this most important Philoptochos ministry.
Disaster and Humanitarian Relief

Chair: Martha Stefanidakis
Members: National Executive Board

The years 2016 and 2017 brought many disasters to our country and neighbors. The National Philoptochos responded to these crises with compassion, love and expediency.

In August of 2016, Louisiana suffered catastrophic flooding from New Orleans to Baton Rouge and points west. The Metropolis of Atlanta disaster team and IOCC responded quickly and determinately to assist those impacted, including the small Greek Orthodox Church in Baton Rouge. Through the efforts of National Philoptochos, $35,000 was sent to the Metropolis of Atlanta Disaster Relief Fund.

On August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey reached the Texas Gulf Shore and over 50 inches of rain fell in two days. First responders from Philoptochos’ partner IOCC arrived in Houston and ministered to the thousands that were displaced in shelters. National Philoptochos immediately sent $15,000 from the Emergency Fund and President Maria Logus sent out an appeal to our members who responded with profound love and donations over $109,000. In Houston, the Annunciation Cathedral and Saint Basil the Great Church activated a response team and located over 70 families that were displaced by the storm. Saint Basil’s opened their facility as an IOCC staging area. In addition to the aid received by IOCC, over $58,000 was given directly by Philoptochos to the families to assist with their losses.

Just one month after Harvey, Hurricane Irma hit Puerto Rico, followed just another month later with Hurricane Maria. Through the many donations from our members across the country, National Philoptochos sent $16,075 to IOCC to help with the first responses there.

In addition, over the two year period, $140,000 in disaster and humanitarian relief was distributed for relief to Hurricane Matthew, Ionian Village, West Virginia floods, and the Mytilene earthquakes.

Our continued partnership with International Orthodox Christian Charities enables us to make a significant impact on these disasters. Their “boots on the ground” together with our contributions enriches the lives of those in need.
The Mission of the Committee is to support the work of the philanthropic programs and institutions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate including, but not limited to, Balukli Nursing Home, orphanages, schools and shrines by the Philoptochos Chapters, through the annual commitment, and to increase awareness of the Ecumenical Patriarchate with distribution of information to the Chapters of the Archdiocese.

The goals of the Ecumenical Patriarchate Committee continue to be advanced by the National Philoptochos with great love for our Patriarchate. As we all know, the Mother Church continues to face difficult circumstances in Turkey. The Philoptochos remains committed to fully supporting and assisting our Mother Church as effectively as possible, through the Annual Commitment, through active support of the tireless efforts of the Archons of the Order of St. Andrew, and through the “Ministry of Presence:” travel to the Patriarchate to personally bear witness to our faith, our support for our Patriarch and our belief and that this Church and its Patriarchate are truly ecumenical.

The Annual Commitment:
Annually, on the first Sunday in November, monies are collected for the benefit of patriarchal philanthropic ministries. The annual collection enjoys wide support throughout the United States and results in a collection of approximately $100,000 each year. It was decided at the March 2012 National Board meeting in Atlanta, Georgia that those monies be transmitted to the Patriarchate annually in conjunction with the Name Day of His All Holiness which is celebrated on June 11th.

The monies collected and distributed since our last convention are as follows:
2016: $125,000
2017: $100,000
2018: $125,000

Support for the Order of St. Andrew:
The Archons, as Defenders of the Faith, take the lead role in engaging in international action on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Philoptochos vigilantly seeks out every opportunity to support and assist the Archons in their vital role, including but not limited to:
- Sharing information regarding events and conditions at the Patriarchate,
- Spreading the message of His All Holiness, whether it be about the faith, the environment or the mission of the Great Church of Christ, and
- Supporting the Archons in international forums such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the UN and others.

The OSCE has proven to be an international forum where the issues of the Patriarchate can be presented to an international audience of diplomats, leaders and individuals focused on individual rights. The Archons annually present two papers at the OSCE highlighting the denial of religious freedom that the Church faces every day and the continued efforts to reopen our theological school in Halki. In 2016, the Philoptochos supported the Archons in this effort by submitting a position paper to this very important organization and added our voice to the of the Order and assist them in their work. The paper was presented in Warsaw, Poland by Anita B. Kartalopoulos in September 2016.
Philoptochos Pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Patriarchate:
In October 2007, the National Philoptochos made its first pilgrimage to the Patriarchate, led by Bishop Andonios of Phasiane. All who participated were thankful for a beautiful spiritual experience that included not only an audience with His All Holiness at the Phanar but also visits to our important religious sites.

At the March 2012 National Board Meeting, the members expressed an overwhelming desire to make another pilgrimage to Constantinople which took place in June, 2013 and was led by our spiritual advisor, Bishop Sevastianos of Zela.

Thus, our 2013 Pilgrimage to Constantinople took form and on June 7, 2013, 30 Pilgrims departed from JFK airport for a pilgrimage to Constantinople, our spiritual home.

Given the importance of our support for His All Holiness, it would be most appropriate to consider making another pilgrimage to the Phanar at some appropriate time, either on our own or in conjunction with the Archons.

We are thankful that we, as the members of the National Philoptochos, are able to assist in the great ministry that His All Holiness has undertaken in the Queen of Cities and for all of Orthodoxy worldwide.
Educational Initiatives

Barbara Pasalis, Chair

During the 2014-2016 term, National President Maria Logus challenged members to **do more doing**. To expand the good works of Philoptochos and its service to our communities, during the present term President Logus asked the National Board to develop educational initiatives to address current, critical issues facing our society. These initiatives would serve our Philoptochos stewards, our parish communities, and the community at large. Under the umbrella of the Public Relations Committee, the Educational Initiatives Committee was formed, not as a stand-alone committee, but as an overarching group that reached out to other National Board committees and members to develop programs. These programs are available on the Philoptochos website at [http://philoptochos.org/outreach/projects/#EducationalInitiatives](http://philoptochos.org/outreach/projects/#EducationalInitiatives).

The Philanthropic Initiatives Committee developed the information for the first initiative: **Be Safe, Be Smart – Investigating Technology Safety in the Computer Age.** Katherine Siavelis, Evanthia Valassiades and Peggy Vranas researched the information for this topic. It was initially intended to serve senior citizens in our parish communities, but more information is being added dealing with Facebook and the safe use of cell phones that is relevant for teens, as well.

Next, the committee addressed the need for parishes to serve families with special children. Children with special needs hold a special place in our hearts, yet having them in church presents challenges. The **Inclusion Ministries Program** was developed by Presvytera Toni Mihalopoulos. **Pick Up Your Cross and Follow Me** is a ministry of programs and resources to serve children with special needs and their families.

The **Stop Bullying in Your Community** program was developed as a complete curriculum designed to be used in parishes to teach our young people how to respond when they are personally bullied or when they witness bullying; it is also designed to teach adults and youth leaders the danger signs of bullying and what they can do to create a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. Joanne Stavrakas, Chair, and committee members Despina Denne, Cathy Hareas, Marilyn Jemas, Arlene Siavelis Kehl, Barbara Pasalis, Katherine Siavelis and Cynthia Xenick developed a complete curriculum for use in our parishes consisting of a collection of videos, PowerPoint presentations, activities and resources.

The **Alzheimer’s Disease** initiative was also developed by members from the Philanthropic Initiatives committee. Katherine Siavelis, Peggy Vranas, Maria Antonakas, Evellyn Tsiadis, Evanthia Valassiades and Eleni Zaferes worked on this initiative. The committee is just completing its work which will include symptoms and treatments, ways that family members can help their loved ones and references.

The **Women’s Health Committee** is another stand-alone committee under the leadership of Carol Stamas. Members of the committee are Martha Driscoll, Lekita Essa, Valine Georgeson and Arlene Siavelis Kehl. The committee plans to address a variety of health issues that women face, hoping to continue their work into the 2018-2020 term. They have begun their work with heart disease—the #1 killer of women. Information collected includes important facts, symptoms, profile of the patient, contributing factors, lifestyle, other conditions that contribute to heart disease, medication and treatment, journey after diagnosis, role of advocacy, prevention and education. The committee is also working to obtain personal testimonials of women who are living with heart disease.

In addition, the Women’s Health Committee has formulated a plan to incorporate healthy activities into the long convention days in order the help members avoid mental and physical stress and fatigue. Members will lead interested delegates on early morning walks and stretching exercises during the meetings.

