



Philanthropy Witness



The Official Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

April 2017



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

Pascha, 2017

Come, let us partake of a new drink; not one miraculously brought forth from barren rock, but a spring of immortality, welling up from Christ's tomb, from which we draw strength.

Paschal Canon, Third Ode

Dear Ladies of Philoptochos,

Χριστός Ανέστη! Christ is Risen!

I offer my prayers for a renewed and transfigured spiritual life in the Risen Lord and my heartfelt best wishes for a truly jubilant *Pascha* for you and your loved ones.

With paternal love in Christ,
The Risen Lord.

+ DEMETRIOS
Archbishop of America



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

PASCHA 2017

It is the day of the Resurrection. Let us shine brightly for the festival, and also embrace one another. Brethren, let us say even to those who hate us, "Let us forgive everything for the Resurrection." And thus let us cry aloud, "Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life."

Christ is Risen!

My beloved Sisters in the Lord,

As we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord we cannot help but be filled with the joy of His Resurrection. We also rejoice in our own freedom from captivity and our repatriation to Heaven. What a wonderful gift we have received from the Lord that we are asked to share with one another by forgiving our brothers and sisters for errors that they have done against us and embracing one another with brotherly and sisterly love.

It is my fervent wish and prayer that our hearts and minds will be transformed by the Pascha of our Lord, filling our hearts with His joy that never ends, love that has no limits or boundaries, and forgiveness that has no strings attached. Greeting and embracing each and everyone of you with our Risen Lord's love, I exclaim with you,

Truly is Risen!

In the love of our Resurrected Lord,

Bishop Sevastianos

+Bishop Sevastianos



Organ Donation a Key Topic at Metropolis Lenten Retreat

More than 150 faithful attended the annual Metropolis of Chicago Philoptochos Lenten Retreat on March 11, 2017, at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Chicago. The Retreat was spiritually uplifting, informative and enlightening. Organ donation was the key topic, for learning and discussion.

Presentations were offered by area clergy, transplant recipients, organ donors and families, as well as by professionals from the Gift of Hope Organ and Tissue Donor Network. Discussions included how the Church regards organ donation, understanding that it is not life threatening, and that organ donation can be given from living and non-living donors.

One of the most moving aspects of the day was meeting a transplant recipient, Mildred, the daughter of one of the Clergy presenters, who was born with a life threatening cardiac condition, necessitating a heart transplant. Mildred received her new heart when she was six years old. Today she is a precocious and active nine year old who enjoys tap dancing, playing the piano and the violin. Mildred's story and that of her parents, as well as other transplant recipients and donors, were true testaments of faith.

As a result, Retreat participants came away with an understanding of what organ donation and transplantation truly means, dispelling many long held myths. As important, they were able to become familiar with the position of our Holy Orthodox Church for, as stated in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 "*...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.*"



National Philoptochos Solicits Grant Applications for 16th Children's Medical Fund Luncheon

The National Philoptochos Sixteenth Children's Medical Fund Luncheon is being hosted by the Metropolis of New Jersey Philoptochos and will take place on November 11, 2017, at The Venetian in Garfield, New Jersey.

This biennial event, the principal fundraising event of the National Philoptochos Society, has raised and disbursed approximately \$3.3 million dollars since its inception in 1989 for children's hospitals and research programs, as well as special programs that serve the needs of ill and fragile children, along with their families throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

At the Luncheon, grants will be awarded to hospitals, research programs and special programs that are located within the geographic boundaries of the Metropolis of New Jersey.

Following are examples of the range of projects and programs that have received funding from past Children's Medical Fund luncheons:

- Emilio Nares Foundation, San Diego, CA, for the Ride with Emilio Transportation Program ensuring that children with cancer receive transportation for treatment.
- Children's National Medical Center, Washington, DC, to help purchase specialized respiratory equipment for the Infant Pulmonary Function Laboratory.
- University of Illinois Medical Center/Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, IL, for the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Program.
- Family Sponsorship Program at Camp Sunshine at Sebago Lake, Inc., ME (pictured above), for a program that provides respite and support to families of children affected by life-threatening childhood illness – including the children, parents and siblings, who are most often overlooked.
- Children's Tumor Foundation, New York, NY, to help fund Neurofibromatosis Preclinical Consortium Phase II Testing.
- Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital, Cleveland, OH, to fund medication and supplies that are not covered by health insurance to provide ongoing support and relief for families of patients.
- Genre's Kids with Cancer Fund, Irwin, PA, to provide Nintendo handheld gaming systems for children to use during the long hours of chemotherapy and blood transfusions.
- Children's Hospital Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC, for Pediatric Neuroblastoma Research.

Grant applications can be accessed at the National Philoptochos website at: <http://www.philoptochos.org/outreach/cmfsection/>. In order to be eligible to apply, organizations must have current 501(c)(3) status from the Internal Revenue Service. Completed applications, including all requested documentation, must be received in the National Philoptochos office no later than 5 pm ET on Friday, June 2, 2017.



