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# Philanthropy Witness



The Official Newsletter of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society

March 2016

## Philoptochos Donations for the Rebuilding of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine Exceed \$1,000,000



On Tuesday, March 8, 2016, in a long standing tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios Geron of America celebrated the *Agiasmo Service* at the Philoptochos Center of Philanthropy, bestowing God's blessing on the Center, those present and all the members of Philoptochos nationwide. His Eminence prayed for all those who through their philanthropic work provide care and healing for those in need.

Present at the Agiasmo Service were, His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, National Philoptochos President Maria Logus, along with the National Philoptochos Past President Aphrodite Skeadas, National, Direct Archdiocesan District, and Metropolis Board Members, and local Chapters Members.

Following the Agiasmo, His Eminence briefed those who were present about the upcoming Pan-Orthodox Great and Holy Synod and asked for the prayers and support of Philoptochos. His Eminence also spoke about the ongoing efforts in aiding our brothers and sisters in Greece and Cyprus, still affected by the recent economic crisis. In conclusion, His Eminence gave an update of the progress of the rebuilding of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. After His remarks His Eminence presented to the National Philoptochos a rare, if not the only existing, hand painted icon of all twenty Anargyroi Saints.

In response National Philoptochos President Maria Logus, thanked His Eminence for this great gift that will adorn the National Philoptochos Center and for His constant love, support and guidance for Philoptochos.



Ms. Logus was then joined by the Tri-Chairs of the fundraising effort for St. Nicholas, Jennifer Constantin, Arlene Siavelis Kehl and Anne Michals, and presented a check in the amount of \$400,000 to His Eminence. Ms. Logus added that through the efforts of the Tri-Chairs, Metropolises Presidents, Philoptochos Chapters and many others throughout the country, Philoptochos has collectively raised over \$1,000,000 towards the rebuilding of a monument that will be a *Beacon of Hope and Faith*. The donation was the third offering in support of the rebuilding of Saint Nicholas.

The unified and creative work of the women of Philoptochos to raise funds for this National Philoptochos initiative is a testament to their understanding that we are One Church, whether on the east coast or west, and our inspiration is the Word of God.

As we faithfully watch Saint Nicholas being built before our eyes, we hope that all Philoptochos chapters around the country will respond to the call, if they have not done so already, and be a part of this once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of this historic endeavor that will proclaim the peace and love of God to all those who visit it.



For information and resources, visit [www.philoptochos.org/news/saintricholas](http://www.philoptochos.org/news/saintricholas). To be part of the Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center Philoptochos Fundraising Initiative, please donate directly to your local Philoptochos Chapter or your Metropolis Philoptochos.

Please join us at the

## National Philoptochos Biennial Convention

Nashville, TN

July 3-8, 2016

### Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center

with the 43rd Biennial Clergy Laity Congress



#### HIGHLIGHTS:

Meet and greet Philoptochos women from across the country!

Cruise on the General Jackson Showboat!

Participate in interactive workshops!

Be inspired by Chapter Challenges!

Assemble meals for the FEEDING THE HUNGRY Initiative!

Enjoy entertainment and a southern style barbeque!

Watch fireworks on the 4th of July!

and much, much more!

## Be a Philoptochos Convention Delegate

Would you like to be motivated? Would you like to be inspired? This summer, women from across the country will convene in Nashville, Tennessee, for the National Philoptochos Biennial Convention to learn from and empower one another. Words cannot describe the camaraderie and warmth when hundreds of women gather to celebrate a deep Philoptochos history and exciting future. There is no better time to see how wonderful our organization is and all the philanthropic work we do, as well as to meet interesting women at every level of Philoptochos and from every corner of the United States.



At the Convention, there will be women like you, who love to practice philanthropy, who seek new ways to increase chapter giving, who want ideas on attracting new members and who are interested in the work that their sisters from other chapters are doing.

You will discuss important issues relevant to our organization, vote on initiatives, listen to speakers, participate in breakout sessions and hands-on philanthropy, share ideas and so much more. And when the day's business has concluded, there are cultural and social events planned for the evenings!

We encourage every chapter to sponsor at least one delegate to come to Nashville, as an investment in their chapter's future. They will become connected to the women and activities that make Philoptochos so great. Your delegate will return home with an enthusiasm she could not have imagined beforehand.

The excitement and empowerment that delegates leave with is something they will carry in their hearts and inspire others for years to come.

