

SOCIAL SERVICES

"HIGHLIGHTING THE GOOD"

THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2022

NATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS:

Eleni Constantinides NJ | Stella Pantelidis DAD

Presenters:

Lisa Xanthos *(San Francisco)*

Katherine Siavelis *(Chicago)*

Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW

Director, Department of Social Services



GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY

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SOCIAL SERVICES RESOURCES FOR NEW PRESIDENTS

(available on Philoptochos Website)

“Recommended Steps for Chapters Metropolises”

Step-by-step procedures to ensure social service assistance to individuals and families provided by all levels of Philoptochos is consistent, compassionate, transparent, and accountable.

- **“Guide to Finding Local Services & Resources”**

To help you find local and broader programs and services regardless where you are in the country for many of the reasons people turn to us for help - resources to supplement what you can do and that can provide ongoing help.

PHILOTIMO: HONOR, INTEGRITY, CHARACTER, DIGNITY & COURAGE.

**Philotimo is helping and respecting
others, not because we expect
anything in return, but because
it is the right thing to do.**

Philotimo exemplifies Philoptochos Social Services

***"For I know the plans I have for you, "declares the Lord;
"plans to prosper you and never to harm you;
to give you a future and a hope."***

Jeremiah 29:11

CASE PRESENTATION:

Lisa Xanthos (*SF Metropolis*)

A 50-year-old man was referred to us by his priest. He was self-employed, producing videos, but due to the pandemic, his income was reduced to zero. His "home" is a very modest boat, in which he lives full-time. He pays monthly wharfage and car parking fees.

He had been in a pedestrian accident that resulted in hospitalization of over one month to treat his many injuries. Although he had health insurance, his hospital bill was more than \$200,000 of which his out-of-pocket costs were over \$7,000. He also incurred expenses for post-rehabilitation therapies and durable medical equipment, only part of which were covered by his insurance. Between the pandemic and his accident, he had over five months of no income at all.

He reached out to Philoptochos because the hospital was ready to refer his bill to a collection agency and he was concerned it would put a lien on his boat or confiscate it to cover his unpaid medical expenses.

After confirming his situation as required by Philoptochos policies and procedures, we negotiated with the hospital, the rehabilitation clinic and the collection agency to reduce his bills.

To ensure he would not be rendered homeless:

- The San Francisco Metropolis Philoptochos paid two months of his wharfage and parking fees, and following a referral to National Philoptochos for supplemental help,
- National Philoptochos fully paid his out-of-pocket medical costs.

But that's not the end of the story!

Ten months later, he wrote and said because he had "landed on his feet", he was returning to our Metropolis and National the money we had awarded on his behalf. We told him we don't require people to pay us back, but rather, we hope they would "pay it forward", to which he responded, "This is how I'm paying it forward. I'm reimbursing you so you can help someone else".

***"There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day,
and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain."***

Timothy 6:8

CASE PRESENTATION

Eleni Constantinides *(New Jersey Metropolis)*

A 53-year-old man passed away at home, by himself. It wasn't until a neighbor called the police about a smell inside the apartment that his body was discovered – an occurrence that happens more often than we are aware. His remains were taken to the County Morgue.

The Medical Examiner's office placed a notice in the newspaper asking for next of kin. A Philoptochos sister saw the notice, and as she recognized his name as Greek, she notified the New Jersey Metropolis Philoptochos.

We contacted the Medical Examiner's Office to inform them that Philoptochos would ensure he would receive a proper burial, and we asked the next steps.

We learned that legal intervention was necessary before the Medical Examiner's Office could release his body to us. We spoke to our Metropolitan, who referred us to a pro bono attorney.

At the same time, we contacted a funeral home with which Philoptochos has a relationship that we would be referring a 'charity' case to them:

- **We negotiated a discounted price for their services *(transporting remains from the morgue to the funeral home, casket, embalming, transporting to cemetery, etc.)***
- **At the recommendation of the funeral home, we purchased a cemetery plot at the least expensive cemetery in the area.**

Upon receipt of an itemized invoice from the funeral home, the NJ Metropolis Philoptochos covered all costs for services rendered by the funeral home and purchase of the cemetery plot.

