Cassandra Rinaldi

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church
Philoptochos Chapter #008
Waterbury, Connecticut

Cassandra Rinaldi has been an active member of her Philoptochos Chapter for 25 years. Beyond her dedication to Philoptochos, she has been a Sunday School teacher, started a volleyball program, and even coached the parish teams to championships. Cassandra has also utilized her profession as a Social Worker to assist the priest in identifying resources for members of the community when the need arises. She has also been instrumental in implementing a Thanksgiving Basket Drive where the Sunday School students donate items and then deliver these baskets to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The members of Philoptochos also provide gift cards in these baskets to help these families as they endure difficult times. The Christmas season also provides members the opportunity to make donations through the Angel Tree that Cassandra organizes to help teenage children from DCFS. Though she offers herself in so many ways, Cassandra is especially eager to help her church with baking koulourakia for the Festival. Along with her husband, she organizes volunteers to prepare thousands of koulourakia for their four-day Greek Festival. A smaller mini-Festival is also offered by the parish which Cassandra co-chairs and actively solicits many donations which have made this a very successful event. Bringing together people of all ages, Cassandra organizes a charity dance featuring music ranging from jazz, big band, country and hip-hop. All the proceeds support local charities and assist parish youth to attend Project Mexico. In everything she does, she leads by example with her generous heart, and is always willing to offer her time and talent to help those in need.
Bessie Papigiotis

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church
“Good Samaritan” Philoptochos Chapter #3067
Cranston, Rhode Island

Bessie Papigiotis has been a member of her Philoptochos Chapter for 49 years. She has held numerous offices and served on the board, including President from 1973 – 1977, 1987 – 1991, and 2001 – 2003. She has also been an active member of the Metropolis Philoptochos Board for over 25 years, and was President from 1995 – 1999. She has been the described as the “glue” that has held the Chapter together. Bessie works hard to bridge the gap between the experienced members and the newer members by encouraging them to work together. She is sensitive to those who are used to doing things a certain way, while encouraging younger members to bring forth fresh ideas. She understands the importance of the work of Philoptochos and that every effort makes a difference for those in need. She encourages participation in projects such as making breakfast bags to feed the homeless, preparing annual Thanksgiving baskets, knitting Forty Day Blessing blankets, and making Prayer Shawls for the sick. She was also instrumental in planning many successful trips to visit other important ministries including the Philoxenia House and Hellenic College Holy Cross. Bessie has helped families from Greece who have come to seek medical treatment, providing food and housing, offering comfort and support, and even obtaining financial resources to help them during a time of great need. These large and small tokens of friendship displayed by Bessie show her philotimo, a word without definition but evidenced by actions that truly touch the heart. She is not just a member of Philoptochos, she lives it through all aspects of her life as a role model and who embodies true philanthropy in all her work.
Klea Kappos

Assumption of the Theotokos
Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Philoptochos Chapter #8010
Denver, Colorado

Klea Kappos is a 35-year member of Philoptochos. She is deeply rooted in her faith and is passionate about Philoptochos. Klea’s exceptional work ethic and selflessness have served as examples to others. She not only inspires collaboration, but she is the motivator through the collective good that comes from the mission of Philoptochos. Her wise counsel, graciousness and positive leadership style have helped recruit new members and retain longstanding ones. Klea has served on Metropolis Philoptochos Board for over eight years, and as Chapter President for two four-year terms. She has held the most of all the officer positions and chaired countless successful Philoptochos events. In addition, she volunteered at the Metropolis Office for 12 years. Klea has been a member of the Festival Executive Board for nine-years and has chaired the Pastry Shop for the past six years. When Klea sees a need, she finds a way to fill it. Through her leadership, she has helped expand the Chapter’s philanthropic outreach by partnering with at-risk local schools to provide t-shirts and school supplies; providing food staples to the African Community Center; and provided clothing to a local prison and rehab facility, as well as to the local non-profit “Clothes for Kids”. Klea has also formed a group to visit parishioners who are homebound to provide for them interaction with fellow Orthodox Christians. Her compassion for all is reflected in her ability to bring people together and mobilize their energy to help those in need. She is patient and kind and has inspired members, encouraged volunteerism and has shaped the ministry of Philoptochos as her parish.
Assimo Kitsos