## **National Philoptochos Convention News Update!**

Irene Arsoniadis and Theone Dickos, Co-Chairs

**"You Are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World"**  
***As the Father has sent me, so I send you (John 20:21)***

The theme for the Clergy-Laity Congress and the National Philoptochos Convention, "You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World," was selected by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, and announced to the National Board at the winter meeting in Houston. National Board members had a chance to generate ideas on the topic, and the results will be the foundation for discussion and interactive workshops at the National Philoptochos Convention in Nashville, Tennessee on July 3-8.

Workshops at the Convention will include topics on Membership, Social Issues, Officer Training and National Commitments.

Nine Chapters, one from each Metropolis and the Direct Archdiocesan District are diligently working on their **Chapter Challenge Projects**. These chapters, who were chosen at the 2014 Convention, will present a unique philanthropic service project they created to meet the Challenge. Five chapters were featured in the last issue of the Philanthropy Witness. The remaining four Chapter Challenges are highlighted in this issue. We hope these presentations at the Convention will give other chapters inspiration for future projects of their own.

The **Direct Archdiocesan District** Philoptochos of Saint Sophia Cathedral, Washington DC is pairing with "Partners for Kids 'n Care," a foster children support. The chapter helps supply the children with toiletries, pajamas, and other necessities. The chapter is also collecting back to school items for back sacks for children from kindergarten through college age, filled with age-appropriate supplies.

**Metropolis of Denver** Philoptochos of Annunciation Cathedral, Houston, Texas is encouraging everyone to "Think Philanthropy" and be "One Parish United in Philanthropy." The chapter is forwarding ideas and information to individuals and church organizations on how to contribute to local charities, such as homeless shelters by having regular collections of needed items.

**Metropolis of Pittsburgh** Philoptochos of Saint Nicholas Cathedral, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania is working on an initiative entitled "Focus on Feeding the Children" with Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve (FOCUS). The Chapter has partnered with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank to help pack and distribute food in bags to over 2,000 students on the North Side of Pittsburgh so they can eat over the weekend.

**Metropolis of Boston** Philoptochos of Saint Nicholas Church, Lexington, Massachusetts is focusing on “Feeding the Hungry” by contributing food and growing vegetables for local food pantries and serving at various church communities in their area.

Another highlight of the Convention will be the “**Feeding the Hungry Initiative.**” All Philoptochos delegates and Clergy-Laity attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a hands-on activity, through a partnership with *Feeding Children Everywhere*. From those who have already participated in this program, we know it is an amazing and rewarding experience. Sign up at the Convention and help package meals for those in need.

Be sure to watch for the **Registration Brochure** that will be sent this month. The fee is \$625 for registered delegates and \$650 for observers, until June 1. After June 1, the price increases to \$700 for both.

We are looking forward to seeing you in Nashville! Come and meet and greet women from across the country. Join us for a fabulous time in Music City!

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## **Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos Hosts Camp for Children with Special Needs**



On Memorial Day weekend, May 26-29, 2016, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Philoptochos under the leadership of Philoptochos Metropolis President, Dee Nicolaou, will offer the second annual “Christ the Good Shepherd- Family Camp for Special Needs Children” at the Diakonia Retreat Center in Salem, South Carolina, to support children on the autism spectrum and their families.

The goal of the faith-based camp is to help children grow in their relationship to God. There will be an Inclusion Liturgy, Morning Matins and Vespers, with participation by the children as readers and altar boys. Highlights from last year’s camp session include a visit by a lamb brought to Good Shepherd lessons, fishing in the lake and the evening campfire sing-along.

If you have a child on the autism spectrum between 9 and 14 years old and live in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina or Tennessee, you and your family may apply to the camp. Siblings are welcome in all aspects of the program. Parents experience some activities with their children and some for parents only. Families stay in cabins and can enjoy the educational and recreational aspects of the retreat center.

The session is limited to ten families to ensure that the physical, social, emotional, dietary and most of all, the spiritual needs of every participant, can be accommodated. There is a 1:1 ratio of trained counselors for each child with special needs.

For more information, check <http://atlantametropolisphiloptochos.org/>

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## Reminder to Chapters:

### Please complete the Online Membership Excel Form

To access a step-by-step bullet point guide to filling out the form, as well as a screen shot tutorial, and to find other membership resources, please go to [www.philoptochos.org](http://www.philoptochos.org) and under the Resources tab, go to the Membership & Elections dropdown menu. Under 2016 Membership you will find

[How to Complete the Online Membership Excel Form](#)

[Screen Shot Tutorial for Membership Excel Form](#)

## Flannel Pajamas for Needy Children in Greece

Chapter News Submitted by Paula Papageorgiou



Philoptochos of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Chicago held a Pajama Drive to benefit the children at two organizations in Athens, Greece-- the Xatzikiriakio Orphanage and the Saint Savvas Cancer Hospital. The orphanage was damaged by an earthquake, so the children are housed in trailer homes. The donation to Saint Savvas went to young brain cancer patients. The chapter collected and sent over 200 flannel pajamas to the organizations. Thanks go to Kronos Shipping for their generosity for covering all the shipping costs.