Share Philoptochos News!

The importance of communication in an organization like Philoptochos cannot be overstated! The past few years have seen significant, positive changes in our communication methods. The National Philoptochos PR/Communications Committee has worked very hard to make sure that Philoptochos news gets disseminated in a number of ways:

1. The monthly publication of the Philanthropy Witness is distributed via email. This newsletter contains timely articles, photos, links and information about current Philoptochos issues. This includes monthly National Ministry Commitments, election information, chapter news, articles on National Philoptochos initiatives and messages from our Hierarchs and National President. Philoptochos members frequently submit articles for publication.
2. Each month Philoptochos is given a full page in the Orthodox Observer to publish articles and photos on a wide array of issues. Read these articles and stay informed!
3. Of course, Philoptochos has a Facebook page with many followers! Updated very frequently, you need to check it often for the very latest Philoptochos news! Be sure to "Like" us! Not a Facebook user? You can still see it via the homepage of the web.
4. Need information on a Philoptochos issue? Our Website, www.philoptochos.org will surprise you with the tremendous amount of information that it contains! It is a very valuable resource for our membership.
5. Philanthropy by Philoptochos Blog site can be accessed through the home page of the Philoptochos website. Take some time to read the numerous blog entries that have been posted by your Philoptochos sisters! They are delightful and have been very popular! Send in a blog entry yourself!

Please know that it is not enough just to read and enjoy Philoptochos news. It needs to be shared with our entire membership! Please take a moment to forward the Philanthropy Witness to your parish priest and others in the Greek Orthodox community. Make photocopies of it to give to members who do not have email. If you know of a Philoptochos sister who does not receive this publication, please encourage them to add their name here. (Email addresses are NEVER shared.) Remind your community about our Facebook and Website presence and encourage them to check these out!

Information is a powerful thing and the more we know about what our national organization is doing, the more we can inspire others to join us and continue to great work that Philoptochos does each and every day.



Heart to Heart Pop-Up Kafés Support Greece & Cyprus

Aphrodite Skeadas, Chair

Across the U.S., stewards of the Philoptochos Society are hosting friendly and intimate **Heart to Heart** coffee socials to benefit the National Philoptochos Aid to Greece & Cyprus Fund. These "Pop-Up Kafés" are designed as a simple, achievable and fun way to fundraise, with a minimal financial goal for each event, and that may be duplicated many times throughout the country.

Each organizer hosts a coffee event in a home, church facility or commercial venue, such as a local coffee shop (as pictured above with the Philoptochos of Holy Cross in Pittsburgh). The host invites a small number of guests, perhaps 10, and each guest offers a small donation for Aid to Greece & Cyprus, perhaps \$10 per person. This concept was considered to respect the attendee's limited time availability, the amount to be donated by each attendee, as well as to minimize the host's expenditure. The gatherings are sessions of camaraderie, purpose and awareness - a coffee break with ease and simplicity that will produce a steady income stream for the Fund, as the Pop-Up Kafés continue through the year.

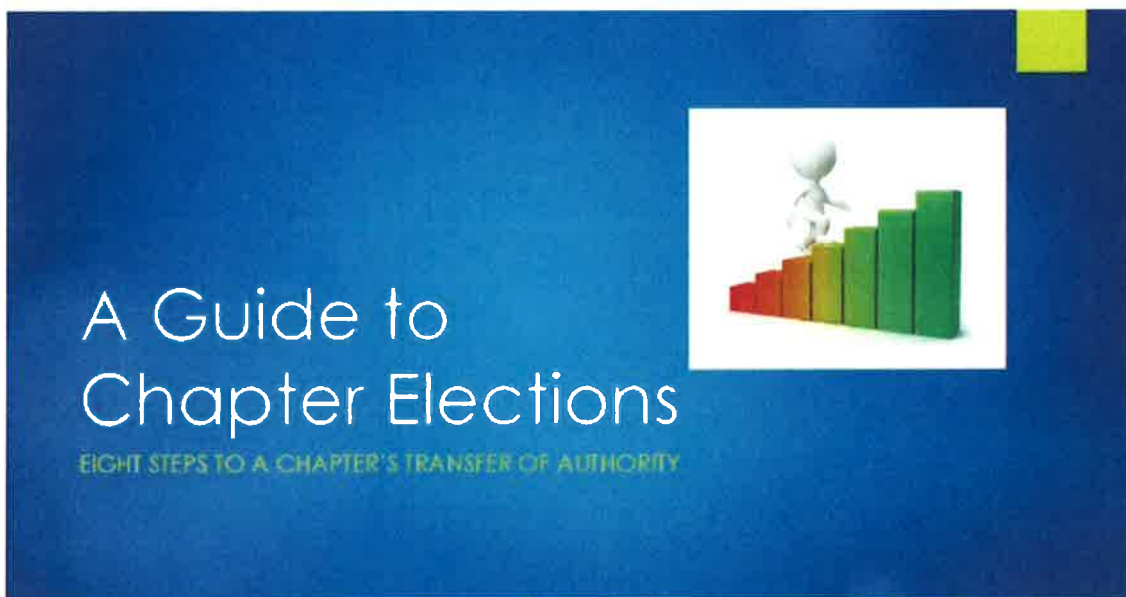
Now more than ever, our help is needed. With an acute level of unemployment, the Greek economic crisis is considered on the scale of the U.S. Great Depression of the 1930's, though the Greek crisis has lasted longer and continues to spiral downward. In addition to the loss of jobs, healthcare and public services, the people of Greece and Cyprus continue to suffer with a serious loss of dignity and hope. As sisters in Philoptochos, it is our privilege and responsibility to offer our love by assisting our brothers and sisters in Greece and Cyprus.

