



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS
NATIONAL OFFICE – DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

126 East 37th Street New York, NY 10016

Main Number: (212) 977-7770 • FAX: (212) 977-7784

Social Work Direct Line: 212.977.7782

Web: www.philoptochos.org • E-mail: PauletteG@philoptochos.org

**NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK:
WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO:**

In the United States today:

- One in five children lives in poverty
- One in six families is food insecure (we no longer use the term “*hunger*”) - the highest ever recorded in the US.
- 10.3% of Americans need government help to put food on the table. 32 million children rely on free or reduced cost school meals or go hungry, and many children do go hungry when schools are closed.
- 51 million Americans are ‘near’ poor - people who are one paycheck, one lost job, one divorce or one sick child away from falling below the poverty line.
- 8.5% of Americans are unemployed – a figure that does not count people who have given up looking for work or who only have found part-time jobs. Of this number, most have been out of work for more than six months and half have been out of work for more than two years. Among those who have found work, over half settled for significantly lower pay and nearly one-third saw their job-related benefits cut or completely eliminated.
- One in seven Americans has no medical insurance – many lost their health coverage when they lost their jobs.

Today, poverty in America is no longer just about “them”, it also is about “us”. It is about the middle class finding they must rely on credit cards or borrow from family and friends to keep the lights on and pay rent. It is about our college educated unable to find jobs and pay student loans. And, it is about the ‘American Dream’ becoming increasingly unattainable for millions of people, who by all accounts, have done everything they were supposed to do to ‘make it.’ It may make us uncomfortable to accept, but the facts shown above mirror the social services cases that come before us. While some of us may think that people should have “saved more” or should “work harder” to stand on their own two feet, this is not always possible – the resources, services and supports are just not there to the extent that they should or could: we do not have a sufficient supply of affordable housing for families or older adults; single mothers cannot find affordable childcare so they can work; health insurances continue to deny coverage for conditions, many of which are life threatening; and dead-beat parents continue to ignore the needs of their children.

So, if you are wondering – or if you are asked - why we do what we do and why we help who we help, it is because our work saves lives. Our work gives people some breathing space so that together, we and they can figure out what their next steps will be, our work builds and rebuilds futures, and, perhaps most importantly, our work provides spiritual support while letting members of our community know they are not alone.