National Philoptochos’ goal in developing these initiatives on these topics is to aid members and communities in living better, healthier, more stress-free lives. If the information provided can save even one life, their goal will be achieved.
Environment Responsibility

Co-Chairs:  Theone Dickos and Diane Saphos
Liaison:  Evangeline Mekras Scurtis
Members:  Pam Argyris
          Despina Denne
          Pat Gogos
          Marilyn Tzakis

“It is a qualitative element of our faith that we believe in and accept a Creator, who fashioned the world out of love, making and calling it “very good.” Tending to and caring for this creation is not a political whim or a social fashion. It is a divine commandment; it is a religious obligation. It is no less than the will of God that we leave as light a footprint on our environment.”

The powerful quote by His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew inspires the Environment Responsibility Committee to continue fulfilling its mission and goals.

Mission Statement

Through shared values and principles, the mission of the Environment Responsibility Committee is to promote awareness and provide programs and procedures to the chapters that will contribute to the preservation and sustainability of our environment.

Goals

1. To provide guidelines for green activities and programs within the church communities stressing the importance of environmental stewardship. Examples: recycling and energy conservation.

2. To provide educational resources to the chapters that reflect the message of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. “The environment is a work of God. We must act responsibly, so that it will be sustained.”

3. To provide a continuing challenge and reminder for each chapter to implement the recycling projects and initiatives recommended by the committee.

4. To recommend and provide guidelines for one new recycling project every year.

To fulfill the mission and meet the goals:

1. The committee continues to write a bimonthly communication of “Green Tips” which help sustain the environment. The Communications Committee posts all the bimonthly communications on the Philoptochos website. The communications are also posted on the Philoptochos Facebook page with a direct link to a printable version.
The Environment Committee has proposed that all the issues of the Philanthropy Witness feature a short article devoted to the environment, and list all the links to its communications and initiatives.

2. The committee continues to send a reminder and challenge to the chapters to implement the following initiatives: **Be Responsible, Go Green and Get Green**, the recycling of small electronics, and **Be Responsible, Be Active and Be Aware in Sustaining the Environment**, the recycling of plastic bags. Both projects are on the Philoptochos website at: [www.philoptochos.org](http://www.philoptochos.org). Proceed to Ministry/Outreach and click on Projects. Simple guidelines are included for easy implementation of the programs.

3. To increase membership participation, the committee is recommending a new project each year. **For 2017 and 2018**, the initiative is in two parts. The committee reviewed the following website: [http://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/edible](http://science.howstuffworks.com/innovation/edible)

   This link contains **Tips for Eco-Friendly Cooking**. Since everyone likes to eat or cook, this is an excellent initiative for participation in helping to sustain our environment. The initial part, **BE RESPONSIBLE, BE GREEN AND ECO-FRIENDLY IN THE KITCHEN** is now posted on the Philoptochos website. From the home page, click on Ministry Outreach and scroll down and click on Philanthropic Projects. Proceed to number 10, Environmental Responsibility. Review the guidelines so that you can actively help sustain the environment while working in the kitchen.

   The second part of the initiative will contain **Guidelines for the Development of Community Gardens**. The projected date for publication is December 2018.

   *The environment is a work of God. Be responsible and always be an active participant in reusing and recycling all recyclable items. Being green should be a way of life. Any little part that we can do will help make a difference.*
National Philoptochos Society  
2016-2018 Committee Report

Family and Society/Interfaith

Co-Chairs: Pat Aleck and Josephine Avaneas
Liaison: Jeannie Ranglas
Members: Philippa Condakes, Joanne Mitchell
Cindy Demeris, Georgia Sarlas
Pat Gogos, Maria Stavropoulos
Diana Jianis, Crystal Thomas
Joanne Kakoyiannis

As the family is the nucleus of civilization and the basic social unit of society, it is very important that our families know the importance of what is occurring in society today and how they can integrate this information through participation in the life of the Church. Aristotle wrote that “the family is nature’s association for mankind’s everyday life.” The mission of the Family and Society Committee is to integrate the spiritual life of the Church with the manifestation of our Christian faith through involvement in volunteer, charitable and educational activities that encourage participation in the life of the Church.

In our Orthodox churches the laity needs our leaders of the Church to present changing social norms and values in terms of our Orthodox faith and values. The National Philoptochos Family and Society Committee goals are to encourage members to participate in the life of the Church. All families and individuals need to be integrated and educated along with all groups of the Church with programs that welcome and allow them to see the canons of the Church in terms of society’s values. All members of the Church community need to feel welcome and integrated into clerical life in addition to all Church organizations. The need is for parishioners to be engaged through dynamic and intimate learning environments.

Following are some ideas and concepts than can be implemented by chapters to help establish events that will involve all groups of the Church in social concepts through Faith:

- Establish a group of members, representative of the Philoptochos Board, Parish Council, and any other Church groups, to work directly under the Parish Priest to evaluate and present programs and lectures that deal with social concepts under our Orthodox Faith. This should meet the needs of all members, new and old, that involves them in the life of the Church.
- The National Family and Society has brainstormed and listed some ideas and topics that may be pertinent in today’s world that could encourage discussions and participation in Church life as we reach out to the outer communities that surround our Churches.
  - Interfaith Marriage
  - Bullying
  - Drugs and Alcohol
  - Anorexia & Bulimia
  - Social Media Influence
  - Excessive Video Game Influence on Youth
  - Family Dynamics
Family and Society/Interfaith, continued

- Human Sex Trafficking
- Keeping College Age Youth involved in Church Life
- National & International Disasters

- The National Society and Family Committee needs to continue to publish articles in the Philoptochos newsletter that deal with the above topics as a starting point for chapters to develop discussions, present informational programs and use the information to write in their Church newsletters.

- Chapters need to establish Outreach Sundays that give an opportunity for all Orthodox to come together in spiritual renewal and fellowship. This gives awareness to community life in addition to promoting the philanthropy of Philoptochos.

- Assign a Philoptochos committee to pursue Outreach Programs. This committee can outline programs that include some of the following:
  - Involvement in community kitchens or outreach to feeding the poor
  - Food baskets in the church
  - Contact local hospitals or organizations to determine their needs
  - Partner with local schools in need of help
  - Sponsor local charities that provide awareness to cancer, children, battered women and prison inmates
  - Publish in the church newsletter with Philoptochos articles, births and weddings to congratulate and make all in the Church aware of these occasions
  - Workshops for married couples and older couples
  - Workshops for children and parents that include two-way conversations to promote understanding of their relationships and involvement in the Church
  - Spiritual and physical wellness
  - Financial planning

Whatever programs Philoptochos chapters develop, the primary goal is to bring women and men closer to the life of the Church. We encourage all chapters to be vigilant in their pursuit to making their chapter visible and ready to meet the needs of the Church, of the community, and of society.
National Philoptochos Society
2016-2018 Committee Report

Feed the Hungry

Chair: Georgia Vlitas
Members: Marian Catechis, Vickie Demos, Lekita Essa,
Christina Hiotis, Katherine Kotsis, Alexis Limberakis,
Eleni Stamboulidis, Thana Ward, Athina Beaury

Much has happened since the National Feed the Hungry program began in October 2014. Goals have been met and surpassed. Philoptochos won a national award! Chapters across the country began and/or expanded their programs to feed those in need, and Communities have worked together and become teams because of this outreach program.

In June 2017, the Feeding Children Everywhere organization honored National Philoptochos with its inaugural Hunger Hero Award in the Outstanding Faith-Based Organization category. As National Philoptochos Feed the Hungry Chair, I was honored to attend the awards presentation, which took place in Orlando, Florida, with Second Vice President, Evangeline Scurtis. It was humbling to be at this event, where all those being honored had done so much for those less fortunate.

After surpassing our goal of providing 250,000 meals for Convention 2016 and providing more than 700,000 meals, our national president decided that a new challenge needed to be set. Well, she went big and challenged the chapters across the country to provide one million meals from the period following the 2016 Convention to the next Convention – July 2018. President Logus knew that many Philoptochos chapters across the country already had programs to feed those in need in their area, and that others were embracing this much needed outreach, so she felt that this new goal was attainable!

If you read the last edition of the Philanthropy Witness, you saw that by May 2018, we had provided over 900,000 meals. Who could have anticipated that response? Obviously, National Philoptochos President Maria Logus did! She had faith in Philoptochos women! Now two questions remain - was the goal met, and if it was, which chapter provided the millionth meal? The chapter as well as the grand total will be revealed at the National Philoptochos Biennial Convention in Boston this July along with photos and experiences from our chapters participating in this initiative!

Another exciting event taking place in Boston will be a meal-packaging event for Rise Against Hunger in partnership with the delegates of the Clergy Laity Congress. On Thursday morning, July 6, the Boston Marriot Copley Place will be the venue where Philoptochos delegates together with Clergy Laity delegates will package over 10,000 healthy meals! In 2 hours filled with work, music and camaraderie, the delegates will measure, bag, seal and box 4 ingredients (rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a micronutrient mix that includes 23 essential vitamins and minerals) for a total of more than 10,000 meals to feed hungry people. What a way to give back for all that God has blessed us with!

