



# THE HELLENIC WOMEN'S CLUB



*The Newsletter of The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc.*

Spring 2013

## *Message from the President*

Greetings,



Spring is the time for new beginnings, so I am especially delighted to send you the first annual Hellenic Women's Club, EOK newsletter. These are busy times here at the EOK and thanks to the continued support of patrons like you, we are able to provide assistance to many worthy charities from Boston to across the Atlantic.

We hope that this newsletter will be of interest to you and allow you to connect with the Greek community in New England. Take a trip down memory lane with a brief history, which highlights how something that started small blossomed into an organization that has distributed over \$1,000,000 in the last decade alone. We have included an article on the Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research, an initiative begun by EOK member Dr. Helen O'Leary which we hope you will find interesting. As you will read, the recent launch of the Hellenic Women's Club EOK scholarship program has allowed us to grant \$5,000 awards to many worthy young women. Finally, we have included photographs through the years from our annual fundraiser, the Mistletoe Ball, where multi-generations come together to mingle, eat, and, of course, dance!

Please accept our heartfelt thank you for all that you have done to help the Hellenic Women's Club EOK continue to support an array of worthy efforts ranging from local shelters to global disaster relief funds; from scholarships to medical research; and

from Boston's arts organizations to our Greek Orthodox faith and cultural community.

Stephanie C. Andrews  
President, Hellenic Women's Club, Inc.

## *Mission Statement*

*The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., also known as Epsilon Omicron Kappa (EOK), engages in wide reaching philanthropic endeavors while promoting Hellenic ideals, culture, and community in New England. Founded in 1936 by a group of seven women to assist Greek war orphans, the EOK continues today as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization which is characterized by a hard-working group of uniquely dedicated women who offer their talents, energy, and spirit to the mission of charity.*

*For three quarters of a century, the Hellenic Women's Club has enjoyed the generous and continued support of its patrons and Sustaining Sponsors. This partnership has allowed the EOK to make annual gifts to a variety of medical, cultural, educational, and institutional organizations in the greater Boston area and beyond. In addition, the EOK is proud to have established the Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research in memory of a dear member. To commemorate the Club's 75th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee, the Hellenic Women's Club Scholarship was launched in 2011, honoring its scholarship mission.*

*The Hellenic Women's Club celebrates philanthropy and community at its annual Mistletoe Ball, which was inaugurated in 1946 and is believed to be the longest consecutive event of its kind in Boston. This holiday benefit, along with a spring event, has enabled the EOK to award more than \$1 million to worthy organizations in the past decade alone.*

# Through the past

## EOK Enjoys Caring, Colorful History

The Hellenic Women's Club came into existence in 1936 when Urania Papas of Newton sent a postcard to six of her friends: "Please come to my house for tea to start a little club."

The seven ladies named their club Ellinikos Omilos Kyrion (EOK), or translated, Hellenic Women's Club. The membership soon expanded to 35 – a welcome outlet for women of similar background. EOK continues today as a close-knit group of women supporting and celebrating their Hellenic heritage.

By 1940, the club established a small scholarship through the Boston Latin Schools. This initiative mushroomed, with scholarships at several area colleges, and annual awards at Hellenic College/Holy Cross and Wellesley College.



With the advent of WWII and the Greek Civil War, the club held its first dinner-dance (at Boston's Hotel Vendome for \$6) to support war-torn Greece and the war orphans. An early EOK flyer stated, "The Greek nation is fighting for freedom. It is our fight." In the AHEPA home's basement on Commonwealth Avenue, the ladies



rolled bandages and packed clothing and bedding to deliver overseas. For three decades, they sustained their support of orphanages throughout Greece – even shipping one a refrigerator.

The dinner-dances, and later, spring fashion shows and theater brunches enabled an expansion of philanthropy. A piano was sent to the Athens Symphony Orchestra, agricultural equipment to the American Farm School, and an iron lung and wheelchair to Greek children. Larger projects included a computer room at Hellenic College, a garden oasis at the Hellenic Nursing Home, and the refurbishment of bedrooms at Philoxenia House and the Hellenic Cardiac Fund apartments.

