

"SOUP RUN"
HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, NEW ROCHELLE, NY

November 22, 2014

We copy below the commentary written by Despina Kartson of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, New Rochelle, NY who organizes the Philoptochos "Soup Run" that ministers to homeless adults who live on the streets of Manhattan. This project is supported by Philoptochos volunteers who work behind the scenes and on the streets, Fr. Nick Anctil, Proistamenos, and by the entire Holy Trinity family who are instrumental in sustaining this effort.

On the last Thursday of the month, volunteers from Holy Trinity, New Rochelle, NY go to the streets near Penn Station in Manhattan to minister to those whose 'home' is the streets near Penn Station. Volunteers prepare and distribute hot food, seasonally appropriate clothing, underwear and toiletries. Perhaps more importantly, they bring friendship - the Holy Trinity volunteers do not refer to the population they serve as "clients" or just as "homeless adults" - rather, they refer to them as "friends", especially since they have a 'following' - many of whom they see each month.

After each "Soup Run", Despina sends out an email to the volunteers - and more - recapping the night's events. We post her reflections about last night's Soup Run with the hope that you will be moved to participate in and/or replicate projects such as this in your own communities.

*Paulette Geanacopoulos
National Philoptochos Department of Social Work
11.21.2014*

Dear All -

Thanksgiving came early for 120 of our friends on the street last night when we served warm turkey meals and all the fixings - stuffing, cranberry sauce and potatoes, cookies and juice. They were thankful for the delicious meal and the many warm clothes, socks, underwear and toiletries that we distributed.

Imagine some of the ways in which people survive: two sisters said they live on the street but that God provides for them - they serve food at a soup kitchen to other homeless three times a week so at least they know they can eat there. And they were most appreciative of our food. And then there was one man asking for a meal just as we ran out. Another man who was eating our meal offered to share his food with him when seemingly out of the blue, we found one more meal and gave it to him. We were also able to share a hug with a woman who said it would be her first Thanksgiving without her mother who recently passed away - she just wanted a hug, wanted the connection to another.

Thank you to Angie Lambros for sponsoring the soup run, John Kronos for cooking, Cynthia Hertzegovitch, Constance Mavrovitis and Kathleen Haverlack for sorting the clothing and toiletries, Sylvia Chandras for coffee and juice and for the many Holy Trinity parishioners who support this moving and worthwhile homeless outreach project. We offer special thanks and gratitude at this time of year when we consider all that has been given to us and all that we have to give to others. Happy Thanksgiving! Please join us next month on December 18.

Volunteer comments:

Cynthia: I think it's all about the people-to-people connection in this day of devices - the woman who just wanted a hug - because in the end, that is what we miss the most when people are gone. It's why the picture of my dad in my wallet is not a portrait but of him giving me a hug.

Maria: Each time we do our "Run" we are reminded of the awesome power and gentility of God's love. It teaches me humility and the gift God has given us of each other.

From the Soup Run in August: As we were giving out food and clothing a gentleman approached and asked how he could help. He said that he saw we were doing God's work and wanted in some small way to be a part of it. His name was Khadi and he was from Saudi Arabia. He took my hand and placed a \$50 bill in it and said, "I want to help you buy food." We thanked each other and as quickly as he came upon us, he was gone.