If you would like to learn more about this program or host a **Heart to Heart** Pop-Up Kafé, please contact a [member of the National Philoptochos Aid to Greece & Cyprus Committee](#) or your Direct Archdiocesan District or Metropolis Philoptochos President.

Reminder to Chapters:

Please send your Membership Dues in now if you have not already done so. The coupon above can be printed and included with your check.

January 2017	January 2017
Membership	Membership
Date _____	Church Name _____
Check Amount \$ _____	Chapter Number _____
Check Number _____	Check Amount \$ _____ for _____ Members
Checks Payable to: National Philoptochos Society	Check Number _____
	Mail to: National Philoptochos Society 126 East 37th Street New York, New York 10016
	Please include this portion with your earmarked check



Get Ready for 2017 Chapter Elections!

All chapter presidents and board members should be planning now for their chapter elections in May 2017. Each Philoptochos chapter should hold elections for board members, and then upon ratification from the National Philoptochos Office, officers can then be elected. Why not make your election meeting a festive affair with refreshments and a celebration to thank the previous administration and welcome the new one!

For information, forms, and a step-by-step guide to the process go to www.philoptochos.org > Resources > Membership & Elections or <http://www.philoptochos.org/resources/membership/>.

For a new PowerPoint presentation with details, [click here](#).

*****April National Ministry Commitments*****



International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC)

Dee Nicolaou, Chair

In the spirit of Christ's love, International Orthodox Christian Charities offers emergency relief and development programs to those in need worldwide. IOCC will respond, without discrimination, to those who are suffering or in distress, to enable them to improve their lives and their communities and to have means to live with dignity, respect and hope.

IOCC is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of more than 140 churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy, as well as a member of InterAction, the largest alliance of U.S. based secular and faith-based organizations working in support of the world's most poor and vulnerable populations.

Since its inception in 1992, IOCC has distributed more than \$580 million in emergency relief and development assistance to families and communities in more than 50 countries. All assistance is provided solely on the basis of need and benefits families, refugees and displaced persons, the elderly, school children, orphans, and people with disabilities.

IOCC helps communities in need by establishing healthcare centers, providing medical treatment, creating access to clean water and promoting health through sanitation programs. They also support agricultural development and promote food safety.

The mission and focus of IOCC is aligned with that of Philoptochos—to help those in need. Over the last ten years, National Philoptochos has donated over \$443,500 to IOCC. In 2016, National Philoptochos donated \$35,000 to the Women's Sustainable Agricultural Project in the West Bank and Water Emergency Project in Gaza.



Sisterhood of Saint Basil Academy (SBA)

Kaliopé Tsitsipás and Joanne Stavrakás, Co-Chairs

“To shelter, protect, love and educate the youth so that they grow up to be healthy, wholesome, well-rounded Orthodox Christians, as well as productive members of society with vision and hope,” stated in the mission of our beloved Saint Basil Academy, articulates the commitment of the Sisterhood to provide for the physical needs of the children.

The Sisterhood of Saint Basil Academy Fund was established in 1960 at the National Philoptochos Convention in Buffalo, New York and continues to provide clothing, furnishings, graduation celebrations, awards and gifts, including a four-wheel drive vehicle to transport the children. In 2016, National Philoptochos disbursed \$35,755 from the SBA Sisterhood Fund. Ten-year disbursements from 2007-2016 total \$423,445.

As with any home, there is regular and necessary maintenance. The generous donations from our Philoptochos Chapters throughout the Archdiocese to the Sisterhood have provided for the following in the dormitories:

- plumbing repairs
- carpeting
- appliances
- renovating bathrooms
- replacing roofs
- painting and remodeling
- general repairs

We are all dedicated in *syndiakonia*--common ministry, to serve and do the Lord's work, each day of our lives. Lent is a time to reflect and to be thankful for our families and our blessings. It is a time to help those who need our assistance, to give of our time and talents and pray for peace in the world. As we approach Holy Week, anticipating the resurrection of our Lord, remember the children of our Saint Basil Academy family and support the Sisterhood with love and generosity.

