

Greek Orthodox group wants to spread word about hands-on charity



Holly Meyer, hmeyer@tennessean.com 6:34 p.m. CDT July 5, 2016



(Photo: Submitted / Dimitrios S. Panagos)

Women of the Greek Orthodox Church in America have served about 750,000 meals to those in need since February 2015 and they want people to know about it.

Spreading that success story isn't meant to be self-congratulatory, but inspirational, said Maria Logus, the national president of the [Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society](http://www.philoptochos.org/) (<http://www.philoptochos.org/>). Logus, who became the head of the philanthropic arm of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America in October 2014, is leading an effort to raise the 85-year-old organization's public profile and re-emphasize tangible acts of charity.

"I want people to know what Philoptochos can do. I want it to inspire them to do things," Logus said. "I'll partner with them. I'll work with them. We'll do whatever we have to do as long as we're all creating a better world."



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Logus, who is in Nashville this week for the national Philoptochos' biannual convention, challenged the Philoptochos chapters across the country in early 2015 to serve 250,000 meals as a part of its Feed the Hungry program. She said one chapter began vigorously contributing to that goal and its membership increased by 100 people.

"I also think that it's a way for us to include the next generation of Philoptochos members, the philanthropists within the community. I think young people want to do something," Logus said. "They want to do something in a practical, physical fashion. It appeals to them in ways that perhaps fundraising might not necessarily."

The convention, which is running concurrently with the archdiocese's [Clergy-Laity Congress](https://www.clergylaity.org/) (<https://www.clergylaity.org/>), meets through Thursday at Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center. The organization has about 26,000 members and the national entity gave out \$1.74 million in aid in 2015. But the question of what Philoptochos does continues to persist, Logus said.

"We have been a secret too long," Logus said. "We're not just the fundraising arm. We're the philanthropic arm. We're out there. We're doing hands-on philanthropy. ... If there is a need out there, we are going to respond. It is what we do."

On Tuesday morning, convention attendees listened to Nashville communications specialist [Elizabeth Seigenthaler Courtney](https://www.finnpartners.com/about/managing-partners/beth-seigenthaler-courtney.html) (<https://www.finnpartners.com/about/managing-partners/beth-seigenthaler-courtney.html>) share ways to grow their public presence as well as church-wide communication.

"The more I've read, the more I've wanted to know. If there's anything I really want to convey to you, it's just that. There are so many people in this country like me in cities around each of your chapters who can benefit from knowing more about you," Seigenthaler Courtney said. "Make more people aware. Invite them and share what you're doing. Only positive can come from this."

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