We would love for you to join us in Boston and participate in packaging these healthy meals. Be sure to sign up ahead of time online at the site below, or at the Philoptochos Registration booth. Come, work, socialize with fellow delegates, have fun and make a difference!! If you would like to donate towards the cost of the meals (25¢ per meal) or sign up to volunteer to package the meals at the Convention in Boston, please go to: http://events.stophungernow.org/GOLPS. Please join us in any way you can.
National Philoptochos Society
2016-2018 Committee Report

Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology

Chair: Arlene Siavelis Kehl
Liaison: Barbara Pasalis
Members: Marian Catechis, Agatha Felactu
Philippa Condakes, Katherine Kotsis
Mary Doreza, Irene Politis

Philoptochos Supports HCHC Students in Countless Ways

Philoptochos chapters across the country understand well the importance of Hellenic College, the only fully accredited Orthodox Christian college in the western hemisphere, and Holy Cross, the oldest and largest Orthodox Theological institution in America to our Church. They are committed to providing scholarships for its students, helping with operational expenses of the school, and offering support to the students while they are on campus or back home during school breaks serving the churches in their respective metropolises.

In September of each year, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, chapters support our Scholi by fulfilling their national ministry commitment to our Hellenic College Holy Cross (HCHC) Scholarship Fund. Over the course of 14-1/2 years for the fall and spring semesters, from 2004 through the spring semester of 2018, National Philoptochos has awarded $1,149,600 in tuition scholarships which is approximately $80,000 per year to male and female students. Over the course of any given year, we award approximately 35 – 45 need-based scholarships, and every spring semester at the time of the HCHC graduation, we award 4 scholarships based upon merit.

In addition to the National Philoptochos HCHC Scholarship Fund, Metropolis and Chapter Philoptochos Programs provide financial support through scholarship assistance programs which assist seminarian students with tuition, room and board, and/or books and incidentals.

Then in March of each year, on the Feast of the Veneration of the Holy Cross, chapters support our Scholi by fulfilling their national ministry commitment to our HCHC Lenten Appeal. For the 13-1/2-year period from 2004 through the spring of 2017, National Philoptochos’ support to HCHC for operational expenses and infrastructure projects totals $1,066,400 which is approximately $79,000 per year. Necessary infrastructure projects funded by Philoptochos over the years include: HVAC, freezer, carpeting and flooring, painting and refurbishments of classrooms, dormitories and other areas, updating and refurbishing the library and learning resource center, a Campus One Control System (for security, class attendance, resources, library and student payments), essential information technology, and athletic equipment for the gymnasium.

Finally, Philoptochos members and chapters offer moral support to HCHC students while they are on campus by staying connected with them through their visits, hosted dinners, and by sending them special letters and care packages. When the students are back home during school breaks serving churches in their respective metropolises, it is the pleasure of Philoptochos members to see them, catch up on their school experiences, and encourage them on their career paths. Philoptochos members recognize that these students are our future priests, our future lay leaders including religious educators and youth ministers, are so important to the future of our Greek Orthodox Church in America, and they need to help ensure their success.
Leadership Institute

Chair/Liaison: Jennifer Constantin

Members: Pam Argyris, Elaine Cladis, Philippa Condakes, Theone Dickos, Agatha Felactu, Elaine Kevgas, Anne Michals, Joanne Mitchell, Barbara Pasalis, Irene Politis, Jeannie Ranglas, Diane Saphos, Aphrodite Skeadas, Ourania Soumas, Joanne Stavrakas, Maria Stavropoulos, Martha Stephanidakis, Crystal Thomas, Barbara Vittas, Elaine Zetes.

Mission Statement: To inspire and prepare members to develop as visionary philanthropic leaders with a commitment to community service, education and stewardship of the Greek Orthodox faith.

- **Institute Participants:**
  1. Alana Dunn
  2. Mary Floratos
  3. Tasia Gorski
  4. Polixeni Kapsalis
  5. Vangie Kolokithas
  6. Petra Knox
  7. Mary Leiterman
  8. Alisa Mathews
  9. Dorrie Papademitriou
  10. Tracy Pappas
  11. Arianna Ranahosseini
  12. Sue Russon
  13. Margaret Sarafoglou
  14. Maro Shuster
  15. Lindsay Stavrakas
  16. Irene Stefanakos
  17. Christy Zeppos

- **Leadership Institute Curriculum** - a big thank you to our Institute lecturers:
  1. *How Decisions are Made* - Joanne Mitchell, Evan Scurtis and Betty Lantz
  3. *Making the Ask-Fund Development* - Jeannie Ranglas
  4. *Servant Leadership* - Pam Argyris & Joanne Stavrakas
  5. *Communicating Effectively* - Ourania Soumas
  6. *How to Delegate Tasks & Follow Up* - Theone Dickos & Diane Saphos

- The new ‘Welcome to Philoptochos’ Handbook will be a wonderful addition to the resources presently available to chapters. We anticipate the book being finalized this summer!

- **Leadership Institute next steps:**
  1. Building a National Mentorship Program to:
     - Develop and strengthen existing leaders
     - Transfer knowledge & experience to the next generation
     - Nurture high potential, promising young members
  2. Developing Monthly National Training and Service Topics

We welcome the ideas and suggestions of every Philoptochos Member.
Please send them to:  [leadership@philoptochos.org](mailto:leadership@philoptochos.org)
The Literacy Outreach Program is designed to be an ongoing project that promotes literacy for children and adults. The goals of the program are:

- To promote motivation, success and enjoyment of reading and oral communication for school age children
- To increase the self-esteem of students participating in the program
- To offer meaningful volunteer opportunities for Philoptochos members and others within our Greek Orthodox church communities
- To strengthen the ties between generations by providing opportunities for adult tutors and young children to bond through additional instruction, support and encouragement

This year a goal of this committee was to promote literacy awareness and instill the idea of doing good deeds, large and small that would make a difference in the lives of others. Since 2012 National Philoptochos has embraced a relationship with author Nick Katsoris to make a difference by participating in National Make A Difference Day in October. Amy Logan’s *The Girl With A Cape: A Story of the Superhero in All of Us* was introduced to National Board Members promoting the hero in all of us and how each of us can make a difference.

Past initiatives that should continue to embrace are: National Education Association’s Read Across America and the collaboration between International Reading Association and Rotary International; working together to improve literacy worldwide. The Literacy Project Guide is available as a download. This publication gives ideas for mentoring, and improving learning and literacy for children and adults.

Let us remember, promoting the love of reading for not only the children within our parishes but for the children within our communities will make a difference in the lives of others.
On behalf of the Membership Committee it is a pleasure to greet all of you who have gathered for the spring 2018 meeting of the National Philoptochos Board.

One of the most important endeavors of the Membership Committee is to increase membership by spreading the good works of Philoptochos and making our mission known. As an appointed membership committee, we are committed to coming up with new ideas to increase membership through open and lively discussion of thoughts and ideas. The committee participates in monthly conference calls. The overwhelming majority of the committee feels that the most important issues are to raise awareness of the incredible work Philoptochos does, as well as to be visible and approachable to potential members.

Philoptochos does not stand alone regarding stagnant and declining membership numbers. Organizations across the board are seeing declining numbers. Lack of time and less energy for additional projects or commitments seem to be the biggest obstacles preventing prospective members from joining Philoptochos. Philoptochos needs women’s talents and time, the latter being most valuable. We must be sensitive to the changing world around us and understand the lives of the members we want to attract.

Today’s women work more outside of the home and are more active than ever; so if we want them to be part of Philoptochos, we have to offer a milieu which permits participation and engages their children as well, for they will not give up valuable family time easily. The younger generation is interested in service work; however, they do not have the flexibility, spare time or availability to commit on a continuous basis. Also, Millennials place less value on more formal and traditional means of communicating. As Philoptochos leaders we must identify and remove obstacles that discourage participation.

Is the structure of Philoptochos meetings an obstacle for involvement in Philoptochos? It has been suggested for Chapters to have a “call me once” commitment. If a member can volunteer for one service project or activity that interests them during the year, they will be less hesitant to join. New members should be allowed to chair or spear head an event or new outreach project as well. Let them know we value their ideas and we need their skill sets and knowledge. Emphasize that they will experience the satisfaction of helping others and improving the lives of those in need.
Membership Committee (continued)

It is difficult to attract young adult women if we do not have young adult women in the “group.” Young women need to feel part of a team. Something that has been discussed in our conference calls is that we must think “outside the box” and have younger members in the forefront. We must give new and younger members leadership roles and have them highly visible in order for potential young members to be able to associate with them. In the changing world dominated by social media and more impersonal means of communicating, what people desire most is an opportunity to connect with one another. People want to bond and create relationships with others, as this is human nature. Philoptochos must create opportunities for women to connect, and foster an environment where they will open up and feel more comfortable. If they feel welcomed and embraced, they will invite Philoptochos into their lives and will introduce Philoptochos to their friends, who we hope in turn invite their friends to become Philoptochos members, and so on and so on. Then….one by one we rebuild Philoptochos!

