

Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

Biennial Convention: July 6 - 9, 2014
Philadelphia, PA

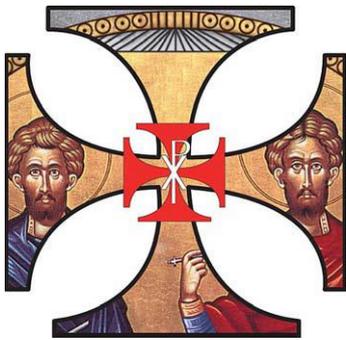
Chapter Challenge

Metropolis: Boston

Chapter Name: Good Samaritan Annunciation Church, Cranston, RI

Project Title: Prayer Shawl Ministry

Project Summary: We crocheted over 500 shawls for our homebound and nursing home parishoners, Philoxenia house, cancer clinics, the veterans home, neonatal babies, and various hospitals in the Providence area. The shawls were blessed by Father Andrew George, and chaplains in the hospitals. We leave icon prayer cards for the Greek Orthodox Christians, and for non-denominational patients.



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How did this start?

My brother, Ralph Rafaelian, was diagnosed with prostate cancer. A friend of mine gave me a prayer shawl to give him with a prayer card. I visited him and draped the shawl around his shoulders, and told him to read the prayer card. We prayed together; I didn't know how he'd take it, but his eyes were filled with tears as he asked me to tell the person he appreciated it. Weeks and months went by, and every time I visited him he had the same shawl around his shoulders. He would tell me he could feel the prayers knitted into the shawl. This gave him much comfort, and me much joy that he felt this way about a shawl. He passed in February of 2012. That September, I told our Philoptochos members that I would like to start a prayer shawl ministry, that I would pay for the yarn, and that anyone interested in helping me do this for other sick patients should join. The response was overwhelming. The proposal touched 12 women, and with that we started the Prayer Shawl Ministry. At the time, we didn't know that this was going to be the challenge.