

2024 NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS BIENNIAL CONVENTION



**Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina
San Diego, California**

**MINUTES
Tuesday, July 2, 2024**

The 2024 National Philoptochos Biennial Convention was reconvened by Co-Convention Chair, Cindy Kezos at 11:03 PST on Tuesday, July 2, 2024 at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina in San Diego, California.

Report of Credentials Committee- Anita Kartalopoulos, Co- Chair of the Convention, presented the Credentials Committee report as follows:

323 Registered Delegates
274 Delegates in Attendance
262 Voting Members (132 Majority needed)
12 Observers Registered

Adoption of Standing Rules And Agenda

The Standing Rules and Agenda were presented by Anita Karalopoulos. A motion was made by Lily Katos, Archdiocesan District, to accept the standing rules as presented. It was seconded by Mari Lou Diamond, Metropolis of San Francisco. Motion passed.

Adoption of Convention Program

A motion was made by Barbara Tasionis, Metropolis of Atlanta, to adopt the convention program as presented. It was seconded by Mary Lofton, Metropolis of San Francisco. Motion passed.

Appointment of Minutes Committee, Timekeepers and Tellers- Arlene Siavelis Kehl appointed the Minutes committee, Timekeepers, and Tellers.

Report of the 2022 Convention Minutes Committee Elaine Sackleh, Metropolis of New Jersey, presented the minutes of July 7, 2022. The minutes were approved by the July 7, 2022 Minutes Review Committee (Marian Catechis, Despina Denne, Elaine Zetes). A copy is provided in the Philoptochos App for review under "Convention Documents".

Resolutions Committee Report and Vote on Resolutions

Anita Kartalopoulos, National Board 1st Vice President and Convention Co-Chairman, reported on the submission of resolutions and the review by the Resolutions/Legislative Committee. The text of the resolution were reviewed not only on Sunday, June 30, 2024 and each resolution was received upon presentation on Tuesday, July 2, 2024.

1. Resolution to Use Nonprofit Postage– Submitted by the Archdiocesan District Philoptochos for A.D. Chapter St. Anna's Philoptochos #63

Whereas, The Greek Orthodox (GOA) Ladies Philoptochos Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that the IRS has recognized as being tax-exempt by virtue of its charitable programs;

Whereas, The nonprofit organization status of the National GOA Philoptochos Society extends to all districts and chapters in service to the GOA Philoptochos Society; and

Whereas, Nonprofit organizations are entitled to utilize nonprofit postage rates for USPS mailings that directly service and benefit their organizations; and

Whereas, The National GOA Philoptochos Society has not availed their entitlement to discounted nonprofit postage for mailings nor facilitated nonprofit postal rates for districts and chapters in their Service;

Resolved, That the National GOA Philoptochos Society will promptly complete and submit to the United States Postal Service PS Form 3624 form Application to Mail at Nonprofit USPS Marketing Mail Prices to receive USPS approval to utilize the nonprofit postal rate for all mailings in service to the GOA Philoptochos Society;

<https://pe.usps.com/businessmail101?ViewName=NonprofitApplication>

Resolved, That the National GOA Philoptochos Society will follow up to confirm USPS approval of PS Form 3624 and have nonprofit indicia postage pre-printed on all envelopes to be used in 2025 and in subsequent years by GOA Philoptochos chapters to mail payments to the National GOA Philoptochos Society;

Resolved, That the National GOA Philoptochos Society will enable all districts and chapters of the GOA Philoptochos Society to order sheets of nonprofit postage stamps from their office, at the nonprofit rate, for all mailings in service to the GOA Philoptochos Society;

Resolved, That the National GOA Philoptochos Society will notify all districts and chapters of the GOA Philoptochos Society that they may use discounted nonprofit stamps for all mailings in service to the GOA Philoptochos Society.

This resolution was presented by Maria Philippides from the chapter and debate followed. The resolution was defeated.

Anita Kartalopoulos introduced James Stewart, PRP as our Official Parliamentarian.