Are you part of the solution to increase membership and help retain current members? Think about what you are doing to invite, embrace and engage new members. We all must be committed to sharing the news of the good works of Philoptochos to our Greek Orthodox sisters in Christ and to bring them into our “army of women.” We need to remain relevant! Let’s impress upon prospective members that their time, talent and resources are welcome and needed, and that the philanthropic and charitable work that Philoptochos does is more important than ever!
Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF)

Chair: Theone Dickos
Liaison: Frances Levas
Members: Pam Argyris, Alexis Limberakis, Mary Doreza, Irene Steffas

Philoptochos will actively promote awareness of Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) within all church communities, encouraging students to remain connected to their faith during their college years. Philoptochos societies shall support and remember our graduates, as they transition from high school to college, and from college into the workforce. Philoptochos will provide spiritual nurturing for college students and open communication.

Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) is the official collegiate campus ministry program under the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. OCF is charged with connecting Orthodox College Students—and those interested in the Orthodox Christian faith—to Christ and His Church. In partnership with Philoptochos, OCF strives to:

- Support fellowships on college campuses, whose members experience and witness to the Orthodox Christian Church through community life, prayer, service to others, and study of the Faith;
- Provide a variety of thoughtful and innovative programming including College Conference and Real Break domestic and international service projects, and,
- Train lay and clergy volunteers as well as students for leadership roles on campus and beyond (Quoted from the OCF website)

The National Board OCF Committee continues to be in communication with Donna Levas, National Programs Manager and Christina Andersen, National Chapter Relations Manager, to gain further insight and foster awareness of OCF within our Philoptochos chapters across the country.

In 2017, OCF requested and was granted $33,700 in funds from National Philoptochos to help underwrite the Summer Leadership Institute for the 2017-2018 academic year. The curriculum is based on the needs and concerns of our Orthodox college students and the ministry of OCF. The Summer Leadership Institute provided students with opportunities for prayer and reflection, teambuilding, ministry orientation and programmatic and strategic planning, and is completely free to all students attending. It was an expectation that SLB members take what they have learned and apply their training to organize regional and local events.

As this report is being written in May of 2018, James P Gianakis, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship is preparing a grant proposal for the National Philoptochos to again underwrite the Summer Leadership Institute for the 2018-2019 academic year. It will be presented to the National Philoptochos Finance Committee on May 22, 2018.
Orthodox Christian Fellowship Committee (continued)

October is OCF Awareness month, and we need to promote all of the programs, including **College Student Sunday.** [The Assembly of Bishops has designates a day in October as College Student Sunday.](#) Parishes and Philoptochos chapters are asked on this day (or any Sunday that your church calendar permits) to recognize their college students by allowing students to share their experiences in Orthodox Christian Fellowship. Parishes are also asked to pass a second tray to support the ongoing and essential work of Orthodox Christian Fellowship as the official campus ministry organization of the Orthodox Church in the United States and Canada.

The transition from high school to college is crucial. It is easier to keep our young people connected than to get them back. The following suggestions and ideas are from a successful OCF Program from the Philoptochos of The Annunciation Cathedral of Atlanta.

- Reach out to the 12th grade Sunday School Teacher and ask if you can come to class one day or ask the teacher to share information with high school seniors about OCF and Philoptochos College Outreach. It is a team effort keeping young people connected to Orthodoxy as they transition into college.
- Take a laptop with you and have them register for OCF or ask them to do it on their own mobile device. Spend some time on the OCF website and see if their universities have active OCF chapters. If not, encourage them to start a chapter at their college.
- Watch/share OCF Transition video with high school seniors and their parents. It is an 8 minute must see video on You Tube [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cB89h6rZgMg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cB89h6rZgMg)
- Visit class or email / and or send a letter and start collecting information (For example: Student name, College Name, Student’s College Address, Birthday, Email address, Cell phone number, Name Day, Parents Names, Home Mailing Address, Parents Email Address)
- Follow-up with a letter/email or phone call to the parents of the graduating class.

Please continue to support our OCF ministry commitment in May/June. We must continue to nurture our young college students to keep them connected to our Orthodox Faith. Visit the Orthodox Christian Fellowship website, [www.ocf.net](http://www.ocf.net) for more information.
Orthodox Christian Missions and Support A Mission Priest

Chair: Marty Driscoll
Liaison: Georgia Vlitas
Members: Josephine Avaneas
         Betty Lantz
         Sophie Mastor
         Celeste Moschos

To spread the teachings of Christ and carry the message of the Orthodox Church throughout the world inspires a chapter to fulfill the commitments for Orthodox Christian Missions and Support A Mission Priest (SAMP). Each chapter determines the amount it will give to support and strengthen missionary outreach programs. The financial assistance of National Philoptochos enables mission organizations and priests to build and restore churches, community centers, schools and medical facilities and to participate in the training, teaching, and field management of mission projects.

In 2016, National Philoptochos gave financial assistance for:

- $24,400 to the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) for a women’s mission trip to Kenya and Albania
- $32,000 to Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) for general support of mission priests

In 2017, National Philoptochos donated to the following missionary programs:

Orthodox Christian Missions
- $15,000 for the Guatemala Health Care Team for medical supplies
- $10,000 towards the matching grant for missionary training and equipment for new missionaries in Guatemala
- $5,000 for missionary work in Tanzania (St. Barbara Church in Santa Barbara, CA)
- $7,000 for St. Nicholas Children’s fund in Uganda to provide the education and health needs of ten girls for one year
- $8,000 to Orthodox Christian Network for eight episodes of “This Week in Orthodoxy”

Support A Mission Priest (SAMP)
- $36,000 to benefit 60 mission priests at $600 each for a full year
The mission of the Philanthropic Initiatives Committee is to: research and evaluate current trends and public concerns that require the Society's understanding, promotion and involvement in order to better our local, national and global communities; to develop opportunities to become involved and contribute to these worthy causes, projects and events; and to review past projects for relevancy.

The committee has continued to meet, via conference calls, to discuss and recommend worthy programs which our Philoptochos Chapters throughout the United States could implement in their own communities. The focus and work of our Committee this past year includes:

- Investigating and providing important information on Technology Safety Methods and Programs / Be Smart Be Safe on the Internet. This information was presented in a Philoptochos Witness article and on our Philoptochos Website under Ministry Outreach – Philanthropic Projects.

- Recommending programs for our Armed Services Persons and Veterans which was presented in our Philoptochos Witness entitled “Remember Our Veterans” and on our Website. Programs included: Wreaths Across America; Homecoming Heroes Grant Program – Modest Needs Organization; Fisher House Foundation; United Services Organization (USO); and the Veterans Administration Agency / VA Medical Centers.

- Given extensive research on educational programs and materials, our committee has focused our efforts in collecting and organizing all of this information regarding awareness, understanding, care and support for Individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and their families. This information is being finalized in a Power Point Presentation to be offered on our Philoptochos Website.

- Prison Ministry has also been a concern of our committee. Marilynn Jemas, who has worked extensively in the prison system, has compiled and provided various ways in which our Chapters can support this forgotten outreach ministry to help incarcerated adults, youth and their families. Our Philoptochos Witness and Website will highlight the recommendations of Fr. Stephen Powley, Director of the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) as well as other programs and projects.