- **We arranged for a local priest to provide a graveside service**
- **I, along with several Philoptochos sisters attended the burial so he would not be buried alone.**

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Matthew 5:4

CASE PRESENTATION

Katherine Siavelis (*Chicago Metropolis*)

A 59-year-old, single woman was referred to us. Our interviews and documentation requests revealed that she was a college graduate who previously had been gainfully employed. We learned that early in her life, she had been sexually assaulted by a relative which caused her trauma and subsequent post-traumatic stress syndrome. She suffered from multiple medical issues, including endometrial cancer, sleep apnea, high blood pressure and diabetes. We learned she had left her job to take care of her elderly, disabled parents, who eventually passed away. Although she had received an inheritance, she lost it due to an internet scam.

When she came to Philoptochos for assistance, she had lost her housing, was living in a hotel and was working in a job that paid \$14/hour, with no benefits. She asked for help paying the hotel, finding more stable housing, and finding a better job.

By working together with the resources within our Metropolis – the Chicago Metropolis Philanthropy Fund, the Hellenic Foundation and Project Hope - over a period of time, we assessed her multi-faceted needs and helped her accept the services we were able to offer:

- We paid her hotel costs on a short-term basis.**
- We helped her secure an apartment that was rent free for six months and then low rent beyond that time.**
- We helped her navigate the services she needed to manage her health and mental health needs.**
- We guided her towards getting a better paying job.**

POSTSCRIPT:

THE CLIENT, HAD PRIDE – SHE DID NOT WANT A HANDOUT - BUT A HAND UP, WHICH WE WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE! SHE IS VERY GRATEFUL TO PHILOPTOCHOS!

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

John 1:5

“Tips” for your social services toolbox

- **All cases:**

- **Refer to the 'Recommended Step-by-Step Procedures' to ensure all levels of Philoptochos provide consistent, transparent and accountable services.** *(See Philoptochos website/social services menu).*
- **Ask all those seeking your help to complete and sign our Application for Assistance and Consent for Release of Information forms.**
- **Interview clients – confidentially and without judgment.**
- **Obtain documentation from clients to verify their situation.**
- **If a client requests help with many bills, ask client to prioritize them.**
 - **Remember that our policies require we pay bills directly to vendor.**
- **If your chapter or Metropolis cannot meet all of the client's needs, refer the case to National Social Services to supplement what you can do.**
- **To refer clients to local or broader government and nonprofit programs and services, access our Guide to Finding Local Programs and Services".**

“Tips” for your social services toolbox - continued

► Medical cases:

- **Negotiate bills: oftentimes, just asking the hospital, medical provider or collection agency will result in a discounted bill.**
- **Ask the hospital if the client qualifies for its “charity care”.**
- **We do not contribute to accounts of any kind – whether GoFundMe, an account established at a hospital or bank in the person’s name, or other; however, we can contribute to specific bills.**

► Funerals:

- **Establish a relationship with funeral homes in your community, so that when you refer a ‘charity’ case to them, they will provide you with the best price possible.**
- **Obtain an itemized invoice from the funeral home.**
- **Find out if the deceased is an American veteran who may qualify for burial at a VA cemetery.**
- **We do not contribute towards transporting remains outside the country; however, we can contribute to costs of embalming, casket, permits, etc.**
- **We do not contribute towards the cost of cremation.**

“Tips” for your social services toolbox - continued

▶ When a client is applying for public benefits

- **As we cannot provide ongoing assistance, for those needing long-term help, refer them to the local social services office.**
- **Offer to help non-English speaking persons with the application process, including help with translating and more**
- **If client has children, offer to pick up their children from school/childcare while the parent is at the public benefits office.**
- **Be mindful how you assist clients so that your financial assistance is not counted as income, thus delaying or disqualifying them from public benefits. Consider gift cards.**

▶ When client is not a citizen or permanent resident

- **A person’s immigration status may disqualify them from public benefits; however, you can provide financial assistance to give them time to figure out their next steps.**

“Tips” for your social services toolbox - continued

▶ Walk-ins to your Church:

- Leave a supply of the Philoptochos “Application for Assistance” in your Church Office to be given to a “walk-in” seeking help.