2. Resolution Election Protocol & Exclusion of Associate Membership from Membership Count- Submitted by the Metropolis of New Jersey

RESOLUTION SUGGESTION FOR THE 2024 BIENNIAL CL/PHILOPTOCHOS CONVENTION – SAN DIEGO, CA

RESOLUTIONS TO THE 2020 NATIONAL GREEK ORTHODOX PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC. BYLAWS

ARTICLE 5 : PARISH CHAPTER

SECTION 3: CHAPTER PHILOPTOCHOS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. COMPOSITION

Each chapter shall have a Chapter Philoptochos Board of Directors (“Chapter Board”), with an odd number of directors of not more than twenty-one and not less than seven members, as follows:

- a. A chapter with less than twenty members shall have not less than seven Directors;
- b. A chapter with twenty-one to forty-nine members shall have not less than seven Directors and not more than fifteen Directors;
- c. A chapter with fifty to ninety-nine members shall have not less than seven Directors and not more than seventeen Directors;
- d. A chapter with one hundred to one hundred ninety-nine members, shall have not more than nineteen Directors and;
- e. A chapter with more than two hundred members shall have not more than twenty-one Directors.

Whereas, It seems that there is a confusion as to how many Directors can be elected during an election year;

Whereas, Subsections d. and e. do not reference the minimum number required;

Resolved, That subsection d. include the following terminology, “shall have not less than seven Directors and not more than nineteen Directors”;

Resolved, That subsection e. include the following terminology, “shall have not less than seven Directors and not more than twenty-one Directors “;

Resolved, That Associate members, for determination of the number of Directors, not be included in the membership count, since they cannot vote; and

Resolved, That the number of Directors be determined by the total membership of the year prior to Election Year.

This resolution was presented by Eleni Constandinides, Metropolis of New Jersey President and debate followed. Barbara Pasalis, Treasurer proposed an amendment to the resolution that following paragraph be stricken: Resolved, That Associate members, for determination of the number of Directors, not be included in the membership count,

since they cannot vote and Irene Hotzoglou, AD Metropolis President seconded the amendment to the resolution.

Marilyn Yeatts, Metropolis of San Francisco moved to remove the last clause: Resolved, That the number of Directors be determined by the total membership of the year prior to Election Year. Theodora Hart Metropolis of San Francisco seconded. The amendment to the resolution was passed.

The amended resolution was then considered and defeated.

3. Resolution to Change the Name of of the 75th Anniversary Founders Fund to Fund for ElderCare- Submitted by the National Executive Board and Commitments Committee

Whereas, the review conducted by the Commitment Committee noted that the 75th Anniversary Founders Fund name is dated and confusing to members

Whereas, The National, Philoptochos celebrated their 91st year as an organization in 2024

Whereas, the 75th Anniversary Founders Fund currently assists older Orthodox adults and their families with home health care, hospice, funerals and other needs as assessed by the Social Services Director

Resolved, that the name of the commitment be changed to Fund for ElderCare for a better understanding of the Fund's purpose.

This resolution was presented by Harriet Stoukas, National Assistant Treasurer and debate followed. The resolution was adopted.

4. Resolution Amending the Requirements for Full Membership- The Metropolis of Pittsburgh and the Metropolis of Chicago each submitted a resolution.

Whereas, the population demographics that make up the cities and towns throughout the United States of America is constantly changing; and

Whereas, certain areas of the United States have diverse populations of Orthodox Christians, including but not limited to Serbian, Romanian, Antiochian, etc., while others do not; and

Whereas, some Orthodox Christians of ethnicities other than Greek, join Greek Orthodox churches because a church of their own ethnicity no longer exists; and

Whereas, the qualifications for full membership into the Ladies Philoptochos Society require women aged 18 and older to be of the Greek Orthodox faith; therefore

Be it resolved that an additional, more inclusive section be added to the Bylaws following Article V, Section 2.1. Therefore, the “Full Membership” section will have both an (a.) and a (b.), as follows:

Article V, Section 2.1. Full Membership

a. Women of the Greek Orthodox faith, of at least 18 years of age, shall be eligible for full membership in the Society.

b. Women of Orthodox ethnicities other than Greek, of at least 18 years of age who have been baptized and/or chrismated as Orthodox Christians shall also be eligible for full membership in the Society.

The Pittsburgh resolution was presented by Joyce Spanakis, Metropolis of Pittsburgh President and discussed. She withdrew the resolution on behalf of the Metropolis. Kathleen Katrakis, Metropolis of Chicago President, discussed the slightly different verbage of the Metropolis of Chicago’s motion and it was debated. She withdrew the resolution on behalf of the Metropolis of Chicago.

