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TO OUR READERS

We are excited to bring you the second electronic version of the Philoptochos Voice. This edition will share with you our 2016-2018 programs and new initiatives, as well as our 2018 convention presentations. We hope that you will read the content, click on the links to access the videos and presentations, and learn more about the goals and programs of our beloved organization.

The 2018 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention presented a new, expanded vision of Philoptochos, which was inspired by His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America’s observations at the 2015 Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon:

“Philoptochos has surpassed its original Philanthropic purpose. You are not only philoptochos, but also philotheos, philadelphos, philanthropos, and philoxenos.”

Not only Friends of the Needy, but also Friends of God, Friends of Neighbors, Friends of Humanity, and Friends of Strangers.

This expanded vision will take Philoptochos beyond its 100th anniversary, ensuring our existence and relevance to our members and parish communities. We are 9 Metropolises, over 400 chapters, and over 25,000 members strong with the dedication, agape and power to feed over one million people.

Accordingly, the 2018 Convention presented the spirit of a new Philoptochos. The convention was interactive, engaging, informative and inspiring. We hope that this edition of the Philoptochos Voice will convey this new vision and spirit to our readers.

Don’t forget to forward and share!

In His Service,

Barbara Pasalis
Valine Georgeson
National Philoptochos Public Relations/Communications Co-Chairs
To the 2018 Convention Delegates, Stewards and Friends of Philoptochos,

The 2018 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention is now the stuff of memories and oh, what glorious memories they are!

Images of hundreds of Philoptochos members — working together from early morning and late into the night, listening intently to our dynamic guest speakers, or just smiling broadly at a charming four-year-old who shares our commitment to helping the homeless and hungry — flood my mind and happily confirm my belief in the love, resolve and commitment of the women of Philoptochos. The dedication of our delegates exceeded all of my dreams, and to each of you, I offer my thanks, my respect and my love.

Our Convention Chairs, Barbara Pasalis and Elaine Zetes, and their dedicated committee members, worked tirelessly to create a warm and welcoming environment, combining an educational and inspiring program with opportunities for lasting friendships to develop and grow. I hope that the delegates have shared their experiences and that this 2018 Convention issue of the Philoptochos Voice will give everyone a glimpse into the joyfulness of our week in the Holy Metropolis of Boston.

The love, the kindness, the generosity and the ferocious dedication and devotion offered by Philoptochos stewards across the Archdiocese gives proof that,

When Philoptochos sees pain and suffering, we strive to offer comfort;
When Philoptochos sees hunger, we aspire to offer sustenance; and
When Philoptochos sees despair, we try our best to offer hope.

We know that it is our belief in Christ that fuels our mission and inspires us, making it possible for Philoptochos to do good against all odds. And as the moving theme of our convention reminds us, “All things are possible to the One Who Believes in Christ.”

With love in Christ,

Maria Logus
National Philoptochos President
In keeping with this new vision of Philoptochos and the Clergy Laity theme, “All things Are Possible to the One Who Believes in Christ,” the 2018 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention offered an expanded program designed to serve not only the needy and the world at large, but also our members and parish communities.

Over the past two years, this was accomplished without reducing the financial support that Philoptochos annually provides to its many ministries, such as St. Basil Academy, Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Saint Photios Shrine, International Orthodox Christian Charities, Orthodox Christian Missions, Support A Mission Priest, Orthodox Christian Fellowship, Archdiocesan Presbyters Council and National Sisterhood of Presvyteres Joint Benevolent Fund, Retired Clergy and Widowed Presvyteres Benevolent Fund, Children’s Medical Fund, Emergency Fund, Social Services and more. From 2002 – 2017, this support has totaled $25,804,228.

Adhering to the charge of National President Maria Logus to do more doing, the Feed the Hungry Program challenge was increased to over one million meals in 2017-2018, and the development of a series of educational initiatives was prioritized. When asked what Philoptochos does, President Logus replied clearly and confidently, “We serve.” For a recap of the convention program, please continue reading.
When the Feed the Hungry program launched in January 2015, National Philoptochos President Maria Logus challenged chapters across the nation to provide 250,000 meals for the needy by the 2016 convention. In an extraordinary demonstration of “can do” spirit, chapters not only met, but shattered, that goal by providing an amazing 750,000 meals! The success did not go unnoticed. In June 2017, the Feeding Children Everywhere organization honored National Philoptochos with its inaugural Hunger Hero Award in the Outstanding Faith-Based Organization category.

Feed the Hungry Chair, Georgia Vlitas and 2nd Vice President, Evan Scurtis receive the inaugural Hunger Hero Award for Faith-Based Organizations

Refusing to permit chapters to rest on their laurels, President Logus issued a new challenge for chapters for the 2016-2018 term:

TO PROVIDE 1,000,000 MEALS BY THE 2018 CONVENTION
Delegates arrived in Boston fueled by excitement and anticipation, eager to learn not only whether Philoptochos had attained the goal, but also the name of the chapter that had served the millionth meal. The result?

**Philoptochos served 1,343,734 meals**

And which chapter can claim bragging rights for serving the millionth meal? That honor belongs to the Philoptochos chapter at Annunciation Church, Akron, Ohio in the Metropolis of Pittsburgh. This single chapter provided an astounding 263,000 meals. Congratulations not only to the Akron chapter, but also to every participating chapter for warmly embracing this most worthy ministry and helping Philoptochos to exceed its goal.

**Millionth Meal Winner**
Annunciation Philoptochos, Chapter 6003 Akron, OH

Akron President Diamon Marcum accepting the National Philoptochos Feed the Hungry “Certificate of Award”
HANDS-ON CONVENTION PROGRAM: RISE AGAINST HUNGER

Philoptochos delegates, as well as Clergy Laity delegates who gathered in Boston, participated in a meal-packaging event in partnership with *Rise Against Hunger*. The event took place at the Boston Marriott Copley Place on July 5, where in two one-hour sessions, the delegates worked together to assemble four ingredients (rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a micronutrient mix) to provide more than 10,000 meals for hungry people. Capitalizing on the opportunity to serve together, the participants did so with camaraderie and a sense of purpose.
“SUPERMAN” 4-YEAR-OLD AUSTIN PERINE ZOOMS INTO THE CONVENTION

Philoptochos delegates received a special treat when Austin Perine, whose “Show Love” project has captured the nation’s attention, “zoomed” into the convention hall. “Superman” Austin Perine of Birmingham, Alabama is only 4 years old, but he has made it his mission, with the help of his parents, to minister to the homeless in his community.

Wearing a Superman cape, and with a pure heart and an engaging personality, he delivers much-needed meals with only one request of each recipient: “Don’t Forget to Show Love!” Little Austin started by using all of his allowance and forgoing all presents to buy chicken sandwiches to distribute to the homeless in Birmingham. When Burger King learned of his philanthropy, they told him they would provide him with all the chicken sandwiches he needed for free. In addition, Austin’s Show Love Foundation is collecting donations and has already raised more than $77,000. The funds will be used to provide food, toiletries, drug rehabilitation and shelter integration.

At the end of the session, National Philoptochos informed Austin that they would be sending a check for $1,500 to his nonprofit, Show Love Foundation. Truly, the spirit of philanthropy is alive and thriving in this young man!

