

GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC.
METROPOLIS PRESIDENT'S REPORT
2018-2020



METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO PHILOPTOCHOS

Marilyn Tzakis, President, 2019 to present

Pam Argyris, Immediate Past President, 2018-2019

August 22, 2020

It is with pleasure that we bring you greetings from the Metropolis of Chicago to all the delegates of the 2020 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention. The Metropolis of Chicago includes the states of Illinois, western Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, northern Missouri, and Wisconsin. We offer our sincere thanks to the Metropolis of Pittsburgh for their planning of the pre-COVID 19 Convention and we regret that we could not be together in Cleveland.

The 56 Philoptochos chapters of the Metropolis of Chicago are committed to the mission of Philoptochos, embracing and supporting all National Commitments and programs as well as the following Metropolis endeavors:

- Metropolis-wide Vasilopita Celebration
- Metropolis Lenten Retreat
- Quilt-a-Thons to benefit hospitalized children
- Annual Philoptochos September Luncheon
- Metropolis Dress-A- Girl Event
- Saints Cosmas & Damianos Vespers and Feast Day Celebration
- Bishop's Welfare Fund
- Philoxenia House in Rochester, Minnesota
- Metropolis Philoptochos Philanthropy Fund
- Feed the Hungry Program
- Perspective Newsletter
- Presidents' Meetings
- IOCC
- Metropolis Oratorical
- Metropolis Jr. Olympics

Our annual September Luncheon remains the main fundraiser for the Metropolis Board and is the kick-off event of our Philoptochos year. In September 2018, the annual luncheon "All Things are Possible With Faith and Love" was held at Café Le Cave with over 300 guests in attendance. The St. Iakovos Retreat Center, The Metropolis Philanthropy Fund and the many philanthropic endeavors of the Metropolis were the beneficiaries of the funds raised through the generosity of the Metropolis Philoptochos Board and the generosity of our guests, donors, and supporters. The September Luncheon for 2019 was cancelled as the Metropolis was hosting the Children's Medical Fund Luncheon in November 2019.

We continue to plan and host three Presidents'/Regional Meetings yearly in which chapter representatives attend sessions focusing on membership, officers' workshops, and guidelines/procedures. The meetings, hosted by various chapters throughout the Metropolis, allow our members to share ideas to enrich our Philoptochos experience as well as promote camaraderie and cohesiveness.

On February 8, 2020, we held an Officer's Workshop at All Saints Greek Orthodox Church in Joliet, Illinois. Approximately 80 Presidents and their Officers were present, as we reviewed and informed them of their duties and responsibilities. However, due to COVID-19, that was the last meeting we had where we were less than 6 feet apart and face to face. On June 13, 2020 we held our first Zoom Presidents meeting. At this virtual meeting 50 chapters were represented, with 76 in attendance. It was very informative, as some Presidents were attending a President's meeting for the first time.

Our Metropolis-wide Vasilopita was held at SS. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Palos Hills, Illinois on January 13, 2019. Over 400 people were in attendance as we celebrated and honored St. Basil the Great, benefiting St. Basil's Academy in Garrison, New York. On January 12, 2020 we celebrated the Vasilopita at St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Chicago, Illinois. Again, 400 people were in attendance. We thank both Philoptochos chapters for their generosity and commitment to Philoptochos.

As 2019 was an election year, we elected new Metropolis Board Officers. We honored our Immediate Past President, Pam Argyris on February 20, 2020 at a Testimonial Dinner. We celebrated the end of Pam's term as President; but know her service to Philoptochos and the Metropolis will continue. We thank Pam for being our leader, our friend and our beloved sister.

In 2019 the Metropolis Lenten Retreat was held on Saturday, March 23rd at St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church in Palos Heights, IL. The theme of the Retreat was "Refugees, War & Oppression" and the keynote speaker was Dr. Vassileia Digidiki, MA, PhD, a forensic psychologist and instructor at Harvard University. Dr. Digidiki spoke in both Greek and English and she presented an extremely informative and valuable lecture, speaking of the difficult circumstances of refugee women and children and the migrant population in the Mediterranean Basin. We thank the St. Spyridon Philoptochos Chapter for their wonderful warmth and hospitality in providing breakfast and lunch for our guests. This was a wonderful way to give us spiritual strength as we continued our Lenten journey. Unfortunately, our 2020 Lenten Retreat had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to a spiritually nourishing Lenten Retreat in 2021.

In addition, our two Quilt-a-Thons were held on March 30, 2019 at SS. Constantine & Helen Church in Palos Hills, IL. and on April 10, 2019 at SS. Peter & Paul Church in Glenview, IL. At these two annual events, members from many chapters across the Chicago metropolitan area meet to make quilts for children afflicted with life threatening diseases. The quilts are distributed to several area hospitals throughout the Metropolis. Again, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Quilt-a-Thons for 2020 were cancelled.

The Metropolis of Chicago was honored to host the 17th Children's Medical Fund Luncheon on November 16, 2019 at the Marriott Magnificent Mile Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago. With a sell-out crowd of over 1,150 guests gathering to support the Children's Medical Fund, over \$282,025 in grants were awarded to 17 programs located within the six states of the Metropolis. We thank the dedicated team of the Metropolis Board and Philoptochos chapter members for their help and for sharing their time, talent, and treasures to ensure that the event was an outstanding success. We also thank the National Board members and chapter members from across the United States for their support and generosity in helping our fundraising efforts. It is through the generosity of all that the 2019 National Philoptochos Children's Medical Fund Luncheon net proceeds exceeded \$542,717!

Our Metropolis Dress-A-Girl Event was held on October 13, 2018 and November 2, 2019 at St. Basil's Greek Orthodox Church in Chicago, Illinois. To date, they have distributed 2,000 girls dresses and 700 boys and girls pants to the following national and international areas.: Haiti, Greece, the Philippines, India, Zambia, Oklahoma and Corpus Christi, TX

In March of 2020, everything stopped. When a crisis hits, Philoptochos Sisters band together and offer assistance. We put together food baskets, made calls to our fellow parishioners, assisted the elderly with grocery deliveries and medicines, and most of all we supported our family and friends with strength and compassion. Our Metropolitan challenged us to do more, so we began Masks Matter, distributing 7,600 hand sewn masks (to date) to non-first responders. In addition, we donated to food banks to help the hungry.

We kept our faith alive, and though unable to enter our churches, we watched live stream services. We reopened our Feed the Hungry Program in a new way, in the parking lot of the Annunciation Cathedral every Tuesday, distributing brown bags filled with sandwiches from commercial restaurants and including chips, pop or water, fruit and a dessert.

Thank you to His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael and our Metropolis Clergy for their love, support, and encouragement of all our Metropolis endeavors. Thank you to the Metropolis Philoptochos Board for their love and support, to the Chapter Presidents for the commitment to our programs and to all of the Philoptochos members throughout the Metropolis for their hard work and dedication to assist those less fortunate and in need.

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