- Helping victims of Human Trafficking continues to be a concern of this committee. By utilizing our Website, Philoptochos Members can obtain information regarding specific agencies that assist these victims. We are continually updating our Website.
Overview:
After spending almost 23 years in rental space, and an exhaustive search for property throughout Manhattan, the National Philoptochos completed the purchase of the Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy (PCOP) on November 27, 2012 for $3 Million. The original asking price was $3.4M but after hard-fought negotiations, a purchase price of $3M was agreed upon with the Seller. We had raised a down payment of $2.1M and closed with a purchase money mortgage of $900k. In 2014 the mortgage on the property was fully paid off and $100k was set aside in the “Evergreen Fund”—a reserve account for emergency repairs required for the building. In the even that any monies from the Evergreen Fund are ever used, the monies must be replaced in order to keep that fund’s balance at a minimum of $100,000. We occupied the property in August, 2013.
The PCOP is an approved mixed-use building having both a commercial and residential component. At the time of purchase, the building was fully occupied by the current tenant.
In addition to the Evergreen Fund, a restricted fund was set up at Wells Fargo for the payment of the mortgage, any repairs and other expenses associated with the PCOP. The funding stream for this account is the rental income from the tenant as well as monies from the Per Capita that were designated at the 2010 convention. Additional sources of funds were the leaf donations by individuals and chapters and other gifts targeted for the PCOP.
As we all know, prior to occupying the PCOP, we were paying an annual rent of $75,000 ($6250/mo) to the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. Since we occupied our building in August 2013, our rental savings through 2018 will total $400,000.
At the time of occupancy, we were very fortunate because the building was in excellent condition and other than a coat of paint, it was move-in ready. A budget of $50,000 was allocated for IT infrastructure (computers, phones, security). Arlene Siavelis Kehl managed that process and brought it in under budget.
Furnishing our space was accomplished through a donation of excellent quality, used office furniture by Nicholas J. Bouras, so we did not have to expend monies on furniture.
Since occupying our space in August of 2014, we have been fortunate to have a tenant that pre-existed our purchase of the building. This pre-existing use of the building was a benefit to us as our tenant assisted us in transitioning into the role of owner and manager of our space.

To Date, the following have been completed:
• Complete restoration and beautification of the façade by New York City Restorations, one of the premier restoration companies in NYC. The restored façade is truly beautiful.
• Expanding into the space so as to provide greater services to those in need as well as support services to our chapters;
• Maintaining a quality tenant in the building in order to assist with cash flow and meet day-today operating expenses (utilities, maintenance, service contracts for systems and taxes); A new 24-month rental agreement has been entered into that will bring us $190,968.00 in rental income.
• Engaging in the preventive maintenance that a historic building requires as well as the systems upgrade, renovations and maintenance that any real estate investment needs.
• Installation of a new security system;
• Updated IT infrastructure and expansion into the third floor;
• Renovations to the outside deck, doorways and other items in the tenant space;
• Railing installation, painting and other repairs/enhancements in the basement;
• Purchase and installation of a new refrigerator for our kitchen;
• Analysis of the HVAC systems and engagement in bid process for replacement of all systems;
• Full review of historical views of our property as well as the Landmarks’ Commission designation of the PCOP;
• Review of the premises with an Engineer;
• Review of basement space and planning for storage needs for both National Philoptochos as well as other current programs;
• Minor painting both at the front of the building as well as in the tenant space and other minor repairs.

Upcoming Projects in process:
• Installation new HVAC systems ($70k estimate has been received);
• Installation of handicapped access (to be done upon completion of the façade);
• Expansion/renovation of the reception space on the second floor;
• Interior enhancement/beautification of our space;
• Lighting enhancements in staff work areas;
• Purchase of fireproof safe for protection of Philoptochos legal documents and archives;
• Purchase of new furnishings for the reception area that will be effective for multiple uses of the space;
• Renovation of all bathrooms.
• Installation of the Tradition of Love Tree for individual donors, “In Memory Of”, “In Honor Of” et al is anticipated for the fall;
• Relocation and reorganization of staff work spaces.
• Inquiries are being made regarding the feasibility of an elevator however we are concerned about not only the cost and approvals which would be required but also the loss of square footage;

Conclusion:
As prudent owners and good stewards of the PCOP, we had a very fruitful collaboration among our very dedicated committee. We have done a significant amount of work in addition to addressing a number of items that required our attention. We look forward to further expansion in our space, its enhancement and further growth. In addition to the “bricks and mortar” needs of the PCOP, however, we must also prudently provide for its economic viability. The Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy is about PROMISES KEPT, not only for our current members but for generations to come.
The Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy is fulfilling its mission, as promised. We look forward to the enhanced services that will continue to emanate from our beautiful Center of Philanthropy.

1 2013: $25,000.00 (4 months at $6250/mo) 2014: $75,000.00; 2015: $75,000.00; 2016: $75,000.00; 2017: $75,000.00; 2018 $75,000.00
National Philoptochos Society  
2016-2018 Committee Report

Public Relations/Communications

Co-Chairs: Barbara Pasalis and Valine Georgeson  
Members: Helen Carnegie  Alexis Limberakis  
Despina Denne  Dee Nicolaou  
Marilynn Jemas  Arlene Siavelis Kehl  
Communications Support: Vivian Siempos Haidas

The efforts of the Public Relations Committee this term have focused on identifying and producing educational programs to serve our members and our communities. In addition, we have continued to provide support for the committees by uploading their news and information to the website and publishing articles in the Orthodox Observer and Philanthropy Witness.

We have expanded our Media Listserver and will be sending our news out to additional news outlets beyond the Orthodox Observer. This has already been effective in increasing awareness of our work and our programs.

In addition, we have continued to use our other platforms to keep our members informed, including our blog, Philanthropy by Philoptochos, and social media outlets, including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. We tried something new at our 2017 Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon, an Instagram Takeover, which gained some traction. In addition, we promoted a Facebook campaign, Kindness, Compassion & Coffee, to raise funds for emergency hurricane relief in Fall 2017. We hope to expand and continue efforts such as these in the 2018-2020 term.

Sub-committees were established for the following educational initiatives, which have been completed and uploaded to the website, each on its own dedicated page. In addition, information about the initiatives was disseminated to the membership and parish communities.

- Be Safe – Be Smart: Investigating Technology Safety in the Computer Age  
- Inclusion Ministry  
- Stop Bullying in Your Community: A Comprehensive Anti-Bullying Curriculum

In addition, sub-committees are currently working on Women’s Health, Alzheimer’s and the Opioid Crisis.

A new stump speech was also produced for 2018, and it is available by request through the National office. Please obtain the speech and use it at parish and community meetings and events to spread the good news about Philoptochos.

We will continue to expand our PR efforts, using all of our platforms. Input from our committee chairs, chapters and members is crucial to that effort. We ask all members to continue sending us their news so that we can share it with the entire organization. News, photos and information should be sent to: communications@philoptochos.org
We are excited about our new Development & Information Officer, Amy Kalogeropoulos, who will join the Philoptochos staff during the convention. We look for her to expand our public relations program and increase our visibility with the Greek and non-Greek communities, as well as infuse our programs with new energy and vitality to ensure Philoptochos relevance beyond our 100th anniversary.

Looking Ahead: Our goals for the 2018-2020 term will be to develop a new website that will be modern and more user friendly. Second, and critically important, is our plan to develop our own member database that will be easier to update and provide us the flexibility to send information to various constituencies with ease. Getting the word out is our top priority.
National Philoptochos Society
2016-2018 Committee Report

Project Review and Management

Co-Chairs: Carol Stamas and Marilyn Tzakis
Liaison: Barbara Pasalis
Members: Helen Carnegis Eleni Stamboulidis
Kathy Siavelis Crystal Thomas

FUNDED GRANTS 2016-2018

The Bone Marrow Foundation, Inc., New York, NY, services children and families throughout the U.S., giving financial support through their Lifeline Fund. The Fund provides assistance to eligible individuals and families who are preparing for and undergoing a bone marrow, stem cell or cord blood transplant. 100% of the funds raised are given to the families. They have long standing relationships with hospitals and other marrow facilities.

Funded: $5,000 2017 Children’s Medical Fund
• Funding for the Lifeline Fund, which will provide assistance to children and families preparing for and undergoing bone marrow, stem cell or cord blood transplants.
• Funds will be used throughout the U.S.

La Clinica Del Pueblo, Washington D.C., serves children and adolescents through a comprehensive health care and educational services. Their program, known as Mi Refugio focusses on youth development and education. Over 90% of the patients come from extremely low incomes, many working multiple jobs and lack the adequate resources or time to tend to health needs. Over 4,000 patients were served in 2017.

Funded: $5,000 2017 Children’s Medical Fund
• Funding for assistance to High School students for youth development and education as part of the Mi Refugio Program.

Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans, Athens, Greece, provides food and basic needs for seniors who were displaced after the exodus of Greeks living in Constantinople in the 1960’s.

Funded: $10,000 Aid to Greece and Cyprus Fund
• Funding for food and electricity for 1 year plus.

Greek American Rehabilitation and Care Centre, Wheeling, IL, its mission is to provide quality care for residents in a safe, home-like environment. 20% of residents are there for short-term care; 80% of residents are there for long-term care, of which 70% are on Medicaid. Currently, 136 nurse call lights need to be upgraded plus additional areas for the third floor.