To learn more about Austin’s “Show Love,” Feed the Hungry program, click on the image below:

Click Here - Live Interview with Austin Perine
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

President Maria Logus quickly answered that question by laying down a new challenge:

- To provide **1.5 Million Meals** by the 2020 convention!
- Which chapter will provide the **1.5 millionth meal**?
- Which Chapter in each Metropolis will provide the **most meals**?

Join us at the 2020 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention to discover how many meals our Philo-Strong 400+ chapters and 25,000+ members will provide!
EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES INFORM & EMPOWER

To address current, critical issues facing our society, Philoptochos is developing a series of educational initiatives to serve and inform our stewards, parish communities, and the community at large. Parishes and chapters can use these tools as chapter and community programs to inform and improve the lives of their members.

**Be Safe, Be Smart-Investigating Technology Safety in the Computer Age.**
This was the first initiative we produced. It was initially intended to serve senior citizens in our parishes. Subsequently, more information was added that deals with the safe use of cell phones and social media, including Facebook; thus, the information became relevant for our teens as well. During the 2018 convention in Boston, delegates were treated to a very informative, yet entertaining, presentation relaying the pitfalls we face in the information age and ways to stay safe and smart.

**Stop Bullying in Your Community.**
This program was developed as a complete curriculum to be used in parishes to teach young people how to respond when they are 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. The program consists of a collection of videos, PowerPoint presentations, activities and resources that can be used in youth groups and parishes.

The entire Anti-Bullying curriculum can be accessed here.

**Inclusion Ministries Program.**
Children with special needs hold a special place in our hearts yet having them in church presents challenges. In response, Presvytera Toni Mihalopoulos of the Metropolis of Chicago developed this program to help parishes minister to families with special needs children. Pick Up Your Cross and Follow Me is presented as an example of a collection of programs and resources to serve children with special needs and their families.

Please click to your right to access the presentation.
Women’s Health Initiative.
The Women’s Health Committee was formed to address a variety of health issues that women face. The committee began with heart disease—the #1 killer of women—and has assembled a full array of articles and resources to educate women on this critical health issue. Convention delegates received a wealth of eye-opening facts and figures about heart disease in a presentation given by guest speaker Dr. Amy Sarma. The committee plans to continue its work and develop additional initiatives on health issues that women face.

The full array of resources can be accessed here.

Reinforcing the committee’s concern with women’s health and well-being, National Board members developed a special convention program entitled, Exercise Your Mind ~ Exercise Your Body ~ The Path to Good Health, in which they sponsored early morning walks and stretching and exercise breaks during meetings to relieve mental and physical fatigue during the convention.

Delegates gather in the lobby of the Marriott Copley to begin their morning walk.
Alzheimer’s Disease.
This is the most recent initiative. The committee assembled a collection of articles and resources that address symptoms and treatments of this devastating illness, along with ways that family members can help their loved ones. In addition, a PowerPoint presentation was designed to introduce this topic to delegates at the convention. Alzheimer’s Disease is an issue faced by an increasing number of families in our communities.

National Philoptochos’ goal in developing these initiatives is to aid members and communities in living better, healthier, more stress-free lives. If the information provided can save even one life, our goal will have been achieved.
The 2018 Convention Speakers were a huge hit! They were engaging, informative and inspiring. Addressing a variety of topics aligned with Philoptochos programs and initiatives, each one reinforced the importance of our philanthropic mission and the relevance of our work.

The Opioid Epidemic. Denise Garlick, MA State Representative, addressed the delegates on the Opioid Epidemic, which is plaguing our nation. She stated that “a substance abuse disorder is a disease of despair” affecting 1 in 13 people nationally, which meant that every member in the room has a friend or relative who is dependent on a drug to function on a daily basis. Representative Garlick shared that in 2016, 42,000 people died from overdoses related to opioids. She provided the visual of a capacity filled Fenway Park plus 5,000 more. Individuals with substance abuse disorders do not use drugs to make themselves feel better, but rather, so that they won’t feel so bad. Every case is different; it’s a complicated picture that presents in many ways.

Ms. Garlick stated that Philoptochos is an organization whose mission is to help vulnerable populations. She charged the delegates with the task of returning home to focus on four items within their communities: reducing the stigma and disgrace attached to addiction, educating their communities about the problem, developing programs to help at-risk people not to turn to addiction, and to continue coalition work. Members should partner with other groups within the community. She also suggested researching the statistics within your geographical area. Examining the data will tell the story of your state. Finally, everyone needs to start talking with their children about addiction in new ways. Ms. Garlick went on to say that it is never too early to begin talking to children.

Philoptochos plans to develop an educational initiative on the topic of addiction during the 2018-2020 term.

Click here for a video of her speech to the delegates.

Photo: https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/DCG1
JoNell Efantis-Potter, PhD, THRIVE Clinic, University of Miami.

Dr. Efantis-Potter warmly greeted the delegates and thanked Philoptochos for the $35,000 grant, which she accepted on behalf of the THRIVE (Trafficking Healthcare Resources and Interdisciplinary Victim Services and Education) Clinic, which treats the health care needs of survivors of human trafficking. Philoptochos has sponsored a Human Trafficking program for over 5 years.

Human Trafficking is modern day slavery, enforced labor and sexual abuse of humans. Human trafficking impacts 20 million victims, half of whom are children. Many of the children are abused, victims of foster care disasters, or runaways. Some live in suburbia and trade sex for items they want. Most victims are kidnapped as children, and their captors use fear to control them. They threaten to kill them or their families, telling the children that they have their identification and know where their families live. Traffickers track every move of their victims. Medical staff who treat patients in emergency rooms have found tracking devices embedded in the victims’ skin. Captors teach their victims not to trust anyone. Victims being treated in the THRIVE clinic have been raped repeatedly from a very young age – as often as 20-30 times a day for 10-20 years. They are drugged to make them sleep and fed, if they are lucky, once a day.

It takes significant time to treat every patient, as they all suffer from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). They have no identification, and usually, they have only the clothing they are wearing. At THRIVE they specialize in the Trauma Informed Care Approach. Every patient is given choices in order to acknowledge their strength and to show them support. “Every patient is different; every survivor has a terrible story; all have tremendous need, but they have survived,” stated Dr. JoNell. She thanked Philoptochos for the grant, which will be used to hire a social worker, and promised delegates that she will be a careful guardian of the grant.

Click here for a video of her speech to the delegates.

Picture: https://anchorstudy.org/sylvester/team/jonell-potter-md
Dare to Serve: A Presentation on Servant Leadership.
Tim Tassopoulos, President and COO of Chick-fil-A,
engaged delegates in an interactive discussion in which he boldly stated to the delegates, “how well you lead determines how well you serve.”

Leadership is the ability to translate intention into reality. Intentional influence combines both competence and character. It is a choice to serve and impact others. Simple achievement without an impact on others may be success, but it is not leadership.