5. Resolution to Establish a Greek Orthodox Elder Care Ministry- Submitted by the Archdiocesan District 2024 Philoptochos Conference

Whereas, Senior citizens, aged 80 years old and older, now constitute the fastest-growing segment of the population in the United States of America; Whereas, The number of Americans, 65 years old or older, is expected to increase from 56 to more than 90 million in the next 25 years; and Whereas, The demand for residential elder care in our country is anticipated to dramatically increase in coming years, with those experiencing memory loss and related illnesses expected to more than double by 2050 from 6 million to 13 million, and the United States Administration of Aging projecting that 70 percent of senior citizens will require long term care at some point in their lives; and

Whereas, Saint Michael’s Home, a National Ministry and Institution of the Holy Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, has, for more than 50 years, provided the elderly with a safe haven where our elders can live out their “golden years” with love, dignity, and quality of care in a Greek Orthodox environment; and

Whereas, Saint Michael’s Home, the only residential care facility for the elderly directly under the aegis of the Archdiocese, is currently involved in a historic expansion of services, with newly designed and constructed accommodations for more residents and offering higher levels of licensed residential care; and

Whereas, Facilities like the Hellenic Nursing & Rehabilitation Center (Canton,

Massachusetts) and the Greek American Rehabilitation & Care Center (Wheeling, Illinois), while neither officially affiliated with nor under the oversight of the Archdiocese, have served the Greek American community; now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc., establish an elder care ministry commitment to offer annual support to Saint Michael's Home and other Greek Orthodox elder care facilities serving the needs of our elderly; and that, in addition to other sources of funding deemed appropriate by the National Board, each Philoptochos Society chapter commit to an annual offering of at least Two Hundred Dollars (\$200) to support this ministry.

This resolution was presented by Chris Ioannou, member of the Archdiocesan District Board, who subsequently moved to amend the last paragraph to: Resolved, That the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc., establish an elder care ministry commitment to offer annual support to Saint Michael's Home and other Greek Orthodox elder care facilities serving the needs of our elderly; and that, in addition to other sources of funding deemed appropriate by the National Board, each Philoptochos Society chapter commit to a discretionary amount to support this ministry.

Rhonda Latkovic, Metropolis of San Francisco, seconded the amendment. The amendment passed. The amended resolution was debated extensively.

It should be noted that in the last resolved clause "or" was added to make the sentence read "...Saint Michael's Home and/or other Greek Orthodox elder care facilities..." by Irene Hotzoglou, AD Metropolis President.

The resolution was defeated.

6. Resolution in Support of Eliminating the Autism Assistance Commitment- Submitted by the National Executive Board and the Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Whereas, the review conducted by the National Philoptochos Society Commitments Committee has found in the years since the establishment of the Autism Assistance Fund, awareness, understanding, and acceptance of Autism and those affected by the disorder has grown throughout our community and country, and
Whereas, public funding for educational and training programs addressing Autism and insurance coverage for costs associated with the care and treatment of people on the spectrum are today widely available, now therefore be it

Resolved, that remaining fund balance shall be distributed to Autism related charities and programs through the National Philoptochos and/or Metropolises, and be it further Resolved, That the Autism Assistance Fund be eliminated as a National Philoptochos commitment as of January 2025.

This resolution was presented by Anna Vedouras, Metropolis of Pittsburgh and discussed. The resolution was adopted.

7. Establishment of Prison Ministry as a Commitment- Submitted by the Metropolis of Atlanta, Archdiocesan District, the Metropolis of Pittsburgh, and the Metropolis of San Francisco

Whereas, The Mission of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society charges its members to “help...the imprisoned;” and

Whereas, In Matthew 25:36 Jesus says, “I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me;” and

Whereas, The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society addresses the needs of “clothing, food, and illness” through commitments and special appeals, the ongoing needs of those imprisoned and their families are not formally addressed; and

Whereas, Our Lord Jesus Christ preached repentance and the forgiveness of all transgressions; and

Whereas, In 2023, over 1.9 million persons were in state or federal prisons;and

Whereas, The number of females in state or federal prisons increased almost 5% from 2021 (83,700) to 2022 (87,800); and

Whereas, 2.7 million children have a parent serving time in prison or jail on any given day and over 5.2 million children have had an incarcerated parent at some point during their lives;and

Whereas, Some 501(c)(3) programs have reduced the likelihood of recidivism to less than 5%; and

Whereas, The Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM), an agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States, provides spiritual care and helps both Orthodox Christians and non-Orthodox alike find hope and purpose in their lives; and