Funded: $15,000 - 75th Anniversary Fund
• Funds to be used toward the cost of Jeron Provider 790 Nurse Call System.
**Homefull, Dayton, OH**, provides critical job training and placement for homeless adults, including peer mentoring, supervision, supplies and equipment. In 2016, fifty-five men and women participated in the training program leading to dramatic housing and income stability for clients served, particularly in their Permanent Supportive Housing Sites.  
**Funded: $10,000 - Social Service Fund**  
- Funds to cover cost for job training and placement.

**Mission Tanzania via St. Barbara’s Church, Santa Barbara, CA**, supports Ufufuo Health Center in Tanzania where there is limited health care. They currently are in a partnership with Columbia University in a HIV prevention, treatment and counseling program. The Center opened in 2012. The closest health centers are 200 miles and 800 miles away. It has the most state of the art equipment to train local doctors and dentists.  
**Funded: $5,000 - Orthodox Christian Mission Fund**  
- Funds used to cover costs of medical supplies to the Ufufuo Health Center.

**Orthodox Christian Mission Center, St. Augustine, FL**, supports various Mission Teams throughout Central and South America and Africa. The Guatemala Health Care Mission Team consists of 10 health care providers for the Father Andres Giron Orthodox Clinic in the Village of Aguacate, Guatemala. The Team provides medical supplies and medical and dental care to 20,000 Guatemalan people who have limited access to medical care and health education.  
**Funded: $15,000 - Orthodox Christian Mission Fund**  
- Funds used to cover costs of medical supplies, medical and dental care and health education.

**Funded: $10,000 - Orthodox Christian Mission Fund**  
- Funds used for Mission Training.

**Orthodox Christian Network, Fort Lauderdale, FL**, provides communication of our Orthodox religion through multimedia. Their program, “This Week in Orthodoxy”, highlights related events and happenings in many geographic areas across the U.S., including the plight of Christians throughout the world.  
**Funded: $10,000 - Orthodox Christian Mission Fund**  
- Funds used to produce 10 episodes on “This Week in Orthodoxy”.  
- Cost of each episode is $1,000.00.

**St. Elias the Prophet Greek Orthodox Church, Dubuque, IA**, is a small parish of 35 families. In 2014, the original church building became uninhabitable due to the side wall caving in and the roof being unable to support the structure any longer. The Parish voted to purchase a new building. The Philoptochos began a project to repair and reinstall 9 windows and light box frames. The project name is Philoptochos Hall of the Saints.  
**Funded: $3,500 - Emergency Fund**  
- Funds used for repair and reinstallation of 1 window.  
- The cost of each window is $3,500.00.
St. Mary’s Children’s Hospital, Bayside, NY - Center of Pediatric Feeding Disorders, provides 45 minute feeding sessions for infants and children with various feeding problems from disadvantaged families. Medicaid does not cover this treatment. In 2016, 3,843 – 45 minute feeding sessions and 156 assessments were provided. The program served 175 children in 2016.

**Funded: $5,000 - 2015 Children’s Medical Fund**

- Funds used to cover costs of feeding sessions.

St. Nicholas Uganda Children’s Fund, Chardon, OH, provides education, health and welfare of Ugandan children, teens and young adults in slum areas of Kampala, Uganda. They serve 260 orphans and children at the primary school, secondary school, business and technical, and university levels. The organization started in 2008, by Nicholas and Sharon Georges who were missionaries in the area from 2002-2007.

**Funded: $7,000 - Orthodox Christian Mission Fund**

- Funds used for 10 teenage girls residing in St. Antonios Orthodox Secondary School.
  - Tuition and boarding fees
  - Clothing
  - Personal care items
  - Mattresses, sheet, and blankets
  - Comprehensive medical care
  - Transportation to and from school
- Total cost is $700.00 per year per girl.

Shepherd Center of Kansas City Central, Kansas City, MO, provides a “Meals on Wheels” program serving homebound older adults (60 years and older) and disabled individuals.

**Funded: $3,531 - 75th Anniversary Fund**

- Funds used to partly cover non-perishable items for 120 Emergency Meal Packs.
- Program serves approximately 200 individuals, many below poverty level.

STEPS PTO, Parma, OH, is an Academy of Willow Farms that services children with Autism throughout North Eastern Ohio. The program was created 5 years ago to provide and aide the students and families of the Academy. They created a project called Educational Greenhouse for Students with Autism. The students grow vegetables and distribute them back to the Community. In 2017, they served 120 students and their families.

**Funded: $3,000 - Autism Fund**

- Funds used to cover remaining costs for project Educational Greenhouse.
- The program will service 140 students in 2018.
- The program provides a meaningful and vocational experience for the Students at Willow Farms.

University of Miami, THRIVE Clinic for Human Trafficking Survivors, Coral Gables, FL, the focus of the Clinic is to assist, recognize and provide expert medical care for victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking as defined by the Federal Government. The THRIVE Clinic, (Trafficking Healthcare Resources and Interdisciplinary Victim Services and Education), was started by a group of Greek-American health providers who are on the faculty at the University of Miami. All current medical staff is voluntary.

**Funded: $35,000 - General Medical Fund**

- Funds used for a part time social worker for 1 or 2 years based on hours.
Saint Basil Academy

Co-Chairs: Joanne Stavrakas and Kalli Tsitsipas
Liaison: Joanne Stavrakas
Members: Deana Balahtsis, Georgia Kaloidis
          Helen Carnegis, Betty Lantz
          Elaine Cladis, Aspasia Melis
          Eleni Constantinides, Joanne Mitchell
          Bessie Drogaris, Evellyn Tsiadis
          Joanne Kakoyiannis

Saint Basil Academy is one of the most important and beloved ministries of the National Philoptochos Society, celebrating its 74th Anniversary this year, provides a loving and safe environment, quality education and religious life for all Orthodox children as a licensed residential child-care institution in America. Focusing on the total child, spiritually, emotionally, addressing their needs and nurturing them into adulthood.

The Academy is under the guidance of the Archdiocese, Philoptochos is the land owner of the property and buildings. Chapters throughout the country assist through their commitments from Vasilopita and the Sisterhood for the maintenance of the entire facility, salaries and most importantly the care of precious lives. The Sisterhood Fund provides for the ongoing needs for the children of the Academy and graduation expenses.

The Zoe Cavalaris Fund provides for tutors in the Learning Center for the continued academic success of the children and scholarships for the high school students planning to attend college.

Currently there are 21 children residing in a safe environment, participating in extracurricular activities including baseball, soccer, basketball and chorus. Their smiles will brighten a room, while the family histories and reasons for being at Saint Basil Academy will tear at your heart. Each child is treated as an individual, abilities are examined, and appropriate programs are structured for each child. The children are amazing and astound us with their strong desire to strive for excellence academically and in extracurricular activities.

Children have visited cities during Vasilopita Celebrations in Houston, Denver and surrounding east coast cities, speaking as “ambassadors” at Vasilopita celebrations about their “home” the Saint Basil Academy. Some children return to their families for holidays, spring break and summer, others stay with host families.

The Bridge Program is thriving and provides an extended home for those children who continue to live at the Academy and continue their education after high school graduation. This program provides a healthy and supportive environment that prepares young people to make the transition from adolescence to adulthood. It helps them to develop the skills and self-esteem needed to successfully work and live independently.
Graduation was held on Saturday, June 2, 2018, a splendid day of heartwarming and touching commentary from the high school graduates down to the pre-school ones. Guests included His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, our President Maria Logus, National Philoptochos Board members, AHEPA family members, families from the surrounding parishes and well-wishers from near and far.

Saturday, September 29, 2018 is the Annual 5K Walk on the grounds of the Academy. All are invited to participate and have an opportunity to meet the children and see our awesome Saint Basil Academy.

We encourage every steward of Philoptochos to visit the Academy to witness and be a part of the lives of the children, seeing firsthand the “Miracles on the Hudson, our children of Saint Basil Academy.” The website of the Academy has a plethora of information that includes the SBA Fact Sheet, the SBA Brochure, Referral Brochure and the Student Application, all that can be downloaded and duplicated for use by the Philoptochos chapter and Parish Priest to raise awareness and refer children. As one of our committee members states, “you do not know what an incredible asset Saint Basil Academy is until you visit.”

As our beloved Archbishop Demetrios often states “if we save one child, then it is all worth it.”
The Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is the first Greek Orthodox Shrine in America in the beautiful historic city of Saint Augustine, Florida. Known as “the Jewel of Saint George Street,” the Shrine is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The 35th Anniversary of the dedication of the Shrine took place in February 2017, and in 2018 the Shrine celebrated the 250th anniversary of the landing and immigration of 500 Greek settlers and others of Mediterranean descent. In May, there were Greek Week celebrations with lectures and a “glendi”. Our committee had an active conference call discussion of this very significant and exciting time to celebrate our beloved Shrine, our heritage, and the history of the first Greek settlers in the United States landing in New Smyrna, Florida.