On November 23, 1963, members were preparing for the 18th dinner-dance, when word arrived of President Kennedy's assassination. With sadness in their hearts, they cancelled the festivities, but later rescheduled to the Saturday before Christmas. The dinner-dance was thus reborn as the Mistletoe Ball – the highly popular gala that has even welcomed princes and presidential candidates.

Now in its 66th year, the Ball has supported research in thalassemia,

lymphoma, and neurological diseases at Boston's major hospitals; dozens of organizations devoted to culture and caring have benefited annually; and most recently, the club has initiated The Demetra Fund to fight breast cancer, the restoration of an ancient Greek marble plaque at the Museum of Fine Arts, and a major in-house scholarship program for Greek-American women.



With the help of thousands of generous supporters, the "little club" conceived in 1936 has achieved 75 years of good works. At the Diamond Jubilee in 2011, Hellenic Women's Club members looked to the future:

"We have kept faith with the ideals of our founders. We stand tall with our heritage, our church, and our community. It is our hope that the goals envisioned by our forebears will endure and flourish in the century ahead with dignity and with grace."

Thank you for caring.

Last Name: EFTYMIU  
First Name: SOTERIA  
Father's Name: EFTYCHIOS  
Age (TEN):                      Sex: FEMALE  
Reg. No.: A-954                      F.P. No.: 564  
Mailing Address: HELLENIC WOMEN'S CLUB E.O.K.  
NOTE: POSTER PARENT # 564

# *EOK offers young women a chance to soar*

Like athletics, education is the bedrock of Greek culture, and now, for the first time ever, the Hellenic Women's Club EOK is annually offering six young women a chance to gain knowledge that one day may transform not only their own lives but the life of the world.

The Hellenic Women's Club Scholarship Fund was launched last year when the Club celebrated its 75th Diamond Jubilee. The fund now annually awards six young women a \$5000 scholarship each on the basis of community service, leadership, and academics. The recipients are named each year on the night of the Mistletoe Ball, the Club's landmark fundraising event, and are invited to the Ball as guests of the Club.

Eva Markos, EOK scholarship chair, says: "It is tremendous that the Greek community is so dedicated to our efforts in support of the Ball. Their generosity makes it possible for us to support the education of these young women, and it speaks volumes about how loyal they are."

Pia Kurkuvelos, one of this year's scholarship recipients, writes: "I had a lovely evening and greatly appreciate both your generous support of my academic pursuits through your scholarship, but also the kind gesture of inviting me as a guest to the Ball...I look forward to attending the event in years to come and to becoming more involved in the Hellenic Women's community."

This year's scholarship recipients include: Jasmine Khan of Austin, Texas, a sophomore at Tufts majoring in international relations; Chrisanthe Salemis of Westwood, Ma., a freshman at Tufts studying the classics; Georgia Kostopoulos of Cambridge, Ma., a sophomore at Simmons College studying physical therapy; Victoria Tansey of Peabody, Ma., a freshman at Roger Williams University; Charlotte Parish of Westwood, Ma., a sophomore at Boston College majoring in English and secondary education; and Pia Kurkuvelos of Danvers, a graduate of Harvard University and now a student at Boston College Law School.

This year, the Club awarded two named scholarships. One honored Eugenia Nichols Pergantis, and the other was a gift from The Haseotes Family. Young women, who are U.S. citizens of Greek-American descent or who are of the Greek Orthodox faith; who live in



*Chrisanthe Salemis, Charlotte Parish, Eva Markos-Chair, Georgia Kostopoulos, Pia Kurkuvelos*

Massachusetts; or who are students at a Massachusetts college or university, are invited to apply.

The Hellenic Women's Club has a long tradition of supporting scholarships, arcing back to the 1930s, when EOK scholarships were first administered through the Boston Latin Schools. Later, in the 1950s, the Club supported Greek-American scholarship students at MIT, Harvard, Boston University, and Tufts; and later it supported students at Hellenic College Holy Cross and Wellesley College, where nine young women of Greek-American descent have received scholarship aid through EOK support.