## MARCH NATIONAL MINISTRY COMMITMENTS

### Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) Support a Mission Priest (SAMP)

Celeste Moschos and Betty Lantz, Co-Chairs



The Philoptochos Society continues to share the light of Orthodoxy by participating in the missions and evangelism efforts of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC). This partnership bore much fruit in 2015 by helping to underwrite Mission Center programs, including supporting long-term missionaries and

short-term mission teams, and assisting the "Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) program," which provides stipends to further the ministry of 376 mission priests in 16 countries around the world.

The OCMC and the SAMP programs, through the committed and caring support of our Philoptochos chapters, has benefited from National Philoptochos donations over the years and has brought people to Christ and his Church. In 2015, Philoptochos gave OCMC \$20,000 and SAMP \$40,000. In the last 10 years Philoptochos donated over \$375,000 to OCMC and over \$456,000 to SAMP a total of over \$831,000.

By the end of 2016, OCMC plans to send 20 short-term mission teams to lead youth camps, offer catechism and healthcare, and reach out to people who are thirsty for the life-changing experience of knowing Jesus Christ. Last year marked the first-ever OCMC team in Indonesia and now three teams will be returning in 2016. One of these groups will travel to St. Thomas in Singaraja, Bali, an outreach to the Orthodox of Indonesia, under the loving care of Fr. Stephanos Boik Nino, who operates a safe and loving home for children, that provides Orthodox teachings.

Within the last year, two beloved SAMP priests in Kenya have been elevated to the episcopacy and are serving in two new Kenyan dioceses. In response to the tremendous growth of the Church in Kenya, the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria established these two new dioceses in addition to the existing Metropolis of Nairobi. Through the SAMP program, OCMC will continue to assist His Grace Bishop Athanasios (Akunda) of Kisumu and West Kenya and His Grace Bishop Neofitos (Kongai) of Nyeri and Mount Kenya, along with 164 other priests serving faithfully in Kenya.

Perhaps one day, National Philoptochos will be able to visit a mission site in one of these developing countries.

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## **Hellenic College Holy Cross Lenten Event**

Marian Catechis and Philippa Condakes, Co-Chairs



The V. Rev. Christopher Metropulos was installed as President of Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (HCHC) on October 29, 2015. Fr. Christopher will be holding Presidential Engagement Gatherings throughout the country to "share the vision of future admissions growth and expansion on our campus." Fr. Christopher has also expressed his desire to work with our National President Maria Logus and Philoptochos to increase the education of those at the School on the true mission and purpose of the Philoptochos.

During the month of March, all Philoptochos chapters are asked to hold an event that will benefit the operational expenses of the school. In 2015, \$60,000 was donated to the school. Over the last ten years a total of \$764,900 has been donated. The funds collected from this year's collection will continue to update the security system. This year Phase One was implemented for use in the cafeteria. Future phases will be upgrades to the residence halls, individual dorm rooms, bookstore and laundry facilities.

From the funds that the Philoptochos has donated over the past few years, it has been approved to use these funds to purchase new furniture for the common areas of the dormitories. These common area ensembles will cost approximately \$1,500 each, and eighteen areas will be furnished. The approximate total for these furnishings will be \$27,000. The students will be involved in the planning of these areas. This is part of the ongoing improvements to the campus and school.

We thank the Philoptochos chapters for their commitment to the education of our youth and future Spiritual Leaders.

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### **LETTER FROM THE EDITORS**

Last month, we sent you the pilot of a new format for the *Philanthropy Witness* newsletter, and we hope you enjoyed this second edition.

The new format provides flexibility and the benefits of being an all-digital process and keeps us up-to-date with current technology. Please note that we are still refining the format and system for future iterations.

Thank you to Dee Nicolaou for years of dedication to quality production and graphics coordination of the *Philanthropy Witness* in its original format.

We look forward to continuing to provide news and updates to our chapters nationwide. **It is a joy to communicate the good works of the Philoptochos Society!**

*Philanthropy Witness Editors*

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