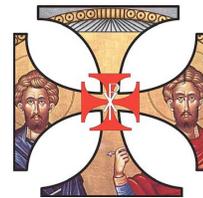


# National Philoptochos Society 2016-2018 Committee Report



## Educational Initiatives

Barbara Pasalis, Chair

During the 2014-2016 term, National President Maria Logus challenged members to **do more doing**. To expand the good works of Philoptochos and its service to our communities, during the present term President Logus asked the National Board to develop educational initiatives to address current, critical issues facing our society. These initiatives would serve our Philoptochos stewards, our parish communities, and the community at large. Under the umbrella of the Public Relations Committee, the Educational Initiatives Committee was formed, not as a stand-alone committee, but as an overarching group that reached out to other National Board committees and members to develop programs. These programs are available on the Philoptochos website at <http://philoptochos.org/outreach/projects/#EducationalInitiatives>.

The Philanthropic Initiatives Committee developed the information for the first initiative: **Be Safe, Be Smart – Investigating Technology Safety in the Computer Age**. Katherine Siavelis, Evanthia Valassiades and Peggy Vranas researched the information for this topic. It was initially intended to serve senior citizens in our parish communities, but more information is being added dealing with Facebook and the safe use of cell phones that is relevant for teens, as well.

Next, the committee addressed the need for parishes to serve families with special children. Children with special needs hold a special place in our hearts, yet having them in church presents challenges. The **Inclusion Ministries Program** was developed by Presvytera Toni Mihalopoulos. *Pick Up Your Cross and Follow Me* is a ministry of programs and resources to serve children with special needs and their families.

The **Stop Bullying in Your Community** program was developed as a complete curriculum designed to be used in parishes to teach our young people how to respond when they are personally bullied or when they witness bullying; it is also designed to teach adults and youth leaders the danger signs of bullying and what they can do to create a community-wide bullying prevention strategy. Joanne Stavrakas, Chair, and committee members Despina Denne, Cathy Hareas, Marilynn Jemas, Arlene Siavelis Kehl, Barbara Pasalis, Katherine Siavelis and Cynthia Xenick developed a complete curriculum for use in our parishes consisting of a collection of videos, PowerPoint presentations, activities and resources.

The **Alzheimer's Disease** initiative was also developed by members from the Philanthropic Initiatives committee. Katherine Siavelis, Peggy Vranas, Maria Antonakas, Evellyn Tsiadis, Evanthia Valassiades and Eleni Zaferes worked on this initiative. The committee is just completing its work which will include symptoms and treatments, ways that family members can help their loved ones and references.

The **Women's Health Committee** is another stand-alone committee under the leadership of Carol Stamas. Members of the committee are Martha Driscoll, Lekita Essa, Valine Georgeson and Arlene Siavelis Kehl. The committee plans to address a variety of health issues that women face, hoping to continue their work into the 2018-2020 term. They have begun their work with heart disease---the #1 killer of women. Information collected includes important facts, symptoms, profile of the patient, contributing factors, lifestyle, other conditions that contribute to heart disease, medication and treatment, journey after diagnosis, role of advocacy, prevention and education. The committee is also working to obtain personal testimonials of women who are living with heart disease.

In addition, the Women's Health Committee has formulated a plan to incorporate healthy activities into the long convention days in order the help members avoid mental and physical stress and fatigue. Members will lead interested delegates on early morning walks and stretching exercises during the meetings.

National Philoptochos' goal in developing these initiatives on these topics is to aid members and communities in living better, healthier, more stress-free lives. If the information provided can save even one life, their goal will be achieved.