Saint Mark Greek Orthodox Church
Philoptochos Chapter #5060
Boca Raton, Florida

Assimo Kitsos has been a member of her parish Philoptochos Chapter for the past 12 years, and has been a member of Philoptochos for over 42 years. She is an inspiration to people at her parish through the many ways she offers of herself, including delivering the Prosfora every Sunday morning at 7:30 a.m. and baking Artoclasia for Feast Day services. Assimo also coordinates the weekly coffee fellowship following the Divine Liturgy, always being a gracious hostess, greeting her fellows parishioners by name, and making everyone feel welcome. All proceeds from the coffee hour support the many programs and ministries of Philoptochos. Assimo also shares her talents by knitting blankets for the Miami Children’s Hospital, making over 40 “pillowcase” dresses for children in Africa, and preparing lunch for the homeless at the Caring Kitchen. As a member of the Philoptochos Board, Assimo has attended retreats at the Diakonia Center and is always eager to share her wisdom and advice with other members to help the ministry grow. Whenever there is a need, Assimo is the first to volunteer, whether it is set-up, clean-up, preparing Lenten meals, selling vasilopita and tsoureki, and baking for the Festival. Assimo is a bundle of energy, but even more, she is filled with love for the Lord and her Church. Understanding the importance of cultivating a new generation of leaders for Philoptochos, Assimo encourages and mentors younger members, guiding them as they become involved in this incredible ministry, but most important, leading by example as a faithful Greek Orthodox Christian who humbly and prayerfully attends every church service.
Cynthia Hackett

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral
“Evangelistria” Philoptochos Chapter #7002
Carmel, Indiana

Cynthia Hackett is much more than a list of achievements. She is a devout Orthodox Christian who lives her life with great faith, impacting the people around her with goodness and love. She represents the essence of philanthropy by demonstrating love for humankind with kindness and benevolence. Cynthia has been a member of her Philoptochos Chapter for 40 years, twice serving as President. One of her significant initiatives is the parish Leisure Timers ministry for senior parishioners. She created a forum to gather in fellowship and make them feel a part of the community and appreciated for their years of service. Cynthia has also worked tirelessly for the parish Festival. Combining a ministry of outreach and encouraging an act of kindness by visitors, Cynthia initiated a food drive, encouraging all Festival attendees to bring canned food items for free admission. The response has been outstanding and established a long-term relationship with Gleaner’s Food Bank which provides food to those in need. As an accomplished cook and baker, Cynthia has shared her talents by leading baking sessions, especially in preparation for Lent, enabling people from diverse backgrounds to learn to prepare meals with the intent to grow their faith. She is also blessed with musical talents which she has shared as member of the parish choir for decades, and also leads the children’s choir as they sing during the Christmas and Pascha seasons. Although Cynthia’s mobility has been reduced in recent years, she continues her inspiring service to all generations at Holy Trinity. Cynthia epitomizes AGAPE in all that she does serving both the church and the greater community.
Evangeline Bozikis

Saint Paul Greek Orthodox Church
Philoptochos Chapter #6011
North Royalton, Ohio

Evangeline Bozikis has been a member of her Philoptochos Chapter for over 30 years. She inspires people daily by being an exemplary member through her various philanthropic endeavors. She has helped raise thousands of dollars for the North Royalton Hunger Center, making the support of Philoptochos their number one contributor. She also ensures that children in need are fed and clothed. In fact, people in the parish are so familiar with her good works that they willingly offer donations to make sure the families and children are provided for, especially during the holidays. Her work truly exemplifies the mission of Philoptochos. Evangeline looks beyond the person, their age and race, and sees their physical and emotional needs. Everything she offers is from the heart, with the ultimate goal of bringing joy and comfort to those less fortunate. One of many examples of Evangeline's work includes a story of learning that a grandmother had recently gained custody of her young grandchildren. She took it upon herself to seek out the support of Philoptochos and parishioners. And just as swiftly as she always acts, Evangeline purchased clothing, groceries and other basic necessities for this new family. With tears in their eyes, they expressed their gratitude, knowing that this generous support made their family transition smoother and more peaceful. When asked how she has been such a strong community member, Evangeline does not take credit for her efforts. Rather, she thanks the Philoptochos members who inspired her over the years, and it is her desire to do the same for the next generation.
Kathy Bastas