Great leaders serve, as it’s not about the leader. The practices of a great leader are summarized in SERVE:

- **See & Shape** the Future -- leaders look to the future, as they communicate very clearly why tomorrow can be better than today.
- **Engage** and Develop Others -- the power of a shared vision pulls people together; you should always be recruiting new members and re-recruiting existing members.
- **Reinvent** Continuously -- always take the opportunity to learn and stay fresh.
- **Value** Results & Relationships -- your results represent your relationships.
- **Embody** the Values -- Do we know them? Do we live them? Do we show them?

Mr. Tassopoulos ended with a challenge to the delegates, “Don’t miss the opportunity you have to grow as a leader, thereby growing the service that Philoptochos provides.”

The development of new leaders is critical to the survival of any organization. Every metropolis and chapter must have a plan for developing new leaders so that we move the organization forward.

Click here for a video of his speech to the delegates.

Click here for his presentation.

Picture: https://www.chick-fil-a.com/Board-Officers/Executive-Officers/Tim-Tassopoulos
Be Our Guest. Despina Kartson, author of Last Night’s Soup Run and longtime Philoptochos member, spoke at the AGAPE Awards breakfast. Her presentation focused on the humanity of the homeless, the fact that homeless people are people, just like you or me. At some point, they had families, education and employment, but they have fallen on hard times. A spouse or partner may have passed away unexpectedly leaving them unable to pay their bills; they may have lost their job and are without family to rely on; they may be street homeless because of a lack of affordable housing; or they may be dealing with substance abuse. Homeless people all have a story to tell, one that may be very similar to our own.

Despina’s parish and Philoptochos, through their Homeless Outreach Ministry, serve 125 meals each month on 33rd Street and 7th Avenue across from Madison Square Garden in New York City. They are there 12 months a year, regardless of the weather. As Despina says, “They (the homeless) still need to eat.” They have been serving the homeless for ten years, and they serve their guests without judgment. Over the years, they have served over 10,000 meals. They serve a hot meal and offer toiletries, clothing, fleece blankets, rain ponchos and whatever else they believe their guests will need based on the season and special requests.

“We love connecting with our guests. We look them in the eye and ask for their names; we listen, and we just talk to them,” said Despina. One of the most poignant lessons she received from this ministry is that the homeless are just like everyone else. Watch her presentation to learn the stories of the homeless people she has served over the years. Doing this will change your perception of the homeless in the best possible way, and if you and your chapter and parish have been considering starting a feed the hungry program, this will certainly help tip the scale. You will truly be touched both by the volunteers and those whom they serve.

Click here for her speech to the delegates.
Heart Disease in Women. Amy Sarma, MD, Corrigan Women’s Heart Health Program of Massachusetts General Hospital,

spoke on the causes, symptoms and treatment of heart disease, as well as how the disease presents itself differently in women versus men. Many women arrive at the hospital late, well after they’ve had a heart attack, because they have atypical symptoms, which they don’t recognize as a heart attack. Rather than chest pain, they may feel indigestion, shortness of breath, fatigue, or jaw pain. Time is of the essence when it comes to heart disease -- for the patient, for treatment, and for the diagnosis, so knowing the difference in symptoms is important. Women tend to be more medically complex at the time of a heart attack and also have atypical mechanisms that make treatment more complicated.

“We are now understanding that there are a lot of differences between men and women when it comes to traditional risk factors. Many non-traditional risk factors are emerging that are particular to women. For instance, cardiovascular complications of pregnancy, including pre-term delivery, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, and gestational diabetes are now known to be cardiovascular risk factors. Women who experience these events during pregnancy are more likely to experience cardiovascular disease later in life,” said Dr. Sarma. Dr. Sarma’s presentation was eye-opening. She provided information that all women need to be aware of and to share with friends and family members because, as she stated clearly, time is of the essence.

Take a look at our Women’s Health Initiative page on the Philoptochos website to read testimonials of women who have had many of these atypical symptoms – and who report that they truly couldn’t believe they had heart disease based on their symptoms.

Click here for part one of her speech to the delegates. Click here for part two of her speech to the delegates.

Picture: https://www.massgeneral.org/doctors/doctor.aspx?id=20404
What is Giving? Rev. Fr. Nicholas Louh of Ancient Faith Radio’s Healthy Minds Healthy Souls, and pastor of Saint John the Divine Greek Orthodox Church, Jacksonville, Florida, gave a truly inspirational presentation on giving. He began by speaking about how many of us have key words or phrases that we use all the time, using his child as an example. One of his son’s most frequently used words is “seriously.” He asked delegates what they think the most frequently used words in the Bible are. He identified “believe,” mentioned 272 times; “prayer,” mentioned 371 times; “love,” mentioned 714 times; and the most frequently used word is “give,” mentioned 2,161 times.

“You are extraordinarily gifted at giving,” he said about Philoptochos. He stated that the value of our lives is not what we accumulate but what we give. He encouraged everyone to invite not only Philoptochos, but also the entire parish to find needs in the community and to fill them, to find hurt in this world and to heal it. He also said that hurrying, what we all suffer from in today’s world, is the enemy of the ability to help.

He provided four examples to help us excel in the gracious gift of giving:

• Let us give of our time
• Let us give of our talents
• Let us give the gift of the human touch, and
• Let us give the gift of Christ.

Towards the end of his presentation, Fr. Louh spoke about a ministry trip he took and the lessons he learned from a little boy who had so little and yet showed grace, strength and humility. Fr. Lou’s presentation is one that is worth watching and sharing with your Philoptochos Chapter and your entire community, as a reminder to give.

Click here for a video of his speech to the delegates.

Picture: https://www.ancientfaith.com/contributors/nicholas_louh
INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION GROUPS

When surveyed about the programs they would like to see expanded at National Philoptochos Conventions, delegates overwhelmingly asked for more interactive discussion sessions. The Chairs of the 2018 Convention responded by scheduling three hours of breakout sessions (see next section) and four hours of interactive discussion sessions for all attendees.

The interactive discussion sessions included eight topics. Each group discussion was led by National Board members, and in some groups, priests and organization leaders.

Delegates were divided into groups with an assigned meeting room. Each session lasted 30 minutes, with the facilitators rotating. In this way, every delegate participated in all eight sessions. Facilitators reported great dialogue exchanges. The delegates’ questions were answered; ideas were shared; successes and challenges discussed; and solutions were offered.

The following are summaries of these discussions:
FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES
Barbara Vittas and Valine Georgeson, Facilitators

Successful fundraising is a vital part of every Philoptochos chapter. Fundraising determines the amount of financial support that can be disbursed to the chapter’s philanthropic causes.

