

**GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC.
NATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT
2020-2022**



**NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
REPORT OF SERVICES 2020 – 2022**

423 TOTAL # CASES INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES SERVED THIS PERIOD

535.....PRESENTING PROBLEM *(Some clients presented with more than one issue)*

- 139..... Indigent; insufficient income; unemployed, underemployed
- 97..... COVID-19
- 49..... Cancer
- 49..... Aging Services *(includes homecare)*
- 48..... Other medical *(cardiac, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, orthopedic disabilities, TBI, substance abuse)*
- 48..... Single parent headed household
- 38..... Mental illness
- 34..... Domestic Violence *(includes child abuse/ elder abuse; homicide/suicide)*
- 23..... Homelessness
- 10..... Family services *(includes adoption)*

CASES BY METROPOLIS

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 27..... Atlanta | |
| 24..... Boston | 58..... New Jersey |
| 25..... Chicago | 06..... Pittsburgh |
| 199..... Direct Archdiocesan District | 37..... San Francisco |
| 11..... Denver | 16..... Other <i>(Canada, Greece, Kenya, Serbia)</i> |
| 14..... Detroit | 05..... N/A |

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED.....\$ 521,743.73

Grants awarded211

Cases awarded grants.....133 *(of 423 unduplicated count of cases)*

211 Grants by Metropolis:

Atlanta	15 grants.....	\$ 27,820.02
Boston	12 grants.....	\$ 33,571.25
Chicago.....	12 grants.....	\$ 38,693.44
DAD	91 grants.....	\$ 229,852.82
Denver	04 grants.....	\$ 19,039.70
Detroit	25 grants.....	\$ 37,183.22
New Jersey.....	27 grants.....	\$ 65,748.87
Pittsburgh.....	04 grants.....	\$ 13,890.32
San Francisco.....	21 grants.....	\$ 55,944.09

Purposes of 211 Financial Grants:

- 124 Housing *(Contribute to prevent evictions and mortgage foreclosures; relocate DV survivors)*
- 44 Funeral / final arrangements
- 23 Out-of-pocket medical/ mental illness *(counseling; homecare; substance abuse)*
- 20 Utility arrears *(electric, gas, water, heating oil)*

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Services provided by Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW, Director, Department of Social Services

Co-Chairs, National Social Services Committee: Eleni Constantinides NJ. Stella Pantelidis DAD.

Committee Members: Olga Bookas DAD. Jennifer Constantin DAD. Cindy Crosson Detroit. Bessie Drogaris NJ. Lekita Essa ATL. Vasilianna Fakiris DAD; Alexis Limberakis NJ; Aspasia Melis NJ; Helen Psaras DAD; Evangeline Mekras Scurtis Atlanta; Katherine Siavelis CHI. Maria Skiadas DAD. Irene Fotos ATL. Eleni Gugliotta Pittsburgh. Irene Hotzoglou DAD.

Marilynn Jemas Chicago. Eugenia Kourlos Boston. Nellie Logothetides DAD. Celeste Moschos Boston. Kalli Tsitsipas DAD.

Julie Vagelos ATL. Evanthia Valassiades Detroit. Lisa Xanthos San Francisco. Margaret Yates Detroit.

Additional Metropolis Social Services Liaisons: Atlanta: Presvytera Evi Kaplanis, Tina Chagaris. Boston: Georgia Lagadinos.

Chicago: Helen Theodosakis. DAD: Despina Kartson, Lydia Vagelos Callimanis. Denver: Stella Piches.

NJ: Denise Poulos Cecchini, Tula Sandilos, Dr. Yvonne Athanasaw. Pittsburgh: Crystal Thomas

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR CHAPTERS/ METROPOLISES (Both are on Convention App & Philoptochos website)

- **2022 STEP-BY-STEP POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR CHAPTER/ METROPOLIS SOCIAL SERVICES ACTIONS**
To ensure all levels of Philoptochos provide consistent, compassionate, transparent, and accountable services.

