



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC.
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SOCIAL WORK SERVICES REPORT
PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS CONVENTION
Philadelphia, PA July 6 - 9 2014

PERIOD COVERED: CALENDAR YEAR 2012 • CALENDAR YEAR 2013 • JANUARY 1 - MAY 31, 2014

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR: EFTHALIA KATOS
CO-CHAIRS: STELLA FIORENTINO, ASPASIA MELIS, NELLIE LOGOTHETIDES

SERVICES DELIVERED BY: PAULETTE GEANACOPOULOS, LMSW
PauletteG@Philoptochos.org

As the largest organization of Christian women in the United States - over 27,000 strong - we are more than just a number. We are women who view ourselves not as individuals, but as determined citizens who contribute to the greater good by collectively embracing and supporting far-reaching philanthropic efforts - not just through words, but through solutions.

And what sets us apart from most other groups is that our efforts are founded in our faith, our culture, our convictions and our spirituality. It is within this context that we provide social services, and it is within this framework that, when asked why we do what we do, we can say:

"Our work saves lives, gives hope and lets people know that God has not abandoned them, nor is He punishing them.

Our clients - over one new case per (work)day - are men and women, young and old who hail from every Metropolis in the Archdiocese. Some are homeless, others are mentally ill, yet others are drug addicts, and still others are victims of intimate partner abuse. Many are unemployed or underemployed -the 'working poor'- and a significant number are middle class families who must rely on credit cards or borrow from family and friends to keep the lights on and pay rent. Some of our clients slip into poverty because of a quirk of fate, an emergency or a disaster, while others face financial hardships and are at or near bankruptcy because of a life-threatening illness for whose treatments and medications are only partially covered by health insurance.

While some may think people should have "saved more" or "worked 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 necessary to meet needs: we do not have a sufficient supply of affordable housing for families or for older adults on fixed incomes; single mothers cannot find reasonable childcare so they can work; health insurances continue to deny coverage; dead-beat parents continue to ignore the financial needs of their children; and three- and four-generation families struggle to balance helping their increasingly frail older parents while at the same time raising their own children. Most of our cases are people who by all accounts, did everything they were supposed to do to "make it" but who were caught in an environment of vanishing resources and ideological debates about whether our society can or even should help those in need. And they are people who never thought they would ever need to ask for help from anyone, let alone us.

Historically our clients have faced multi-problems, but with each passing year, our cases become more complex and difficult than ever before. Perhaps describing some of our cases is the best way to give a "picture" of who we help:

A 38 woman was referred to us by her local chapter for financial assistance to help cover some of her daily bills. In the course of our interviews, we learned that she used to have a well-paying job, had previously been married, and that a few years after her divorce, she had met a well-groomed, polite and good-looking man who appeared to be the perfect mate. He convinced her to leave her job to help him start a business, and trusting him, she did so. Within a short period of time, she realized that not only was there no growing business, there was no business at all. He became physically abusive, drugged her with Rohypnol several times, and told her to become a prostitute to earn money - for herself and him.

We helped her obtain a restraining order, referred her for counseling, and by providing her with the funds to relocate to a safe environment, gave her the breathing space she needed to get her life back on track.

An elderly man was referred to us by his Hospice Social Worker. He had resided in a nursing home for several years, and when his cancer diagnosis became terminal, he was given only a few days to live. His only source of income was SSI (Supplemental Security Income – welfare for the aged and disabled), his wife had passed away many years before, and whatever relatives he had in Greece, were deceased, as well. The social worker asked if we could intervene so that he wouldn't be buried, anonymously, in Potters' Field.

The Metropolis with whom we coordinated on this case ascertained that the man was a veteran, and thus eligible for a casket, a plot and a headstone at a State Veterans Cemetery. The Metropolis arranged for a church funeral which was attended by about 25 Philoptochos members and the local funeral home volunteered to transport his remains, at no cost, to the cemetery – about 50 miles away.

A man saw our sign outside our building and took a chance that we may be able to help him in some way. He was a homeless man whose extraordinarily strong stench was so bad that it wafted throughout the building causing our tenants to come down two and three flights to find out what it was. The man was one of the politest, kindest, and appreciative people I have come across in a long time. We spoke for a while and I learned that he was 65 years old, had grown up in the Bronx, had been a union member for many years, and had walked away from his apartment when he decided to move to another part of the country. He asked if he could continue to sit for a while in our vestibule as his feet were swollen - he wore worn-out shoes that made me think of *Mr. Bojangles*. There was no history of alcohol or drugs, his only criminal record was one of trespassing when he tried sleeping in a quiet hallway, but he showed evidence of paranoia characteristic of people who “slide into homelessness” over a period of time.

All I did was give him \$20, a cup of yogurt that Kay (Brakatselos) had (Oikos, to which he said, “Oh, the good kind”), two bananas that I had brought to the office, some cookies from our kitchen, and a referral to a homeless drop-in center nearby – and yet, he acted like I had given him the world. I told him he needed to bathe and change his clothes at the drop-in center, to which he said, “Oh, I smell?”