Successful fundraising happens when a chapter:
• Believes in the cause it chooses to support
• Always announces where the net proceeds from the fundraiser will go
• Keeps records of expenses and donations
• Enjoys working together and includes all members
• Promotes the event creatively
• Creates fundraisers that appeal to both parishioners and the outside community.
• Sends handwritten notes of thanks to donors and volunteers

Main challenges with fundraising:
• Getting enough volunteers to help
• Creating and offering new ideas for fundraisers
• Finding room on the church calendar to schedule an event
• Promoting the event successfully
• Finding chairpersons to lead the effort
• Asking for donations throughout the year

Ideas for Fundraisers – Chapters have successfully sponsored ALL of these events!
• Offer Greek cooking classes
• Autumn or Spring Food Fair
• Yiayia’s Attic Sale – Sell items donated by your parishioners
• Community Christmas Card – charge $20.00 per name
• “Greek Dancing with the Stars”
• Plant a Rose bush – $50.00 donation. Philoptochos will plant it on church grounds
• During Lent, sell Loukoumades after Sunday Liturgy
• Makaria Gatherings – Offer a fish meal at a set price
• “Men Who Cook” – Male parishioners donate and cook food for a community meal. All proceeds to Philoptochos!
• Gyro Fest Lunch – Distribute flyers with lunch menu to surrounding businesses.
• Tabletop Christmas Trees – Decorate & Auction
• Walk-a-thon! Trivia Night! Used Purses or Jewelry Sale!
GRANT APPLICATIONS 101
Arlene Siavelis Kehl, Carol Stamas and Marilyn Tzakis, Facilitators

This goal of this group was to inform delegates about the National Philoptochos Grant Program and to provide them with a greater understanding of the 2018 General Grant Application Process.

The Grant Application process has many components and the full report from this Committee will be published in the October 2018 edition of the Philanthropy Witness e-newsletter.

Important points discussed with the delegates:

Who can apply for a general grant from Philoptochos?
- Any applicant that is a legally constituted Not for Profit with current 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service and functions in the identified service area.

How are grant applications reviewed?
- They are reviewed pursuant to a set of eight criteria, which can be found in the complete report.

When and by whom are grant applications reviewed?
- Grant applications are reviewed on a rolling basis
- This begins with the National Philoptochos Project Review & Management Committee.
- The Committee’s suggestions and recommendations are then forwarded to the National Philoptochos Finance Committee, which reviews recommendations with the National Philoptochos Executive Board; their recommendations are then submitted to the entire National Board for a final decision.
How does applying for a General Grant differ from applying for a Children’s Medical Fund Grant?

- General grant applications that are submitted are reviewed on a rolling basis
- Children’s Medical Fund (CMF) Luncheon grant applications must be submitted by a set deadline for grants to be reviewed and awarded at the Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon.

Click here to access the general grant application form on the National Philoptochos website.

The National Philoptochos Project Review and Management Committee’s grant application ensures that grants are awarded to both large and small organizations, which provide services consistent with the mission of Philoptochos and where our donations will make a real difference in the lives of others.

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

www.iocc.org
Dean Triantafilou, Executive Director
Elaine Cladis and Marian Catechis, Facilitators

- IOCC Executive Director Dean Triantafilou presented its history.
- Since 1992, IOCC has disbursed over $600,000,000.
- IOCC and Philoptochos have been partners for 26 years.
- Homefront Program – focuses on preparedness, response and recovery
- Front Liners serve when disasters strike; fourteen clergy and four lay people serve as Front Liners
- Matching fund opportunities were discussed, as well as decision-making processes and the best use of resources.
- IOCC has 28 paid employees in Baltimore, 110 employees in the field
- Philoptochos impacts IOCC through chapter commitments, global emergency donations, assembling and sending Health, Emergency, School & Hygiene Kits.

Click here to access the IOCC website.
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (OCF)

www.ocf.net  
Jim Gianakis, Chairman of the Board  
Pam Argyris and Theone Dickos, Facilitators

OCF Chairman of the Board Jim Gianakis, noted that OCF is charged with connecting Orthodox, as well as interested non-Orthodox, college students in the USA and Canada to Christ and His Church.

• Philoptochos supports OCF through chapter commitment donations
• Chapters partner with OCF to connect with college students in their city
• There are over 400 campus chapters of OCF.
• Philoptochos chapters should appoint an OCF Chair, whose job it is to collect names of graduating high school seniors and to create a database with their contact information. This information should be forwarded to the Philoptochos chapter in the city where the graduate will be attending college.
• Chapters should invite Orthodox students in their areas to church gatherings, offer them rides to services, and invite them to their homes for Sunday lunch.
• Chapters can send snack packages during exams and stay in touch.
• OCF Student Leadership Board – Students who work with OCF chapters to bring Orthodox students together through retreats and conferences.

Click here to access the OCF website.
PREPARING A BUDGET
Martha Stefanidakis, Treasurer
Georgia Vlitas, Assistant Treasurer

The session was intended to assist chapters in preparing their annual budgets. However, the discussion immediately transitioned to a discussion about Commitments, in general, and Commitments with discretionary amounts, specifically. Chapters wanted to clearly understand the purpose for each commitment and how the money is used. More specifically, they asked how to determine the amount to give when it is not specified. In these cases, chapters often debate the amount in the month that the commitment is to be paid, determining funds available. Because of this, they are unable to prepare a budget at the beginning of the year. Chapters should begin by looking at several years’ history and basing the amount on what they have done in the past. After that, they will be able to start preparing a budget including all commitments.
SAINT BASIL ACADEMY

Very Reverend Fr. Constantine Moralis, Vice President, Board of Directors
Philippa Condakes and Joanne Stavrakas, Facilitators

Basic Facts about St. Basil Academy
- St. Basil Academy is under the direction of Executive Director Fr. Constantine Sitaras, and the Board of Directors
- It is financially supported by Philoptochos through annual Vasilopita events, the St. Basil Academy Sisterhood Fund and private donations. Even though it is an institution of the Archdiocese, it receives no funding from the Archdiocese.
- The Academy grounds and buildings are owned by Philoptochos.
- There is no state funding for the children.

The Children who live at St. Basil Academy
- All the children are Christian, but not necessarily Orthodox
- There must be a connection to someone who is Orthodox in order for a child to be referred to St. Basil Academy. Usually referrals come from a parish priest. Parents must give consent for their children to come to St. Basil Academy.
- The Academy currently has 21 children but could house 60 to 70.
- The children are not orphans; their parents are unable to take care of them for any number of reasons.
- Children can stay as long as they need to and are monitored on a case-by-case basis. Families can, and do, visit.
- Some children are not accepted, as they need more specialized services than can be offered.

Daily Life at St. Basil Academy
- Most people do not realize that St. Basil Academy must pay for the education of the students because it is a non-profit entity and pays no taxes.
- Tuition is approximately $15,000 per student. The children attend both public and private schools in Garrison, New York.
- Father Costas and his staff make St. Basil Academy as close to a normal home life as possible, and a safe place for the children, who are involved in a number of after-school activities, including sports, Greek School, and music lessons.
- The children always attend Divine Liturgy and chapel services
- The staff consists of social workers, psychologists, doctors and dentists.
WAYS TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

Amy Kalogeropoulos, National Philoptochos Office
Marilynn Jemas, Alexis Limberakis, Irene Politis and Jeannie Ranglas, Facilitators

The Membership groups started with a short icebreaker in order for members to meet each other. This was very successful!

Delegates were challenged to create a “tag line” or “hook” to invite someone to join Philoptochos. Some suggested samples:

• “We would love to have someone like you, with strength and talents, to further help those in need.”
• “I need you! We need you! Philoptochos needs you!”
• “Do you want to make a difference and have fun? Then join Philoptochos!”
• “Join a group of dynamic, women who come together to help those less fortunate.”
• “Philoptochos provides you the opportunity to serve those in need and in return, gives you rewarding, moving experiences.”