- **2022 GUIDE TO FINDING LOCAL RESOURCES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES** (nationwide)

Many Orthodox Christians face human service and financial challenges, and while their problems vary, one factor connects them: ***Most of the people who seek our help never thought they'd have to ask anyone for help, let alone us.*** The updated 2022 "Guide" helps our community learn about the issues faced by our constituents, how to respond in helpful, not hurtful ways, how to find local and broader resources to provide help beyond what we can do, and as importantly, to motivate you to strategically plan social service goals and actions to ensure those who seek our help are provided the practical and spiritual support they need to develop the wherewithal and tools to manage, as best as possible, on their own in the future. Issues covered include alcohol/substance use disorders; opioid addiction; mental health/ suicide; domestic violence; cancer resources; older adult services; caregiving; protective services; homelessness/ hunger; human trafficking; veteran services; budget management. The Guide is designed to help Philoptochos chapters and Metropolises:

- *Identify issues:* Overview to help recognize the challenges members of our community are facing.
- *Respond to needs:* Evidence-based interventions to make informed decisions about whether and how to assist.
- *Refer appropriately:* To resources that offer longer-term assistance.
- *Start a local program:* While no Philoptochos level can mount programs in response to every issue, we hope some will resonate with your membership to encourage you to start a program, either on your own or in partnership with others.
- *Create a Church environment of comfort, practical and spiritual support:* As a faith-based organization, we strive to give people hope and the knowledge that God is neither punishing them nor has He abandoned them. An important way to do this is by creating a Church environment in which people feel comfortable turning to for help.

- **CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS:** (Final Report posted on Convention App and Philoptochos website)

Between 2020 and 2022, we conducted three **CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS** for Orthodox Christians caring for a loved one who is elderly, chronically ill or disabled. Participation by caregivers from Maine to Hawaii made it clear that this topic broadly resonates in our community. Facilitated by **Theodora Ziongas, M.A.**, and **Paulette Geanacopoulos, LMSW**, their strong backgrounds in the field of aging, caregiving and leading support groups created an ideal, safe, and confidential environment for participants to speak freely and willingly. To acknowledge our status as a faith-based ministry, the final sessions of each were led by the **Rev. Dr. Harry Pappas**, Pastor at the Church of Archangels, Stamford, CT, and Adjunct Professor at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, who addressed spiritual concerns of participants.

Discussions addressed the importance of caregiver self-care, family dynamics vis-a-vis decision making; care receivers' issues of the need for physical/ mental health assessments by geriatric professionals; medication management and more.

Because the support groups were conducted during the pandemic, discussions incorporated COVID's impact on a family's ability to visit one another/attend church/receive communion; impact on holiday celebrations; program and service cutbacks; keeping one's loved one safe and healthy, etc., Spiritual and secular resources were distributed and outlined in the final report. *For copies, email Paulette Geanacopoulos at: PauletteG@philoptochos.org.*

- **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE / INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE** (Fact sheets and other resources on Philoptochos website)

In partnership with the **GOARCH Center for Family Care**, Paulette Geanacopoulos conducted a podcast with Rev. Dr. Alexander Goussetis, and a webinar for Clergy Couples with Presvytera Kerry Pappas and Rev. Dr. Harry Pappas.

DV fact sheets are available on the Philoptochos website: •Facts-at-a-Glance •Does Your Partner...? •Developing a Personalized Safety Plan •What to Say to a Woman You Think is Being Abused •What to Do When a Woman Confides in You •Teen Dating Relationships. The archived podcast and webinar can be accessed on the Center for Family Care website.

- **"BEYOND COVID: FAITH BASED TOOLS FOR HEALING & RESILIENECE"** During 'Mental Health Awareness Month', Paulette Geanacopoulos was a panelist at a program at Annunciation Church, New York City on the impact of the COVID pandemic on our mental health, the stigma felt both by persons with mental illnesses and their families, resources for finding help, and ways to build resilience within a faith-based setting to help us move forward and carry on.

- **PAN-ORTHODOX MINISTRIES ON HOMELESSNESS** Paulette Geanacopoulos continues to represent National Philoptochos on this nationwide group, organized in 2019 by GOARCH Department of Inter-Orthodox, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations to enhance the knowledge of Orthodox jurisdictions about the multi-faceted issues that spiral a person into homelessness (e.g., insufficient supply of affordable housing, overwhelming medical debt, underemployment, domestic violence, single parents, mental illness, substance abuse), and to encourage them to develop local programs and services.