A 47 year old man who was an Army Paratrooper during Desert Storm and a 9/11 First Responder was referred to our office by his 78 year old father. As a result of these experiences, he developed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, and cancer. He also suffered from clinical depression and had limited functional abilities. When he came to us for help, he already had applied for Social Security Disability and SSI - Supplemental Security Income, but as both decisions were still pending, his income consisted of welfare benefits of about \$109 every two weeks and Food Stamps of about \$200 /month. He lived in Section 8 housing which covered 2/3 of his rent; however, prior to being accepted into this voucher program, he had accrued rent and utility arrears of over \$1,700 and \$500.00 respectively. He received medical care from a VA Hospital, but he frequently couldn't afford the public transportation costs to get to his appointments. His father, whose sole income was Social Security, helped his son whenever possible, but he could not support him on an ongoing basis.

We paid the rent and utility arrears so that he would not lose his Section 8 housing, and arranged with the local chapter to give him periodic assistance for his public transportation costs to the hospital.

This family comprised a widowed single mother and her 13 year old severely autistic son, both of whom were US citizens. In her country of origin, the mom had been a Registered Nurse. To obtain such employment in the US, she enrolled in college to fulfill American educational requirements. The son was in the local public middle school. He had been attending a specialized After School Program for children with autism, but was suspended because he would grab at the counselors, an action he undertook because he was nearly non-verbal. Their sole income was \$700 / month in Social Security Disability benefits awarded to the boy, \$300/month in Food Stamps, and educational grants and financial aid in varying amounts awarded to the mom. She covered their rent of \$800 / month through her son's SSD benefits, to which she added \$100 from her financial aid. On occasion, they receive limited help from a woman who attended Sunday liturgy with them at a monastery located 45 minutes from home.

The mom asked for funds to purchase an iPad to develop her son's communication skills – she asked for the iPad 4 rather than the newer iPad 5 as the older version was \$100 less. She said that without our assistance, it would take her over a year to set the funds aside to purchase it on her own. We purchased the iPad for her, and although she did not ask for anything else, we also paid two months of her rent which carried her through the summer when she had no aid from school.

These anecdotes represent a very small sample of what your commitment accomplishes.

As always, we seek to be good stewards of the funds donated to Philoptochos that we draw upon to help our clients. And as always – and it can never be said often enough – on behalf of the hundreds of Orthodox Christian individuals and families we are able to help because of your generosity, thank you for your support and good will.

**NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS • DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT TO 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION**

**CASE ANALYSIS: CALENDAR YEARS 2012 & 2013, 01.01.2014 - 05.31.2014
SUBMITTED BY/SERVICES DELIVERED BY: PAULETTE GEANACOPOULOS, LMSW**

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIR: EFTHALIA KATOS; CO-CHAIRS: STELLA FIORENTINO, ASPASIA MELIS, NELLIE LOGOTHETIDES

TOTAL # DIFFERENT CASES: 523

CALENDAR YEAR 2012: 205 CALENDAR YEAR 2013: 228 JANUARY 1 – MAY 31, 2014: 90

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK RECEIVES A MINIMUM OF ONE NEW CASE PER DAY

<u>CASES BY METROPOLIS</u>	<u>523</u>
ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT.....	238
ATLANTA.....	51
BOSTON.....	21
CHICAGO.....	18
DENVER	11
DETROIT	14
NEW JERSEY.....	106
PITTSBURGH.....	05
SAN FRANCISCO.....	41
GREECE /Africa / Cyprus / UK.....	18

<u>AGE OF CLIENTS:</u>	<u>523</u>
0 - 19	34
20 - 29.....	27
30 - 39.....	78
40 - 49.....	98
50 - 59.....	93
60 - 69.....	78
70 - 79.....	44
80 - 89.....	39
90 - 100.....	08
106.....	01
INFORMATION WITHHELD.....	23

ISSUES FOR WHICH HELP IS SOUGHT:

NOTE: ABOUT ONE-QUARTER OF ALL CASES REQUEST AND/OR REQUIRE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

ABUSE

INTIMATE PARTNER ABUSE
ELDER ABUSE / PHYSICAL; FINANCIAL
RAPE
SEXUAL ASSAULT OF CHILD
WILFUL NON-PAYMENT OF COURT ORDERED CHILD SUPPORT

ADOPTION INQUIRIES

AGING SERVICES

AGING IN PLACE SERVICES
ALZHEIMER'S / OTHER DEMENTIAS
ASSISTED LIVING
HOMECARE (ETHNIC APPROPRIATE)
RESPIRE CARE
SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES

COUNSELING

BEREAVEMENT
SUPPORTIVE COUNSELING
CASE MANAGEMENT
THERAPY (REFERRED WITHIN & OUTSIDE OUR COMMUNITY)