Open communication between seasoned members and new members should always be facilitated. Let’s talk about this! The younger delegates were asked to give advice to the seasoned members and vice versa to respond to tense issues that might arise:

Seasoned members advised new members to:

• Let negative talk and criticism from some ladies just go in one ear and out the other.
• Be patient with older members. We have lots of experience to share.
• Stay grounded in your beliefs, even if seasoned members disagree.
• Enjoy working with Philoptochos!
• Be willing to take guidance from older members.

New members advised seasoned members to:

• Be willing to listen and open to new ideas.
• Mentor a new member.
• Welcome everyone! Be accepting!
• Allow newer members to try new things.
• Thank you for the path you have laid for us.
WORKING COOPERATIVELY WITH YOUR PRIEST, PARISH COUNCIL AND OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

Fr. Ted Barbas, Fr. Lou Christopulos, Fr. Chrysanthos Kerkeres, Despina Denne Katherine Siavelis, Facilitators

Suggestions for working cooperatively with your Priest and other parish groups:
- Schedule a summer meeting with your priest and the leaders of all church organizations; attendees discuss their plans and goals for the upcoming year.
- This builds mutual respect among the priest and organizations and avoids conflicts on the church calendar; promotes groups working together for common goals.
- It is important for your priest to be present at Philoptochos meetings; in this way, he will be aware of chapter activities and be able to offer appropriate guidance.

Obstacles in working cooperatively and how they can be overcome:
- “Ego” can often be our biggest enemy. It’s not about you! It’s about the church, the mission and the ministry.
- Some Parish Councils attempt to recruit Philoptochos for church fundraising or expect financial assistance for the parish. Perhaps the Parish Council does not have a clear understanding of who Philoptochos is and what we do. It is important that Philoptochos members clearly communicate our mission.
- The parish priest should make it clear that the business of the church is the responsibility of the Parish Council, not Philoptochos.
BREAKOUT SESSIONS

ENGAGING MEMBERS & DEVELOPING LEADERS

Tim Tassopoulos, President and COO, Chic-fil-A
Marian Catechis and Jennifer Constantin, Facilitators

For Discussion:
1. The 80/20 Rule: Most philanthropic organizations devote 80% of their time, treasure and talent toward developing their programs. But if you want to increase your membership, you should devote 80% of your time, treasure and talent to recruiting new members. Once you have members, the programming will take care of itself.
2. Organizations should be continually re-recruiting.
3. How to handle – I don’t have time!
4. How to motivate pessimistic members?
5. How do we reinvent Philoptochos?

Tips for Success
• What is a good way of introducing a new board member or chapter members to Philoptochos? Have the chapter president or her designee invite the new board or chapter members for coffee or tea to give them an overview of what your chapter has planned.
• Match new members with seasoned members who will be a good fit with them, geographically or personally.
• When a new member joins your Philoptochos board or chapter, what does your chapter do? Every member should receive a copy of your chapter newsletter, bylaws, treasurer’s report, budget, member roster with contact information, meeting schedule, and committee lists.
• Introduce your new board to the community. Send an email blast to your members and a press release to your church bulletin and the local community newspaper.
• Do you have a membership chair? Appoint a membership team with both newer and veteran members. This way, you will have 2 perspectives.
• You MUST have clear goals if you want to be successful. Decide how many new members to target, and make sure you reiterate that number at all events and meetings. Start with 5 or 10.
• Call prospective members on the phone; a personal touch is best.
• Young members? You must have a hands-on approach. Go the extra mile.
• #1 way to develop a leader? Give them REAL responsibility and let them run with it!
• Recruit and engage! If a new or younger member has limited time, allow her to help with just one project.
• Identify new members’ specific talents and engage them in programs that align with their talents and gifts. Allow them to contribute where they want. How do we ascertain their talents? Self-identification; utilize a membership form in which they tell you.
• Enter each calendar or ecclesiastical year with written goals – an annual plan. Have the complete schedule for the year already planned out, written down and ready to pass out at the first meeting.
• Every role/responsibility should have an understudy or mentee. This will help to divide the work, minimize the time commitment and train a successor.
• Long-term members reinvented? Recognize the behavior you want repeated and REWARD!
• Handle pessimism by letting the fire burn out.
• Ensure everyone has value. Make sure you honor tenure and longevity; award and highlight veteran members’ service with years of service recognition.
• Make a big deal about new members; have a celebration!

For Discussion:
1. How do we deal with micro managers?
2. What if the president is the micro manager?
3. How do we get members to chair committees and events?
4. How to diffuse animosity?
5. How to avoid burnout?
6. How to present new ideas/direction?

Tips for Success:
• Micro managers. You can only control what you do. Don’t give in to the temptation to get upset. “I love you; I’m grateful for everything you do, but they’ve elected me president.” Keep going with confidence.
• Consensus is part of the decision-making process; most must agree with a decision. It’s time consuming, but it’s important to make each member feel valued and heard. Respect everyone but move on.
• For the new ecclesiastical or calendar year, concentrate on membership and service and you will be successful!
• For seasoned members, build relationships. Remember, they want attention. Meet one-on-one for coffee/breakfast every 6-8 weeks.
• Remember to have a written plan -- this is VITAL!
• Recruiting should be done continuously. Do you have as many people working in membership recruitment as you do in service? Remember the 80/20 Rule.
• Have a Membership month -- All Things Membership! Put on a huge push in your parish. If they don’t join when you send a letter, send another one! Educated Leadership -- remember the understudy. This gives you two different ways to engage members, organizational roles and understudies.
• Be purposeful and intentional; fewer activities tend to be more successful. Concentrate your efforts. People engage, give and serve based on their interests.
• SURVEY your members. Remember the brainstorming session you had? Engagement increases when done this way.

For Discussion:
1. Board not open to new ideas? The dreaded, “We’ve always done it this way!”
2. Younger crowd not stepping up? What to do?
3. Need new officers? How?
4. Feeling overwhelmed? What to do?

Tips for Success:
• Ask younger members for fresh ideas; ask them to come to your brainstorming session and implement what is suggested!
• If you want different levels of engagement, you must be open to new ideas from newer members and also HONOR experienced members!
• Recognize and REWARD!
• Communicate with everyone. Everyone matters!
• Identify the worker bees and queen bees.
• Back to the brainstorming session! Try a children’s fashion show. Tie the event to a service project. The entire family will participate!
• Not a team player? Sometimes people are just difficult. Just pray for them and let them know you care. Don’t assume you understand their intention. By working together, you will learn to communicate and understand one another.
• Leadership bullying? You control you. You can’t control others. Try to understand why they are that way. Perhaps they have always had to pick up the pieces and are used to taking over.
• Micro managing? Engage more people. Don’t talk rudely about any members when they aren’t present. Stay loyal!
• We must all work harder to get more people involved.
• Invest in membership like you invest in service.
• Honor the entire membership.
• Make the decision to bring in a great speaker, someone different from any you have had before!

For Discussion:
1. How to integrate new and experienced members?
2. Are your new members voicing opinions, but being cut down?
3. How to avoid burnout?
4. How to avoid conflict between organizations within the parish?
5. Work seasoned core members 20%, and stimulate all members 80%?
6. How do we avoid cliques?