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Greek Orthodox Church
“Panagia” Philoptochos Chapter #4009
Long Beach, California

Kathy Bastas has been a Philoptochos member since 1999. She has a sincere desire to help others within the Church and greater community which has brought new people into the ministry of Philoptochos. Kathy is a dedicated volunteer not only for the church but was also recognized as the 2018 Volunteer of the Year for the Orange County Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. She formed a team from her chapter called The Lovely Ladies of Philoptochos who have collectively raised thousands of dollars for breast cancer research. Kathy is also involved with For the Child, a local non-profit organization for abused women and children. She has volunteered over 10,000 hours to this group organizing a back to school drive, Thanksgiving food drive, Santa’s Toy Workshop, and helped with various administrative tasks.

At the parish, Kathy has been instrumental in coordinating the baking for the parish festival, organizing volunteers, and also documenting recipes and costs so that future Assumption Festival bakers would have proper records to carry on this excellent work. Kathy is a true example of Philoptochos and philanthropy. Two years ago, the son of a parishioner was diagnosed with Leukemia. The single mother had two children and, though Christmas was approaching, there was not much to celebrate. Kathy led her chapter in providing food and gifts for this family, and even made sure they had a Christmas tree. She served for three terms as Chapter President, two terms as Advisor, and two terms as Treasurer. She is a wealth of knowledge and is eager and willing to share it with others and inspire the younger generation to continue the wonderful ministry of Philoptochos.
Stella Wacker

Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Philoptochos Chapter #1032
Perth Amboy, New Jersey

Stella Wacker was born in Thessaloniki, Greece and immigrated to the United States with her family at the age of 11. They settled in Perth Amboy and became stewards of the Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church community. Stella joined GOYA and Maids of Athena almost immediately and served on the board and executive board level for both organizations. She has been working for Dunn & Bradstreet, a company that provides commercial data, analytics and insights for business, for 41 years as a leader of the financial applications in technology. She has been married for 38 years to her husband, Emil, and they have two adult children, Jessica, who is married to Jason, and Zachery. At her local chapter she has chaired and co-chaired fashion shows, Thanksgiving baskets, bake sales and published journals for various events. She served as the chapter President and Treasurer for several terms. Stella is currently serving as Treasurer on the Metropolis of New Jersey executive board and has been Treasurer for several terms. She has been a member of the Financial Committee for Hurricane Katrina, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine and the 2017 National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon. Stella participated in an OCMC mission for Orthodox Clergy Wives in Albania. Stella also served as a youth advisor for 12 years for the Metropolis of New Jersey and the Recording Secretary for Northern New Jersey Youth Commission. She has been a volleyball coach for the parish, a Sunday School teacher, a member of the PTO, and a member of the Festival finance committee.
Andrea Despina George Tiggas

Saint Mary Greek Orthodox Church
Philoptochos Chapter #2049
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Andrea Tiggas has been a member of her Philoptochos Chapter for 42 years and has been an inspiration to many people through her participation. She is an excellent role model, both as a willing leader and a helpful member. She brings new ideas for activities and worthy causes to the board and membership for consideration. And, as a board member she shares her historical wisdom and offers thoughtful perspectives for discussion. One of Andrea’s greatest contributions occurred during her two terms as Chapter President. She emphasized the importance of becoming involved in the broader work of Philoptochos at the Metropolis level, which impacted the decision to participate in the Chapter Challenge resulting in an increase in membership and galvanized the chapter to work in a unified way. She served as Treasurer for many years, and actively participates in several fundraising events. She is also a longtime member of the Altar Guild, chairs the Christmas decorating, programs the carillon bells with Orthodox hymns, and co-chairs the Great Lent and Paschal decorating efforts. Philoptochos is a labor of love for Andrea. She upholds Orthodox traditions and supports the work of her parish priests. Andrea has also been an advocate for Orthodox and community organizations including the Mary and Martha House, Zoe for Life, Tandem (a local Christian non-profit for pregnant women and mothers in crisis), Healing House (a residential facility for women fighting addiction and their children), four Orthodox orphanages, and programs working with those affected by human trafficking. Andrea chooses to spend her free time volunteering with Philoptochos and she is a great promoter of service to and for all.