Whereas, The Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) provides “resources and training to local parishes and clergy, enabling them to offer local solutions and fulfill Christ’s command to visit Him in prison;” and

Whereas, The Philoptochos members are “doers” as St. James in his Epistle 1:22 exhorts all Christians to be “Doers of the word and not hearers only;” therefore, be it Resolved, That an Orthodox Prison Initiative Commitment be established as an annual National Philoptochos commitment in support of 501(c)(3) organizations which aid 1)

those incarcerated, 2) those formerly incarcerated who are re-entering society, and 3) those families and children affected by incarcerations; and
Resolved, That the annual amount of the Orthodox Prison Ministry Initiative Commitment be determined by each Chapter; and
Resolved, That at least fifty percent (50%) of the annual Orthodox Prison Initiative Commitment be earmarked for the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) and that the remaining amount be earmarked for other 501(c)(3) prison ministry programs assisting the incarcerated and their families; and
Resolved, That the distribution of donations to the annual Orthodox Prison Initiative Commitment be determined by the proposal grant process as established by the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society.

This resolution was presented by Irene Politis, Metropolis of Atlanta President, and debate followed. The resolution was further endorsed by the Metropolises of Pittsburgh, San Francisco and the Archdiocesan District. The resolution was adopted.

8. Resolution for the Vasilopita Funds Distribution and Saint Basil Academy Support-
Submitted by the Archdiocesan District, The Metropolis of San Francisco, and the Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Whereas, The National Philoptochos Society and all its Metropolises, Districts, and chapters have for over 80 years generously and lovingly supported the Ministry of St. Basil Academy (SBA) as well as the Saint Basil property, which is owned by the National Philoptochos;

Whereas, The National Philoptochos Society wishes to continue to support the Ministry of St. Basil as well as the premises owned by the National Philoptochos; and

Whereas, The annual Vasilopita Commitment has been dedicated to the Saint Basil Ministry for Orthodox children from distressed families and the support of the property where the children of St. Basil's reside; and

Whereas, Over the years, an additional commitment was approved that also supports the St. Basil children, known as the Sisterhood of St Basil, which is dedicated to the physical needs of the children at SBA; and

Whereas, Over the years, the population of children served at St. Basil Academy originally numbered in the hundreds and is now less than ten children in the Youth program; and

Whereas, The National Philoptochos has donated over 11 Million dollars to St. Basil's over the last 15 years in support of both the ministry as well as the property where the children reside; and

Whereas, Philoptochos Chapters nationwide, as well as the Metropolis and District Philoptochos Boards, have also generously supported SBA; and

Whereas, The Academy of St. Basil's has been the beneficiary of additional generosity from the faithful of this sacred Archdiocese; and

Whereas, SBA currently has approximately Eight Million Dollars in the Saint Basil Academy Trust as evidenced by its 2021 Form 990 filed with the Federal Government and several additional millions of Dollars in unrestricted gifts and bequests in various accounts; and

Whereas, Philoptochos also recognizes that there is a substantial need for countless other children who can also be served throughout our Archdiocese and wishes to serve them; and

Whereas, The Philoptochos wishes to continue to support and serve the children of St. Basil Academy so long as they are under the care of the church in the youth program, to protect and care for the Saint Basil Property, and also serve the needs of youth and children throughout our Archdiocese; and

Whereas, There currently are over \$300,000 collected to date through the 2024 Vasilopita, which will continue to be dedicated to Saint Basil's since they were collected for that purpose;

Now, Therefore, be it resolved that beginning with the Vasilopita of 2025, the National Philoptochos, its Metropolis and District boards and chapters will continue to support Saint Basil Academy as well as other youth programs such as youth-related social services, camping, retreats, and education by beings distributed as follows:

50% to the support of both the Ministry of Saint Basil's which is currently serving approximately ten children, and others located on Saint Basil property, as well as for the needs of the real estate itself and the remaining 50% of the Vasilopita monies be used to support youth social services as well as other youth programs including camping, retreats, education, and scholarships throughout the entire Sacred Archdiocese of America and youth-related programs of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese itself and

Let it also be resolved that the percentage of distribution can be adjusted through a majority vote of the National Philoptochos Board.

This resolution was presented by Chrissy Orginos- Zografos, AD Metropolis, and debate followed. The resolution was adopted.

Barabara Pasalis, National Treasurer, motioned to amend the adopted resolution with the following additional clauses. Marilyn Yeatts, Metropolis of San Francisco seconded.