▶ When person is not from your community:

- Contact your Metropolis President to ask if they are known elsewhere.
- If the person is not an Orthodox Christian, we cannot help with expenses, however, we can provide them with a gift card – such as to a supermarket or other store, and we can refer them to other resources.

▶ Collaborate with your priest

- Your priest is your chapter’s spiritual advisor. While he can be very helpful in identifying persons-in-need, due diligence and accountability to your donors requires that it is your chapter’s responsibility to evaluate all cases per Philoptochos policies and procedures to determine whether and how you can assist.

▶ To donate to bricks-and-mortar needs of church:

- We cannot use monies raised for philanthropic purposes for such needs; however, we can hold a special appeal or fundraiser specifying how monies generated from those events will be utilized.

OVERALL IMPACT 2020 - 2022

*In the last two years,
174 Philoptochos Chapters, Metropolises &
National's Department of Social Services
provided over*

\$2.3 M

*in financial assistance to those-in-need
throughout the Archdiocese.*

*"As each has received a gift, use it to serve another,
as good stewards of God's varied grace."*

Peter 4:10

SOCIAL SERVICES IMPACT: 2020 – 2022

ALL ASSISTANCE \$ 2,317,285.73

- **NATIONWIDE SURVEY – DATA COMPILED BY JULIE VAGELOS**

CHAPTER/ METROPOLIS:

Case assistance (individuals/ families)..... \$ 1,210,245.00

DAD..... \$ 237,525	Denver... 70,656
Atlanta... 154,393	Detroit... 40,046
Boston.... 25,880	NJ..... 299,642
Chicago.... 287,768	SF..... 94,335

Chapter support to nonprofits..... \$ 585,297.00

- **NATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICES..... \$ 521,743.73**

"The crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' He answered, 'Whoever has two shirts must share with the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same.' "
Luke 3:10-113:10-11

RESULTS OF NATIONAL SURVEY

Social Services Provided by Chapter / Metropolis | 2020 - 2021

Metropolis	# Chapter Replies	Total Amount of Assistance	Total Amount Assistance Excluding Other	# Cases Excluding Other	Housing	Transport	Medical	Funeral	Gift Cards	Other
DAD	23	\$398,359	\$237,525	477	\$88,268	\$13,019	\$17,909	\$47,762	\$70,567	\$160,835
Atlanta	20	\$204,636	\$154,393	365	\$73,178	\$5,851	\$18,172	\$19,879	\$37,313	\$50,243
Boston	7	\$28,707	\$25,880	87	\$9,430	\$200	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$8,750	\$2,827
Chicago	44	\$538,366	\$287,768	1,554	\$125,322	\$8,127	\$39,708	\$65,720	\$48,891	\$250,596
Denver	10	\$75,356	\$70,656	263	\$14,923	\$2,930	\$2,113	\$24,890	\$25,800	\$4,700
Detroit	20	\$59,943	\$40,046	148	\$16,315	\$1,953	\$7,204	\$5,430	\$9,144	\$19,898
New Jersey	36	\$347,177	\$299,642	874	\$125,498	\$11,323	\$18,846	\$39,530	\$104,446	\$47,534
San Francisco	14	\$142,999	\$94,335	631	\$26,380	\$4,274	\$3,358	\$19,536	\$40,786	\$48,664
Total	174	\$1,795,542	\$1,210,245	4,399	\$479,314	\$47,677	\$110,311	\$227,247	\$345,697	\$585,297

NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

423 . . Cases Served (Individuals & Families) 2020 – 2022

211 . . Grants awarded to 133 individuals/ families

Atlanta.....	27,820.02
Boston.....	33,571.25
Chicago.....	38,693.44
DAD.....	229,852.82
Denver.....	19,039.70
Detroit.....	37,183.22
New Jersey.....	65,748.87
Pittsburgh.....	13,890.32
<u>San Francisco.....</u>	<u>55,944.09</u>
TOTAL AWARDED:	\$ 521,743.73

Purpose of Grants Assisting Individuals & Families:

*Poverty, unemployment /underemployment; eviction prevention;
out-of-pocket medical bills; aging & family services;
domestic violence; single parent headed household;
mental illness; substance abuse; homelessness and more.*

**"Carry each other's burdens,
and in this way,
you will fulfill the law of Christ"**

Galatians 6:2