

National Philoptochos Society 2014-2016 Committee Report



Public Relations/Communications

Co-Chairs: Barbara Paspalis, Valine Georgeson

Communications Manager: Rania Richardson

Liaison: Arlene Siavelis Kehl

Members: Helen Carnegis, Despina Denne, Michele Genetos, Marilyn Jemas, Diana Jianas, Christine Karavites, Alexis Limberakis, Thea Martin, Dee Nicolaou, Vickie Scaljon, Georgia Vlitas, Eleni Zaferes

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

...Matthew 5:14-16

The PR/Communications Committee established the following goals for the 2014-2016 term:

1. Identify and perfect the focus and rationale of each of the PR platforms, i.e., *Who is the target audience for each platform?*
2. Do a better job of communicating the message of *What Philoptochos Does*.
3. Increase our visibility and audience
4. Upgrade technology for the platforms

We have been successful in distinguishing the purpose of each of our platforms, i.e., Philoptochos chapters, Philoptochos members, Greek Orthodox community at-large. We craft each article to be relevant for the appropriate audience.

The Committee has made significant progress in its goals and objectives. Our new Public Relations philosophy, to *“let our light shine”* is showing signs of success as more and more readers are aware of the good works that we do. The philosophy to *“let our light shine”* and to publish articles and photos of *“Philoptochos at work,”* as opposed to *“photo opps”* of board installations or check presentations, is gaining traction.

Proof of our success is evident from the continually increasing numbers of articles and photos we are receiving directly from chapters at our communications@philoptochos.org email address. The information obtained is being used in the Philanthropy Witness newsletter, the Philoptochos Voice page in the Orthodox Observer, and our blog.

We will move forward with a new initiative at the convention to make all our members *Philoptochos Ambassadors*. Written words provide a wealth of information; however, nothing can replace a personal touch. Utilizing the resources of the Leadership Institute, we will be producing both a 30-second elevator speech and 5-minute *“stump”* speech to make available to all members. These speeches can be used to promote Philoptochos on a personal basis (the elevator speech), and across the country at Metropolis meetings (utilizing the stump speech). When ready, the speeches will be available as resources on the website.

We are thrilled to announce that Leadership 100 provided a grant to Orthodox Christian Network in the amount of \$25,000 (\$50,000 over the next 2 years) to assist us with promoting our public relations vision and campaigns. Nick Mavrack, Chairman of the Board of Directors of OCN, launched OCN’s efforts in our behalf with posts about the Children’s Medical Fund and Feeding the Hungry initiative on the OCN website. We will be working with him continuously to publicize the good works of Philoptochos in general, as well as all of our

initiatives. We are hoping that by having a place on OCN's website, which has over a million viewers, we will increase our audience.

Our President asked the PR/Communications Committee to take the Philoptochos Shop under its umbrella. Thus, we have been working with the coordinators of the shop to promote and market the items we have for sale. We have launched a new and improved *Shoppe Philoptochos* with a new name and a beautiful catalog. Most important, we have harnessed technology and provide customers with the ability to purchase and pay for items online at the Philoptochos website. During the convention, we are using square technology to allow members to facilitate use of credit cards for purchasing.

In addition to monthly news and updates, we continue to publish monthly articles highlighting important initiatives: Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine Philoptochos Fundraising Initiative, Feeding the Hungry Program, and more recently, the Leadership Institute.

Website materials are being regularly updated as we strive to revise various sections each month. Material on the Home Page is rotated weekly. We are excited to report that we are looking ahead to a thorough revamping of the website to provide a fresh, new look. We anticipate that this effort will begin in Fall 2016.

We have been receiving extraordinary coverage in the **Orthodox Observer** with our articles published not only on our *Philoptochos Voice* page, but also on the Saint Nicholas page and in the Metropolis section of the newspaper. We have continued to emphasize hands-on philanthropy, our Feeding the Hungry program, local chapter projects, and St. Nicholas fundraising initiative. The bright red thermometer, which charts our progress toward the goal of serving 250,000 meals, draws attention to our good work.

The **Philanthropy Witness** newsletter continues to evolve and improve with each issue. We have instituted use of Mail Chimp to publish and circulate our newsletter. Mail Chimp provides an easy platform for production/editing of the newsletter and even more important, gives us the ability to obtain reader analytics. We will be gathering statistics on who reads the newsletter, how many times they open an issue, and which pages are most popular.

The **Philanthropy by Philoptochos** blog site, which is available on the Philoptochos website, www.philoptochos.org, has been making great strides. Each month we receive a new blog written by a Philoptochos member. Each of these blogs is so thoughtfully written. The major requirement for a blog entry is that it has a Philoptochos connection. The entries that we have received touch on so many aspects of Philoptochos and it has been a real pleasure to read and publish them.

We have expanded use of our **Facebook** page, including an events page for CMF and the convention that have been well received. We have used our **Twitter** account on several occasions to tweet out requests for small donations for initiatives. We hope to expand those efforts going forward, particularly with respect to the Feeding the Hungry initiative. We hope that with the input of OCN, we will make even greater use of our social media outlets going forward.

This year, our convention newsletter, **Philoptochos Voice**, will be published following the convention. The goal is to tie it in to our 85th anniversary, highlight our new initiatives and to give it a fresh look to attract younger members.

We hope to reach a broader audience through expanded production of videos and podcasts. Social Services produced a podcast this past spring, and our president has included a message in several videos on our **YouTube** channel and at Goarch.org.