The added clauses are:

Whereas, our CPA and auditors have advised us that in order to ensure complete accountability and transparency in reporting, Philoptochos should require signed

agreements and/or grant proposals, as well as follow-up reports confirming the use of the funds; and

Resolved, that all monies currently in the Vasilopita fund will continue to be used solely for Saint Basil Academy and will be contingent upon complete and transparent signed agreements and follow-up reporting; and be it further

Resolved, that all money distributed to youth and young adult programs of the Archdiocese and other programs across the greater United States will be disbursed based on the submission of grant proposals; and be it further

Resolved that money distributed to families in crisis will be distributed according to the procedures established by the National Philoptochos Department of Social Services;

The amendment was passed.

Beverage Break- Arlene Siavelis Kehl, National Philoptochos President, reconvened at 2:25 PST.

9. Resolution in Support of Eliminating the Orthodox Christian Fellowship Commitment- Submitted by the Metropolis of Pittsburgh

Whereas, the mission of Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) is to support fellowship on college campuses, whose members experience and witness the Orthodox Church through community life, prayer, service to others, and study of the faith; and

Whereas, in a desire to support our Orthodox college students and keep them close to our faith, National Philoptochos established a commitment to support the programs of OCF; and

Whereas, National Philoptochos wishes to treat all youth and young adult programs of the Archdiocese equitably; and

Whereas, OCF will now be receiving funding and support through the newly expanded Vasilopita Fund, and therefore, does not need another funding source; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that National Philoptochos eliminate the Orthodox Christian Fellowship Commitment as a separate annual ministry commitment of the Society beginning in January 2025.

This resolution was presented by Joyce Spanakis, Metropolis of Pittsburgh President and debate followed. The resolution was adopted.

10. Resolution of Bylaws Amendment to Include Reference Manuals- Submitted by the National Philoptochos Executive Board

Whereas The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc., (the “Society”) is the duly accredited women’s philanthropic society of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; and

Whereas the Society is a 501(c) (3) Not-for-Profit Corporation of the State of New York and is an Affiliated Organization of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese; and

Whereas as such the Society is governed, not only by the laws of New York State, but also by its own Bylaws, (the “Bylaws”) which were initially enacted in 1932, after its incorporation in 1931, and which most recently were amended in 2020, and

Whereas among the purposes of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society are to help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed and all those in need as well as to promote the charitable, benevolent and philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, to preserve and perpetuate the Family, and to promote participation in the activities of the Greek Orthodox community, and preserve the Orthodox Christian faith, nationally in a consistent fashion throughout the country, and

Whereas the Bylaws of the Society generally state the requirements that chapters, Metropolises, Archdiocesan District and National Board must follow, and

Whereas questions from time to time, arise as to the specific application of the various sections, terms and requirements of the Bylaws, and

Whereas from time to time, interpretation is required in order to determine how best to apply the Bylaws to each individual chapter, and

Whereas many of the same questions arise on a regular basis, and

Whereas it is beneficial that there be consistency among the Society’s Chapters and Metropolises, and Archdiocesan District on a nationwide basis, and

Whereas over time, the National Philoptochos Board, and its executive boards and Metropolis and Archdiocesan District Boards try to provide consistent guidance, and the National Board has developed manuals and handbook(s) to facilitate the consistent, practical and equal application of the Bylaws and practices of the Society; and

Whereas, the relevant Manuals and Handbook have never been specifically identified within the Bylaws of the Society, so that all members are equally aware of the assistance that these manuals and Handbook can provide;

Now therefore be it

Resolved that Article 6, section 4 titled “Interpretation” be amended as follows

a. The following Manuals and Handbook have been created by the National Philoptochos Board for the purpose of providing general guidance to chapters in complying with and resolving questions relating to the Bylaws, elections, general business of the Society, Social Services procedures, major national events of the Society, such as the Biennial Convention and the Children’s Medical Fund Luncheon and other important functions. The Manuals and Handbook which can be amended by the majority vote of a quorum of the

National Philoptochos Board are as follows:

1. The Procedural Manual
2. The Financial Policies and Procedures Manual
3. The Social Services Policies and Procedures Manual
4. The Protocol Manual
5. The Employee Handbook

Additional Manuals or Handbooks, as needed, may be promulgated from time to time by the National Philoptochos Board.

b. In the event that the further interpretation of these Bylaws shall be necessary for any reason, the interpretation shall be made by the national president in consultation with the legal advisor. The English language text of these Bylaws shall be deemed the official text for all purposes.