FAMILY SERVICES

SINGLE PARENT HEADED HOUSEHOLDS
CHILDCARE: DAYCARE / AFTER SCHOOL / OTHER
NONPROFIT SERVICES

FUNERALS

CONTRIBUTIONS; REFERRALS TO CULTURALLY SENSITIVE FUNERAL HOMES; COORDINATE WITH METROPOLIS/LOCAL CHAPTERS

HOMELESSNESS

STREET HOMELESS
LIVE IN CAR / PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION LOCATIONS
LIVE IN PUBLIC/ NON-PROFIT SHELTERS OR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
DOUBLED-TRIPLED UP WITH FRIENDS / FAMILY / OTHER

HOUSING

EVICTON PREVENTION / RENTAL ARREARS
EVICTON PREVENTION / MORTGAGE ARREARS
UTILITY SHUT-OFFS
REFERRALS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS (HEAP, DSS, HHP, OTHER)
REFERRALS TO HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS;
WHO ARE PHYSICALLY &/OR DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED;
FORMERLY HOMELESS

MEDICAL

ALCOHOLISM, SUBSTANCE ABUSE. CNSLG/REHAB REFERRALS
AUTISM
CANCER
CARDIAC
DISABILITIES / PHYSICAL CHALLENGES
GENERAL: TBI; KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS/FAILURE; LUPUS; MS /
CEREBRAL PALSY; STROKE; HIV/AIDS; OTHER)

MENTAL ILLNESS

DISORDERS: ANXIETY, BIPOLAR, BORDERLINE PERSONALITY,
OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER
MAJOR DEPRESSION
DUAL DIAGNOSIS (SUBSTANCE ABUSE + MENTAL ILLNESS)
PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIA /DELUSIONAL BEHAVIORS
SUICIDE /SUICIDAL IDEATION

POVERTY

FOOD INSECURITY (HUNGER, NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES)
UNEMPLOYED (LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT) / UNDEREMPLOYED
INADEQUATE FUNDS FOR DAILY LIVING

PUBLIC BENEFITS

SCREENING / REFERRALS FOR BENEFITS
ADVOCACY / NEGOTIATING SYSTEMS

UNDOCUMENTED / IMMIGRATION

VISAS; HOUSING; EMPLOYMENT; RELOCATION

**NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS • DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION SOCIAL SERVICES FINANCIAL GRANTS REPORT**

PERIOD COVERED: CALENDAR YEARS 2012 & 2013, 01.01.2014 - 05.31.2014

SUBMITTED BY/SERVICES DELIVERED BY: PAULETTE GEANACOPOULOS, LMSW

TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED\$ 377,116.67

TOTAL # GRANTS AWARDED 190

Range of Grants: \$10 - \$7,500

TOTAL # DIFFERENT CLIENTS WHO RECEIVED GRANTS...137

Total Calendar Year 2012: \$186,974.00 | Total Calendar Year 2013: \$160,619.23 | Total Jan. 1 - May 31, 2014: \$36,238.89

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROCEDURES:

Clients seeking financial assistance are required to verify their circumstances through interviews and by submitting documentation of household income and expenses. They provide us with copies of recent bills, public benefit award letters, and documentation of assistance, given or pending, from other sources whether within the Philoptochos community, from family or friends, or from other nonprofit sources. As we do not have the means to assist people on an ongoing basis, an important aspect of our work is to develop a plan of action with clients to ensure, as best as possible, that they will be able to manage on their own going forward.

Once the Social Work Department completes this process, two co-chairs of the National Social Services Committee review requests and either approve or deny them, or, ask for additional information. Further review is conducted by National's Bookkeeper, and subsequently by National's President and Treasurer both of whom sign all checks. Along with our assistance, and through collaborations and cross-referrals, over 80% of our cases receive help from local chapters and Metropolises and nearly half are referred to local resources for longer-term services.

GRANTS BY METROPOLIS

ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT	\$ 154,852.25
Services coordinated with Jennifer Constantin, DAD President; Previously with Maria Skiadas, DAD Past President.	
ATLANTA	60,967.77
Services coordinated with Dee Nicolaou, Metropolis President; and Philanthropy Chairs, Martha Driscoll & Presbytera Evi Klapanis	
BOSTON	17,436.00
Services coordinated with Georgia Lagadinos, Philanthropy Chair; Fran Levas, Metropolis President and Philippa Condakes, Metropolis Past President	
CHICAGO	14,723.61
Services coordinated with Irene Arsoniadis, Metropolis President; and Helen Theodosakis, Philanthropy Point Person	
DENVER	9,069.77
Services coordinated with Marian Catechis, Metropolis President	
DETROIT	6,565.48
Services coordinated with Margaret Yates, Metropolis President	
NEW JERSEY	79,754.31
Services coordinated with Anne Michals, Metropolis President; and Eleni Constantinides, Philanthropy Chair	
PITTSBURGH	4,944.08
Services coordinated with Rosemary Nikas, Metropolis President	
SAN FRANCISCO	23,526.40
Services coordinated with Jeannie Ranglas, Metropolis President; and Lisa Xanthos, Philanthropy Chair	
GREEK / CYPRIOT NATIONALS in the United States.....	<u>5,312.00</u>

TOTAL AWARDED THIS PERIOD: \$ 377,116.67

TOTAL AWARDED TO INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES SINCE OCTOBER 2010: \$ 601,321.87