The committee calls upon all of our Philoptochos chapters across the nation to encourage their members to visit the Saint Photios Shrine and/or to organize a trip to the Shrine, which is located in the Colonial Spanish Quarter of downtown Saint Augustine, the oldest city in the United States. The Shrine’s chapel is beautiful, the site is historical, and it is a true tribute to our Greek Orthodox faith. The Shrine has an extensive shoppe, where one can purchase icons, books, cards, jewelry and other lovely gift items. Your parish can also order bottles of holy water and other religious items.

The committee also encourages all Philoptochos sisters to support the “Light a Candle” programs, which offers prayers with a 7-day votive candle and service for those we wish to honor, to pray for the health of, and to remember.

The “Wall of Tribute” program was initiated in 1982 to support the Shrine by honoring and remembering family, loved ones and friends. The Wall of Tribute lists all benefactors, supporters and ancestors. There is also a wonderful program to engage our Greek Orthodox youth to identify with the Shrine through an annual 100-word essay showcasing their understanding of the survivors of New Smyrna in 1777 and why they are remembered through the Shrine.

The committee emphasizes the importance of the Saint Photios Shrine as a “living memorial” to all Greek Orthodox pioneers whose love of freedom and the desire for a better life for themselves and their families brought them to the New World. We encourage all Greek Orthodox faithful to visit the Shrine, our first Greek Orthodox Shrine in America.
### Location by Metropolis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOSTON</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENVER</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATLANTA</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETROIT</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PITTSBURGH</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN FRANCISCO</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW JERSEY</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREECE / CYPRUS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER (Syria, UK, Uganda)</td>
<td>03</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIRECT LOCATION BY METROPOLIS</td>
<td>385</td>
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### Age of Clients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>41-50</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>51-60</td>
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<td>61-70</td>
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<td>71-80</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>81-90</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As most cases are multi-issue, the following represents the precipitating factor that brought the client to us.

### Presenting Problem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenting Problem</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING / HOMELESS</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utility Shut-Off, RE Taxes, Other fees etc.</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Eviction Prevention (Rent mortgage arrears)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homeless: Street/Shelter/Subway, Transportation hub/ Doubled-Tripled Up with others</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANCER/ OTHER MAJOR MEDICAL</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cancer</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other: Cardiac / Heart Transplant, MS, Kidney failure, TBI, Parkinson’s disease, Prosthesis, Other</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIGENT / UNEMPLOYED / UNDEREMPLOYED</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNERAL</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENTAL ILLNE</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE / ELDER &amp; CHILD ABUSE</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGING SERVICES/ HOMECARE</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDICTION/ SUBSTANCE ABUSE</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMMIGRATION</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADOPTION INFORMATION</td>
<td>03</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>07</td>
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</table>

### Financial Grants Analysis: 2016 – 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED</td>
<td>$ 410,819.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # GRANTS AWARDED</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDUPlicated COUNT of CLIENTS AWARDED GRANTS</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONETARY RANGE OF GRANTS</td>
<td>$4.00 - $7,500.00</td>
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### Distribution of Grants by Metropolis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Grants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN DIST.</td>
<td>$157,234.40</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOSTON</td>
<td>28,154.66</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DENVER</td>
<td>17,080.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATLANTA</td>
<td>69,584.55</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETROIT</td>
<td>14,239.31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PITTSBURGH</td>
<td>24,045.00</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN FRANCISCO</td>
<td>19,140.35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW JERSEY</td>
<td>44,222.82</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHICAGO</td>
<td>37,118.70</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>

- 63 grants: Cancer/ Major Medical, Social Services, 75 Anniversary
- 5 grants: Cancer/ Major Medical, Social Services
- 5 grants: Cancer/ Social Services
- 31 grants: Cancer/ Major Medical, Autism, Social Services
- 2 grants: Cancer/ Major Medical, Social Services
- 9 grants: Autism, Social Services, 75 Anniversary
- 8 grants: Cancer/ Major Medical, Social Services
- 20 grants: Cancer/ Major Medical, Social Services, 75 Anniversary
- 8 grants: Cancer/ Major Medical, Social Services
National Philoptochos Society
2016-2018 Committee Report

Social Services Committee

Co-Chairs: Efthalia Katos and Stella Pantelidis
Liaison: Evangeline Mekras Scurtis
Members: Eleni Constantinides, Lekita Essa, Stella Fiorentino*, Alexis Limberakis, Nellie Logothetides, Aspasia Melis, Helen Psaras, Maria Skiadas, Joanne Stavrakas, Maria Tamvakologos, Kalli Tsitsipas, Margaret Yates, Billie Zumo

*Deceased

Director of Social Work Services: Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW

Metropolis Philoptochos Collaborators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolis</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Metropolis Social Services Liaisons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Archdiocesan</td>
<td>Jennifer Constantin</td>
<td>Georgeann Papadakos, Esq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Elaine Zetes</td>
<td>Georgia Lagadinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Barbara Vittas</td>
<td>Presvytera Evi Kaplanis, Tina Chagaris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>Irene Politis</td>
<td>Margaret Yates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>Theone Dickos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>Crystal Thomas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Jeannie Ranglas</td>
<td>Lisa Xanthos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Anastasia Michals</td>
<td>Eleni Constantinides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Pam Argyris</td>
<td>Helen Theodosakis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Philoptochos Social Services Highlights:

- **Our Services:** Clients are asked to complete and sign our Application for Assistance and Consent for Release of Information forms, and to submit a recent photo, and documentation of their situation to help us determine the most effective way to assist them. We provide information, referral and advocacy services, short-term interventions, supportive counseling and, per Philoptochos Guidelines, financial assistance. With the client’s permission, we collaborate with the appropriate Metropolis Philoptochos to supplement what each of us can do. To educate our community about the human service challenges faced by Orthodox Christians, we develop resources, informational fact sheets (bilingual), and hold live presentations and webinars as requested.

- More than half of our clients live in poverty or near poverty, many of whom are women in single-parent headed households. A large number of our clients who live in poverty are employed, but do not earn enough to support themselves or their families. Medical debt, even among those with health insurance, continues to be a major cause of poverty. Those with long-term financial needs are screened for eligibility for public benefits and are helped to apply for such entitlements. For clients needing debt management, credit counseling or budget management, we refer them to the nonprofit National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC) whose member agencies, nationwide, provide free and affordable services.

- We address about one domestic violence case per month. We provide direct services including supportive counseling, housing relocation and financial assistance, as well as referrals for other social services; however, we cannot assist with or make referrals for their legal service needs. We conduct DV programs, live and via webinars, and develop literature and fact sheets to educate members of our community and our clergy about how we can assist intimate partner abuse victims, survivors and thrivers in helpful, not hurtful ways.

- Requests for contributions toward funeral and burial arrangements come to us from all over the United States with referrals from local chapters, family members, hospital social workers, medical examiners, funeral homes and more.

- A significant number of our clients suffer from serious and chronic mental illnesses, often times untreated.
An increasing number of persons seeking our help are homeless individuals living on the street, in subways or other public transportation hubs, or are in government or nonprofit shelters. A large number of women (with or without children) are homeless because of past domestic abuse relationships. Some of our clients are doubled- and tripled-up with family members of friends. Because they are 'indoors', they no longer are considered “homeless”, thus they do not qualify for many services and benefit programs. Many of the homeless people we see are employed either full-time or part-time; however, their incomes are insufficient to enable them to rent a place to live.

We receive requests for referrals to subsidized housing from low- and moderate-income persons, many of whom are senior citizens. Because housing options are few and waiting lists are long, we are hard-pressed to assist. A significant number comprises undocumented older men who have been in the US for 25+ years. Being without ‘papers’, they do not qualify for benefits, and it is unrealistic for them to return to Greece as they have nothing and no one to return to.

Most of our clients thought they had done everything right to prepare for the future, but because of a quirk of fate, a life-threatening illness, a disaster, or another situation that either catapults or slides them into difficulties, they face financial and emotional challenges requiring our intervention and assistance.

While some of our clients may be perceived as having ‘caused’ their predicament because of poor judgment, we recognize that the path to good judgment frequently is paved by a series of poor ones.

Please refer to www.philoptochos.org/socialservices for a full description of our social services and to download a copy of our Application for Assistance and our “Guide to Finding Local Programs and Services” — a tool to help chapters throughout the country refer parishioners for help.

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES TELEPHONE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Submitted by Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW and Theodora Ziongas, M.A.