This resolution was presented by Anita Kartalopoulos, Co-Chairman of the Convention, and debate followed. The resolution was adopted.

11. Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Direct Archdiocesan District of the Greek Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc.- Submitted by the Archdiocesan District

WHEREAS: the Executive Committee of the Direct Archdiocesan District of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc. (the "Executive Committee"), at a meeting duly called and held on Thursday, May 23, 2024 (the "Meeting"), discussed the fact that the Direct Archdiocesan District of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc. (the "Direct Archdiocesan District") is recognized and operates under this legal name but is also commonly known and referred to by the public and its members as the Archdiocesan District of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Committee has determined that it is in the best interest of the Direct Archdiocesan District to officially adopt the name "Archdiocesan District of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc." as a "doing business as" (DBA) designation to enhance recognition and facilitate operations under this commonly used name;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Direct Archdiocesan District shall adopt the name "Archdiocesan District of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc." as its DBA designation; and
FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of the Direct Archdiocesan District are hereby authorized and directed to take all necessary steps to file any required documentation with the appropriate governmental authorities to effectuate this DBA designation; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that all business conducted by the Direct Archdiocesan District under its legal name or under the name "Archdiocesan District of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc." shall be deemed to be for and on behalf of the Direct Archdiocesan District;

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the officers of the Direct Archdiocesan District are authorized to take any other actions that may be necessary or appropriate to implement this resolution, including filing any required documentation with the appropriate governmental authorities to effectuate this DBA designation, in order to ensure that all business conducted under the name "Archdiocesan District of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc." is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that these resolutions shall take effect immediately upon their adoption.

This resolution was presented by Anita Kartalopoulos. No action required as this was for informational purposes only.

Minutes report - Monday, July 1, 2024- Aglaia Georgountzos, Metropolis of Boston, presented the minutes of July 1, 2024. Dr. Claudia Mitzeliotis, AD Philoptochos, moved to approve the minutes. Chrissy Zeppos, Metropolis of San Francisco, seconded the motion. Minutes approved as presented.

Family Caregiving: Our Community's Journey to Understanding, Compassion and Hope, Anne Vedouras, JD, Rev Dr Harry Pappas, Paulette Geanacopoulos LMSW, Eleni Constandinides (NJ) and Lisa Xanthos (SF)- Paulette began the session "Educating the community about the challenges caregivers face today". She asked Philoptochos delegates to motivate their chapters to respond to the needs of the local caregivers within the individual communities. Paulette presented the Societal Issues:

- 53 million caregivers in the US
- Caregivers assist the elderly, others of any age, those disabled, and those with life threatening illness
- Women are the majority of caregivers
- Many are from the sandwich generation
- 25 hours per week spent caregiving/4-6 years spent caregiving
- \$7,000 spent their own funds annually to pay for needed supplies & housing
- Those with careers are in jeopardy of retirement funds being affected
- Philoptochos Issue today - a significant number of Philoptochos members were, are, or will be a caregiver in the future

- “Forewarned is forearmed”

Anne Vedouras spoke on “Caregiving in the Greek Orthodox Family”. She spoke about her personal caregiving experience for her mom and items to consider.

- Insuring Safety
- Patient advocacy
- Dynamics of family change
- Spouse communication
- Elder care attorney - wills, trusts, medical, etc
- Is the facility run by staff or agency employees? You want STAFF
- Never discount prayer
- Power of Attorney (POA), Health Care POA, constant communication
- Be Aware of Caregiver burnout-deny loved ones condition, anger toward the condition, exhaustion, angst, weight changes, depression —find a way to manage the stress
- Resources Available: Elder Care Attorney - American Bar Association, Office of Aging, Alzheimer’s Association, State Evaluative Process, AARP, Family Caregiver Alliance, Life Care Managers (serve as a family coach), Medicare Rights Center, LongTermCare.gov, National Council of Aging

Paulette also spoke about easing the burden to caregivers, such as:

- FMLA - Family Medical Leave Act - protected 12 weeks unpaid job leave
- Military Family Care Leave
- Paid Family Leave - 13 states & Washington, DC have mandatory paid family leave
- Bipartisan Policy Center
- Tax Credits - Credit for Caring Act/Tax Deductions - elder care attorney advisor
- Claiming as a dependent - check IRS website
- Senior Home Companions - research by state
- Employer Policies - ABetterBalance.org

“Creating A Caregiver Friendly Church Environment” was presented by Rev. Dr. Harry Pappas, having 39 years of pastoral mission.