Tips for Success:
• Members with new ideas -- support their projects; let them do their event; do projects that are important to each group.
• Have members with special talents and interests present to the group.
• Allow young mothers to involve their children; it gives them the ability to get inside.
• Partner with other ministries within the church to do outreach -- it opens doors to be a part of Philoptochos.
• Honor different groups of Philoptochos -- honor your experienced members and your new members.
• Every role in Philoptochos needs an understudy or mentee; this develops new leaders in the best way.
• Give everyone real responsibility; make sure everyone cares about developing new members.
• Have a BRAINSTORMING session every year. It’s all about new ideas. This is how your chapter moves forward and gains members.
• Respond to negativity with the influence strategy. You can only control yourself; don’t assume the other person’s intent; you need to be sensitive to everyone’s needs; meet with difficult people individually -- it’s a small thing but will make all the difference.
• Pursue influence -- not authority!
• Create WRITTEN goals and calendar -- have a plan.
• You should have as many membership goals as service goals; get organized.
• Burn Out -- 80% of the work is done by 20% of membership. Membership/recruiting strategy: designated person to membership and understudies. Use personal contact when requesting help.
• Various ministries in the church compete for the same people. Host a Council of Ministries event each year; ministry heads all meet together and talk about plans for the year.
• Fraternal organizations, i.e. Daughters of Penelope; talk about issues, check calendars, and have joint projects.
• Outside organizations, i.e., Jr. League; advertise your projects outside your church in newspapers, social media, etc. Know what you do! Memorize your elevator pitch!
• WE ARE THE CHURCH’S BEST-KEPT SECRET!

Recap:
• Commitment to Recruit and Engage
• Every Role has an assistant
• Written ministry plan – schedule, goals, leaders
• Honor all members; everyone matters!
• Bring in outside speakers with new ideas.
• Create energy -- no more secrets
OPEN FORUM WITH THE OFFICERS

Maria Logus, President; Jeannie Ranglas, 1st Vice President; Joanne Stavrakas, 3rd Vice President; Barbara Pasalis, Secretary; Martha Stefanidakis, Treasurer; Georgia Vlitas, Assistant Treasurer

We serve. That is what we do. We learned as children how to serve God, our church and our communities. It is a way of life. I have been a member of Philoptochos since the age of 18.

...Maria Logus

She went on to ask the delegates what they would like to hear from the officers.

From a first-time delegate: “What has been your biggest surprise in your capacity as President?”

Response: “The struggle between young and old; bridging the gap and growing membership.”

Suggestions from the officers:

- Approach and speak to potential members personally during fellowship hour after liturgy.
- Pass out a brochure; the Leadership Committee is working on a booklet for chapters to use as a tool.
- Don’t give up; be persistent.
- Engage the participation of both prospective and new members in something they like; the Feed the Hungry program has been embraced by many new members.
- Use the videos on the website to educate your members about Philoptochos.

From another delegate: “Why is the registration fee so high, $625?”

Response: The cost per delegate is actually closer to $800. Sponsorships help defray some of the cost to keep the fee at $625. Coffee service at meetings is cost prohibitive, and that is why we limit the coffee breaks. Hotel costs are exorbitant. The National Board now has its meetings at churches in order to keep expenses down.

Question: “Why do we give more funds to Saint Basil Academy than Hellenic College/Holy Cross?”

Response: Philoptochos owns Saint Basil Academy. We purchased it in 1944 with $500 down, and in one year, finished paying it off. The purchase price was $44,000. No funds come to Saint Basil’s from the Archdiocese. The Vasilopita commitment generates funds for improvement of the physical plant that are distributed throughout the year. This year, Houston’s successful Vasilopita auction raised $47,000. In addition to the Vasilopita commitment funding improvements to the physical plant, the Sisterhood commitment provides funds for the personal needs of the children, and the Zoe Cavalaris Fund provides educational tutoring.
We assist Hellenic College/Holy Cross with 2 commitment appeals each year: for student scholarships and maintenance of the physical plant. In addition, the Archdiocese provides funding to the college and seminary. Metropolises and chapters adopt seminarians to assist them with tuition and fees.

Maria then asked how many in the room were first-time delegates and asked them to share their thoughts about Philoptochos and the convention:

A first-time delegate from Irvine, CA shared that she came to the convention because of her devotion to her chapter president. She was most impressed by Tim Tassopoulo’s presentation on Servant Leadership and the interactive session with Hellenic College/Holy Cross.

First-time delegates from the Metropolis of Chicago expressed their admiration for what Philoptochos does and stands for. Collaboration between seasoned and new members makes a huge difference for creating a balance and bringing value to the mission of Philoptochos.

From another new delegate: “I am a convert. I have embraced the faith, believe in our mission and accept the challenges. Attending the convention enables you to gain confidence, knowledge and organizational skills to take back and share with your chapter.”

“I’m a lifer! My mother brought me to Philoptochos meetings since I was in a stroller. I’m an independent woman, born and raised in the church.”

**Question:** “I know that men can join Philoptochos as associate members; why can’t they vote?”

**Response:** Many chapters shared their chapters’ perspectives. Some said that husbands and friends are happy to help Philoptochos and do not care if they have a vote. Other chapters responded differently. Maria replied that the 2004 decision permitting men to be only associate members can be revisited.

Maria then asked delegates if they had concerns they wanted to share:

**Concern:** Priests in some parishes want to control the Philoptochos’ treasury.

**Response:** Everyone needs to remember that our mission is to help the needy. Funds raised in the name of Philoptochos can only be used for philanthropic purposes. Chapters must have transparency. Share your budget with your priest and ask to be put on the agenda at General Assembly meetings so that you can share your good works with your parish community.
SOCIAL SERVICES
Lekita Essa, Efthalia Katos, Stella Pantelidis, Evangeline Mekras Scurtis, Facilitators

• Philoptochos IS Philanthropy
• Social Services are the core and heart of Philoptochos
• Every chapter should have a Social Service/Philanthropy Committee and a “point” person.
• All philanthropic assistance in a parish should be vetted through Philoptochos, as we are accountable to our donors for the moneys we disburse. Priests should refer cases to the Social Service/Philanthropy Committee of the parish.
• Money should not be disbursed by the priest. It is the responsibility of the Philoptochos Social Service/Philanthropy Committee to obtain documentation when a welfare request is made, and to fill out an Application for Assistance; documentation and record keeping are critical.
• The National Philoptochos Application for Assistance, and Consent for Release of Information are available to download, both need to be completed and mailed or faxed to the National Office. Chapters should use the National form as a guide, and make edits as needed for their particular circumstances.
• Every chapter must have a maximum cap for financial assistance to any individual.
• Once a chapter exhausts its ability to help an individual, the case can go to the Metropolis Philoptochos, and then to the National Philoptochos for additional aid. National Philoptochos has a $7500 cap per family.
• Payments are never made directly to an individual; checks are payable to vendors only, i.e., for rent, utilities, or medical bills.
• Our National Philoptochos Social Worker, Paulette Geanocopoulos, is well versed on government programs, locally and nationally, and can help connect people in need with the appropriate programs.
• Philoptochos Social Services assistance is not to be monthly financial assistance. The goal is to help the person while in crisis and connect them to the programs that will assist them in becoming independent.
• There is a wealth of information available on the National Philoptochos website, including Step-by-Step Procedures for Metropolises and Local Chapters.