For six consecutive Thursday evenings beginning January 11, 2018 the National Philoptochos Social Services Department conducted a Cancer Support Group for Orthodox Christians undergoing cancer treatment. As the group “met” over the telephone via conference call, it was accessible to members of the Greek Orthodox community nationwide. The group was facilitated by Theodora Ziongas, M.A. whose strong background in cancer patient services through positions she has held at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, American Cancer Society and CancerCare, created the ideal environment for participants to speak freely and willingly. Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW, National Philoptochos’ Director of Social Services, served as co-facilitator.

RATIONALE FOR PROGRAM:
Evidence-based research, anecdotal information and practical experiences have shown that support groups improve a patient’s quality of life and survival outcomes, and enable participants to connect with others facing similar experiences. Support groups help participants feel better, more hopeful, and not so alone. They provide patients with the opportunity to speak about and work through their feelings in a safe and non-judgmental setting, and they enable members to share information about how to communicate with those around them about their illness. Group members discuss treatments and side-effects, unintended consequences of medications and therapies, and share ways each person has handled them. Finally, they provide local referrals for requested services — financial, housing, food/ meals, transportation, counseling, caregiver resources and more. A unique aspect of the program is that it highlighted the cultural, religious and spiritual issues and challenges distinctive to Greek Orthodox Christians that can impede their willingness and/or ability to access mainstream services.

OUTREACH / REGISTRATION:
Through notices sent to Hierarchs, Metropolis Philoptochos Presidents and Parish Priests, internal and external news outlets, Philoptochos invited Orthodox Christians, 21+ who currently are undergoing cancer treatment to register via a discrete email address used only for this program—a feature employed to maintain confidentiality, the core foundation for all of our social services. Each caller was screened to ensure his/her appropriateness and understanding that all discussions and revelations would remain confidential. Eight women registered for the support group, of whom seven remained engaged throughout its course. They hailed from various parts of North America and ranged in age from early 50’s to mid-70’s. Only one member reported that she had participated in a cancer support group previously. All said they joined ours because Philoptochos was its sponsor.
TOPICS OF DISCUSSION:
Each session focused on a different topic that collectively addressed the physical, emotional, practical and spiritual challenges cancer patients face to enable them to discuss and share how they reframed their lives. The women discussed roller-coaster feelings of anger, denial and bargaining, ways they developed coping skills to deal with their “new normal” and the loss of control of their lives - frequently for the first time, and, the importance of becoming their own advocates. Group members discussed techniques they have incorporated into their lives to manage their illness and treatments such as strength training and exercise, although even among those who exercised most of their lives, they had to rethink what they could do safely and clear even light workouts with their doctors. They discussed learning how to focus on themselves.

Nutrition - the importance of and challenges to maintaining good nutrition during and after treatment were explored. Participants shared strategies to mitigate treatment side effects such as loss of appetite, fatigue, mouth sores, and concomitant physical and stress-related changes. Because treatments can compromise a patient’s immune system, food safety and food prep were discussed, as was being aware of ingredients in products used in the home or directly on the skin – soap, makeup, deodorant, moisturizer, cleaning supplies and more, some of which is contraindicated depending on a patient’s medication, hormone or immunotherapy treatments. To supplement discussions held in session, we researched and distributed resource materials on nutrition and cancer developed by the Cleveland Clinic, National Cancer Institute and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

In keeping with Philoptochos sponsorship of this support group, the women discussed how culture and traditional gender/ family roles impacted their approach to their illness and families. Up until the time they became ill, most said they were the primary caregivers in their families, but as the effects of their illness and treatments took hold, they increasingly were unable to continue in such capacities, and struggled with how to ask for help from their intimate partners, adult children or parents. In some cases, they had to encourage their partners to actively listen to what they were going through.

As agreed to by the group members and as stated by one of the group members, “to help me understand how my spiritual beliefs and religious teachings impact how I approach my illness”, we invited a member of the clergy to participate in the last session to lead a discussion that examined spiritual healing from an Orthodox Christian perspective: Rev. Dr. Harry Pappas, Proistamenos, Church of the Archangels in Stamford, CT. Fr. Harry affirmed that “it is through God’s grace, our teachings and traditions that we recognize that God has not abandoned us, that we learn to deal with illness and adversity and that we appreciate the presence of Jesus in our lives.”

As a follow-up to his participation in session and at the request of the group members, Fr. Harry prepared a handout that we distributed to group members entitled, “Spiritual Resources for Healing” in which he recommended readings associated with healing including “My Orthodox Prayer Book” by Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos, “The Theology of Illness” by Jean-Claude Larchet, Psalms that teach us how to pray through all circumstances of life and Psalms for thanksgiving that come from healing, Scriptures, and Saints.

Along with reading sections from the Bible, he recommended that those afflicted by illness listen to recorded passages through the YouVersion Bible App (www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/) which offers a free Bible experience in 50 different languages for smartphones, tablets, and online at Bible.com. Fr. Harry invited group members to contact him individually, should they so choose, after the support group ended.

PROGRAM EVALUATION:
Utilizing “Survey Monkey” we designed an instrument through which group members anonymously evaluated the content of the support group sessions and their experiences. Because of the positive feedback we received, we would consider holding another – and perhaps longer than 6 session cycle - in the future. If requested and based on a further assessment of need, we also would consider expanding this program to conduct additional support groups that reach cancer survivors, caregivers and those whose primary language is Greek.

For more information, contact Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW, Director, National Philoptochos Department of Social Work at 212.977.7782 or PauletteG@philoptochos.org.
Spiritual Enrichment

Chair: Irene Steffas
Liaison: Jeannie Ranglas
Members: Maria Antonakas      Agatha Felactu
         Josephine Avaneas      Helen Malachias
         Jennifer Constantin

SCOPE:

精神 enrichment for individual members, chapters, metropolises and the National Board.
Gather and utilize resources that are being used by chapters and metropolises.

GOALS:

Provide tools and materials to assist with spiritual enrichment;
Assemble resources from the Internet – websites, links etc. for Spiritual Enrichment;
Every meeting, activity and project to include a spiritual component;
Provide appropriate prayers, history/teaching of a Saint(s) or Bible verse for each of the fourteen (14) annual commitments of the National Philoptochos Society;
Create guidelines for Prayer Lists, which are sensitive to privacy issues; and
Plan Spiritual Retreat for May of 2019.

All projects, goals and completed works are to be approved by the Spiritual Advisor of the National Philoptochos Society.
National Philoptochos Society  
2016-2018 Committee Report

UNICEF

Co-Chairs: Ourania Soumas & Irene Steffas  
Liaison: Jeannie Ranglas  
Members: Elaine Kevgas  
Evellyn Tsiadis

Background: UNICEF is an annual commitment that provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers. UNICEF works in more than 190 countries to protect the rights of every child and to provide emergency relief, immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, nutrition, health (physical and mental – trauma) care and most importantly, Hope. UNICEF has the greatest resources, including infrastructure and manpower, to make the greatest impact.

AWARD AT FORMAL MEETING in NYC with Caryl M. Stern, President and CEO of UNICEF, where National Philoptochos presented a $50,000.00 donation to UNICEF. The 2017 UNICEF - USA Annual Report names National Philoptochos Society, as an ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNER.

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America is an active member of the United Nations INTERFAITH PROGRAM. With the blessing of Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, advisor of the National Philoptochos Society, sisters of Philoptochos have attended the day-long seminars led by Program Director Rabbi Diane.

➢ Partnerships to End Forced Labor;
➢ Children on the Move--Preventing Child Trafficking; and
➢ Working with the UN Global Plan of Action

Additionally, sisters attended the following conferences:

“The Blue Campaign” – a day-long conference focused on identifying and combating human trafficking: see their website for greater details and helpful instructions;

“Not On My Watch” – a call-to-action program training against domestic violence; Motto: Educating, Equipping, & Engaging;

“Faith In Action” – the focus was dealing with physical, mental, and the often overlooked and/or forgotten ... but destructive... spiritual abuse;

“Safe Horizons” – a collaboration of NYC Police Dept. and the NYC Law Department, which prevents child abuse, aids homeless youth, and combats the exploitation of teen labor;

“Celebrating Survivors” – a joint presentation by a number of supporting agencies and remarks by young survivors of trafficking, now united with their family members; and
UNICEF Committee (continued)

“HAWAR Projects” – the screening of the film, “A Cry for Help”, which was followed by a discussion of ongoing genocide, enslavement, and sexual violence (of both sexes) and children by ISIS in Iraq: additional work by HAWAR to rescue and empower women, provide a safe haven for them and their children and support the social integration of displaced refugees.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Chapters should continue to financially support UNICEF;
- Chapters are encouraged to reach out to UNICEF offices, located in many cities; and
- Sisters and chapters participating in UN Programs are encouraged to share their information with this committee.