- Christ the Healer - all authentic caregiving is Christ within us.
- Saint Basil the Great - with his extraordinary wealth he was able to develop institutions for those who couldn’t care for themselves (institutions, youth hostels, places for those aging, places for those with special needs/mental & physical disabilities
- Fr. Henri Nouwen (Christian perspective on spirituality and caregiving). Father spoke about Nouwen’s book L’Arche.

- Resources to steady our faith, include:Hymns - “Lord of the Powers, be with us; for in times of distress, we have no other helper but you; Lord of the Powers, have mercy on us!”, listening to scripture/ book of Psalms, honoring feelings, staying connected while working through issues, being present in the moment, support groups, confidential conversation - find someone who knows you inside out, referring to St. John the Theologian - with faith/with trust
- Resurrection Ode - Through the cross, resurrection comes based on GRACE, based on God, bringing deep seeded joy.
- Walking the Path - you will experience the resurrection here & now - sense of victory, redemption, salvation and energy for life.

Paulette concluded the session by reminding the delegates to mention the caregivers support group meetings which are National Philoptochos, as faith rebuilds resilience. She also recommended chapters to bring in speakers to talk about caregiving, including having the ‘end of life’ discussion with our parents and family members. Paulette then took comments from the floor for chapter involvement suggestions:

- Comfort gift bags for caregivers
- A phone call to see how a shut in is doing
- Bring in an Elder Care attorney to discuss planning for end of life
- Have a student record an oral history of the care recipient

Management Report and Budget Presentation- Barbara Pasalis, Treasurer- Barbara presented the 2023 Audit letter stating that “all material respects end in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in the US.” The Management Report is available on the ‘Convention Documents’ tab in the Philoptochos Convention app. Barbara commented that the National Philoptochos is in a strong financial position. Barbara had a few side notes:

- On the expense chart it shows only 54% of the grants have been distributed as this is a timing issue with the reports. The percentage will increase by year end.
- Budgeted expenses will increase in the next budget period 2025 as the hiring of an assistant director who will be charged with planning for an increase in programs and services.

2025-2026 Budget Adoption- Barbara Pasalis moved the adoption of the 2025-2026 Budget. Elaine Zetes seconded. The budget was passed.

Barbara reported ‘good news’:

- 2 years ago we had a lock box created, which worked well the first year, but now delays with the USPS mail delivery are causing issues.. The executive board is investigating paying commitments online - this should save expenses and will

give us the ability to view credits by chapter and provide a step forward in financials.

- Payments will be taken by credit card or direct deposit. Payment testing will begin this fall with test group chapters.
- Lastly, Barbara thanked those who have assisted her in the past year

Cindy Kezos thanked and released the Parliamentarian, Jim Stewart, for his service today once all business matters involving voting were concluded.

Maria Baltazzi- Convention Co-Chair Cindy Kezos introduced Maria Baltazzi, Emmy-winning TV producer, author and guest speaker. Her book, Take a Shot at Happiness: How to Write, Direct, & Produce the Life You Want, was gifted to all attendees.

Maria began with “It is a God given choice to be happy.”

- 50% DNA (genetics); 10% life circumstance (financially, socially, medically); 40% habits (you can control) all impact your happiness
- “Carpe Diem” - make today count and mean something
- “Be the hero of your life”
- Happiness Essentials: Faith, Love, Gratitude, Forgiveness, Peace, Health, Detachment, Abundance
- Faith is a bedrock - try new things - don’t be afraid to stand up for what you believe in
- 3 Happiness Habits: Breathing - Jesus Prayer - Meditation, Cognitive Behavior Therapy - clap hands, snap rubber band on your wrist, say “stop it” or snap your fingers to stop negative thoughts and always savor the good

Maria ended by expressing our need to “be the hero of your story”, “take control of your choices” and “Live your life today, it is not a dress rehearsal”

Arlene Siavelis-Kehl presented Maria with an icon of the Philoptochos Patron Saints Saint Cosmas & Saint Damianos.

Meeting Recessed - Cindy Kezos, Convention Co-Chair, recessed the meeting at 6:15 pm PST.

Respectfully Submitted,
Elaine Sackleh, Secretary

Chrissy Orginos- Zografos, Secretary

July 2, 2024