Click here to access Step by Step Procedures for Metropolises and Local Chapters.

Click here to access the Application for Assistance.

Click here to access Consent for Release.
In addition to inspiring speakers and informative presentations, Philoptochos delegates performed two items of business essential to the organization’s future: approval of the budget for the coming term, and consideration of resolutions to amend the organization bylaws.

**2019-2020 Budget**

A preliminary review of the budget took place on Sunday evening, and on Monday, the delegates voted to adopt the 2019-2020 National Philoptochos Budget, which can be accessed here.

In addition to adopting the budget, the delegates received a report from Schall & Ashenfarb, Certified Public Accountants, LLC, which performed an audit for the years 2016 and 2017. Schall & Ashenfarb specialize in working with not-for-profit organizations. One of their accountants appeared at the convention via Zoom video conference and informed the delegates that after a thorough a review of the organization’s books and records, they determined that Philoptochos is in “a strong financial position. The financial statements are free of material error, and there are no material weaknesses in the internal controls.”

**Resolutions**

On Sunday evening, two resolutions were submitted to the members for their preliminary review to determine whether they should be considered for adoption later in the week.

On Thursday, the delegates adopted a resolution to permit attendance via telephone or video conference at board meetings of Parish Chapters, Metropolis Board of Directors, National Board meetings and Executive National Board meetings. Members who are present either by telephone or video conference for the entire meeting will be considered present at the meeting. This does not, however, apply to Philoptochos meetings at Metropolis Clergy-Laity Conferences or at National Conventions.

The members were united in their approbation for this change to the bylaws, which brings our organization into the 21st century, utilizing modern technology to enable women, who may be unable to attend every meeting in person due to work and family obligations, nevertheless to be contributing members of their chapters and metropolises.
On Wednesday, the delegates received a special treat. After rotating through eight Interactive Discussion Sessions, they were greeted outside the meeting rooms by an authentic 18th century fife and drum, which led them back to the assembly hall. After some rousing American music from the Yankee Doodlers, Benjamin Franklin joined the group to present a historic monologue about the founding of America. It was a fitting way to celebrate the 4th of July in Boston, the Cradle of Liberty.
“No challenge is too great for Philoptochos,” stated President Georgia Skeadas, who initiated the program at the 2004 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention. Nine chapters, one from each Metropolis, are selected in consultation with the Metropolis Presidents to present a new project at each convention. The chapters are given $100 seed money to develop, design, and implement a project of their own creation, which aligns with the Philoptochos mission.

2018 CHAPTER CHALLENGE PROJECTS

Please click on the links to access the PowerPoint presentation of each project.

Direct Archdiocesan District
Chapter 0062, Saint Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church
Greenlawn, NY

Project: “Philoptochos Cares” - Making a Difference for Our Veterans

Direct Archdiocesan District

President Diane Bennis was so moved by the dedication and passion she observed in Joe Sledge, Public Affairs Officer of the VA facility at a summer concert in Northport, VA., that after speaking with Mr. Sledge, Diane went back to her chapter to discuss how they could make a difference in the lives of the veterans. The Philoptochos of Saint Paraskevi partnered with Joe Sledge to understand the needs of the local veterans and to support as many veterans and their families as possible.

Metropolis of Boston
Chapter 3041, Saint George Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Springfield, MA

Project: “Phil-Up-The-House” - The Gray House

The Gray House is in a neighborhood typical of inner-city Springfield, MA, approximately half a mile from St. George Cathedral. The Gray House was founded in the early 1980s by Sisters Cathy Homroc and Jane Morrissey, whose vision came to fruition when Gray House opened its doors to a community in need. They provided services to meet civic, social, and educational needs of their neighbors. In viewing their mission statement, the Philoptochos of St. George Cathedral found that it dove tailed perfectly with the mission of Philoptochos and provided an opportunity to serve.
Metropolis of Denver
Chapter 8022, St. George Greek Orthodox Church
Albuquerque, NM
Project: “The Navajo Nation” –
St. Bonaventure Mission
Metropolis of Denver

No running water, no electricity, no indoor plumbing. No -- not in a foreign third world country, but here in the United States on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico. The St. George Philoptochos consulted with Professor Dr. Paul Andrew Hutton from the University of New Mexico before embarking on their Chapter Challenge as they wanted to expand on their once-a-year food delivery in conjunction with YOCAMA (Young Orthodox Christian American Missions Adventure) to the St. Bonaventure Mission. It is home to over 200 residences spanning a 50-mile radius. The Philoptochos gained access to the St. Bonaventure mission, providing aid in the form of warm clothing and blankets, food, school supplies, dog food, solar lanterns, and more.

Metropolis of Atlanta
Chapter 5012, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
Tarpon Springs, Fl.
Project: GRO Group Greenhouse
Metropolis of Atlanta

Upon contacting the Tarpon Springs Recreation Department, the Philoptochos Ladies of St. Nicholas, learned that the GRO Group (Growth Responsibility Opportunity) needed a greenhouse and that the city did not have the funds to build it. The board felt this was a project they could accomplish, and with the generosity and the efforts of many, this dream came true. The Philoptochos met with many people from the GRO Group, and they look forward to their continuing relationship with them.

Metropolis of Detroit
Chapter 7007, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church
Ann Arbor, MI
Project: “A Place to Play”
Metropolis of Detroit

Moved by their charming, charismatic ten-year old parishioner named CJ, the Philoptochos of St. Nicholas chose to center their project on Creating Brighter Futures, a family-based autism clinic. The center lacked an outdoor play area and though they had plans for one in the future, they had no funding. By bringing the community of St. Nicholas together Creating Brighter Futures and holding various fundraising events, the Philoptochos was able to raise funds to complete the excavation of the outdoor play area. Not only did they raise the funds for excavation, but also their efforts and inspiration prompted a generous donation from a parishioner for the playground equipment, as well.
### Metropolis of Pittsburgh

**Chapter 6011, St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church**  
North Royalton, OH  
**Project:** “A Postcard from Heaven”  
Metropolis of Pittsburgh

St. Paul’s Philoptochos took on the task of sponsoring one room for the expanding Ronald McDonald house of Akron for one year. To raise the needed funds, they decided to host a 5K Race for Ronald. Never having previously conducted an event such as this, they partnered with a race management company. With persistence against all odds, hard work, community involvement, and faith, the St. Paul’s Philoptochos was not only able to sponsor one room, but three.

### Metropolis of San Francisco

**Chapter 4037, St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church**  
Las Vegas, NV  
**Project:** “Warmth for the Homeless”  
Metropolis of San Francisco

The goal of the St. John the Baptist Philoptochos was to provide homeless children and adults living on the streets outside shelters with the ability to withstand the bitter cold days and nights of the Las Vegas Desert. They took on the task of providing extreme cold weather sleeping bags of the same quality that the U.S. Government provides its troops in the same weather conditions. Because of the funds raised by the Philoptochos and a successful bid through the Government Surplus Auction, they were able to purchase 132 sleeping bags to distribute. Furthermore, to give each person a sense of self-worth and responsibility, they require all recipients to sign a receipt for their sleeping bag. In a small way, this acknowledges their existence as a unique and responsible person.

### Metropolis of New Jersey

**Chapter 1032, St. John the Theologian Greek Orthodox Cathedral**  
Tenafly, NJ  
**Project:** “SPARK of Love, Hope, & Joy”  
Metropolis of New Jersey

With their Chapter Challenge, the Ladies of St. John the Theologian were granted the opportunity to reach out to the neediest and most vulnerable children of Greece and Cyprus by partnering with two nonprofit organizations, The Ark of the World in Greece, and the Cyprus Children’s Fund in Cyprus. Inspiration for their project came in July 2016 when the people of Greece and Cyprus were being profoundly affected by the financial crisis. For two years, the Philoptochos led the way. The scope of their project exceeded every expectation as they experienced the generosity, support and love of their Cathedral organizations and fellow stewards.
The Assumption Philoptochos Society chose to help a hospice house. It was brand new to the area and they had just begun construction when they met with them. They worked alongside the Director of Evelyn’s House and their fundraising organization, Friends of Wings. It is the first hospice house in the area to accept pediatric patients. The intention was to do something child oriented; therefore, they helped stock a kids’/teen room. The challenge later expanded to fulfill additional needs, blankets and comfort bags for the families.

**2020 CHAPTER CHALLENGE APPOINTMENTS**

**Direct Archdiocesan District**  
Chapter #0060,  
St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Shrine Church,  
Flushing, NY  
Vasiliki Dinas, President

**Metropolis of Pittsburgh**  
Chapter #6003,  
Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church,  
Akron, OH  
Diamon Marcum, President

**Metropolis of Boston**  
Chapter #3004,  
St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Church,  
New London, CT  
JoAnn Ballassi, President

**Metropolis of San Francisco**  
Chapter #4012,  
Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church,  
Northridge, CA  
Dara Phillips, President

**Metropolis of Denver**  
Chapter #8033,  
St. Barbara Philoptochos, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Dallas, TX  
Joanna Spahis, President

**Metropolis of New Jersey**  
Chapter #1023,  
St. Thomas Greek Orthodox Church,  
Cherry Hill, NJ  
Carol Pappas, President

**Metropolis of Atlanta**  
Chapter #5046,  
St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church,  
Charlotte, NC  
Thalia Fergione, President

**Metropolis of Chicago**  
Chapter #2019,  
St. Peter & Paul Greek Orthodox Church,  
Glenview, IL  
Georgia Ryerson, President

**Metropolis of Detroit**  
Chapter #7025,  
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church,  
Sterling Heights, MI  
Kim LaForest, President
AGAPE AWARD HONOREES

All Generations Accomplishing Philanthropic Endeavors

The AGAPE Award, established in 2008, provides the unique opportunity at the National Philoptochos Convention to honor and recognize nine outstanding women from across the Archdiocese who embody the true spirit of *philanthropia*.

It is our privilege to bestow this prestigious award on these Philoptochos stewards who have been tireless workers for their respective chapters. These outstanding women have inspired their fellow members and parish communities as personifications of the wonderful ministry of Philoptochos. Be sure to read the biographies of each of our nine honorees.

**Direct Archdiocesan District**

Cassandra Rinaldi  
Chapter #0008  
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church  
Waterbury, CT

[CASANDRA’S BIO CLICK HERE](#)

**Metropolis of Boston**

Bessie Papigiotis  
“Good Samaritan” Chapter #3067  
Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church  
Cranston, RI

[BESSIE’S BIO CLICK HERE](#)

**Metropolis of Denver**

Klea Kappos  
Chapter #8010  
Assumption of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Cathedral  
Denver, CO

[KLEA’S BIO CLICK HERE](#)
Metropolis of Atlanta
Assimo Kitsos
Chapter #5060
Saint Mark Greek Orthodox Church
Boca Raton, FL

Metropolis of Detroit
Cynthia Hackett
“Evangelistria” Chapter #7002
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral
Carmel, IN

Metropolis of Pittsburgh
Evangeline Bozikis
Chapter #6011
Saint Paul Greek Orthodox Church
North Royalton, OH

Metropolis of San Francisco
Kathy Bastas
“Panagia” Chapter #4009
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church
Long Beach, CA

Metropolis of New Jersey
Stella Wacker
Chapter #1032
Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Perth Amboy, NJ

Metropolis of Chicago
Andrea Despina George Tiggas
Chapter #2049
Saint Mary Greek Orthodox Church
Minneapolis, MN
CHAPTER AWARDS

The 2016-2018 Chapter Awards were presented by Theone Dickos, Chair, in an entertaining Academy Awards format. Awards were presented in the following categories:

- Best Outreach, 1st and 2nd place
- Best Inreach, 1st and 2nd place
- Best Fundraiser, 1st and 2nd place
- Most Meaningful Chapter Program, 1st and 2nd place
- Membership Awards. Chapters with 20 Members or Fewer, 21-49 Members, 50-99 Members, 100-199 Members, and over 200 Members

In addition, Theone announced that all chapters who fulfilled 100% of their Ministry Commitments will receive a certificate from their Metropolis President.

To access a list of the Chapter Awards, please click here.

For a list of Chapter Awards for 100% Commitment, please click here.
CELEBRATING SISTERHOOD AND SUCCESS

On the final day of the convention, we gathered together, united in spirit and empowered by the inspirational speakers, presentations and projects we had seen. Thursday was truly a day of celebration to:

• Celebrate the extraordinary success of our Feed the Hungry program
• Speak with little 4-year old Austin Perine, who shares our passion
• Participate in a meal-packaging event that produced over 10,000 meals for hungry souls
• View the final Educational Initiatives, which have expanded our mission and are designed to serve and inform our members and parish communities
• Learn about the final Chapter Challenge projects to generate ideas for new programs in our home chapters, and finally,
• Celebrate and share the success of our sister chapters through the Chapter Awards presentations.

This is the spirit of a new Philoptochos. Always mindful of the gratitude we owe to the women who came before us and sharing their passion, we advance into the future confidently, inspired and motivated by a new vision and our dedication to serve: our God, our members, our communities, and our world.

WE ARE:

We welcome all women to join us on our journey!
During the period January 1, 2016 – July 5, 2018, the National Philoptochos Society donated $4,603,590 to its various philanthropic ministries, programs, projects and special appeals.

Programs & Ministry Commitments = $2,996,472

To make an online DONATION to any of these funds, please click here.

Additional INFORMATION regarding these funds can be found here.
To make a donation to the Aid to Greece & Cyprus Fund, the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine Fundraising Initiative, or the Hurricane Relief Fund, please click here.
To make an online DONATION to any of these funds, please click here.

Additional INFORMATION regarding these funds can be found here.

To become a Sponsor of the 2019 Children’s Medical Fund, click here.

We look forward to seeing you all next year in Chicago on the Magnificent Mile for the 2019 Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon where we will gather once again to

Rejoice and Embrace the Children!
The Greek Orthodox
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