For information on how to apply for a scholarship, visit <http://hellenicwomensclub.org/eok-scholarship-fund.php>

The Hellenic Women's Club would like to keep you informed.

If your mailing label isn't correct, please let us know at [contact@hellenicwomensclub.org](mailto:contact@hellenicwomensclub.org)

Photos by  
The Nourises Studio and EOK Archives.



*Upcoming events*

*June 15, 2013*

Scholarship applications due

*November 30, 2013*

Mistletoe Ball 2013

*April 27, 2014*

A Spring Soiree to benefit the  
Demetra Fund for  
Breast Cancer Research

[www.hellenicwomensclub.org](http://www.hellenicwomensclub.org)

*Highlights from a few of our events*



# The Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research



*Sisters Helen O'Leary and Demetra "Toulie" Samellas*



*Demetra "Toulie" Samellas as a new EOK member*

In early 2001, EOK member Dr. Helen P. O'Leary was distraught to learn that her beloved sister, Demetra "Toulie" Samellas, was at critical risk from an all-too-prevalent diagnosis: breast cancer.

"This disease that afflicts one in eight women was now claiming my sister," says Helen. Her strong desire to help Toulie awakened the idea of establishing an endowment for breast cancer research. She brought it to the Hellenic Women's Club – the ideal organization, she felt, to focus on women's health issues. Club members enthusiastically endorsed her proposal, and with a generous seed gift from Helen, the Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research came into existence.

Toulie Samellas had been an EOK member since 1960, serving a two-year term as president. Widowed at age 46 with three teenagers, she had left the ranks of at-home Moms to support her family by managing her husband's electronics business. Shortly thereafter, she experienced her first bout with breast cancer.

"During this difficult, pressured, time in her life, Toulie had no time for outside interests except for the EOK," Helen remembers. "She loved being with the ladies and they offered her support."

Perhaps these caring friends had something to do with Toulie's being able to conquer her disease for 18 years. When the cancer returned, Helen was able to go to the hospital and tell Toulie about the establishment of the Demetra Fund in her honor. Both women cried.

Although Toulie was not able to win her second battle with breast cancer, it gave her comfort to know that a fund bearing her name might bring hope to others in her position. "Demetra, in antiquity, was the earth goddess of fertility and growth and new life," Helen explains. "It was Toulie's given name, and one so appropriate for breast cancer research. It suggests the possibility for women to be resurrected – to be reborn – after treatment."

Demetra "Toulie" Samellas passed away in 2001, but more than a decade later her spirit lives on as the EOK – via a \$100,000 grant – supports a clinical trial at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute through her fund. Dr. Judy Garber, working in collaboration across the Atlantic with Katia Karalis PhD at Hygeia Hospital in Athens, is utilizing the award to better understand genetic mutations and their role in breast cancer.

The current Demetra Fund Committee Chair, Pamela Lazares, reports that in looking to the future, the EOK will continue to support worthy projects at recognized cancer-related institutions focusing on basic science and/or patient care.

## Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., EOK Officers 2012-2014

Stephanie C. Andrews	President
Mary Lynn Pergantis	Vice President
Dorothy Sophocles	Treasurer
Patricia L. Dukakis	Assistant Treasurer
Felicia Kiehm	Corresponding Secretary
Mary Papastavros	Recording Secretary
Pamela Lazares	Demetra Fund
Eva Markos	Scholarship Fund
Allys Spilios	Sustaining Sponsorship

## Members

Joan Aliapoulios	Bobi C. Lelon
Renee Argyris	Tamara Lingos
Christa Ayoub	Tania Lingos-Webb
Olga Bassett	Janice Panagako
Maria Behrakis	Elaine Pantazopoulos
Jean Canellos	Connie Papageorge
Louise Damascus	Athena Papas
Carolyn DelGizzi	Florence Patterson
Carol Drake	Mary Philopoulos
Mary Gomas	Janis Otis Semine
Kathleen Hamilton	Heidi Tourkistas
Linda Hasiotis	Jennifer Trakas-Acerra
Stacey Tsairis Kacoyanis	Diane Speare Triant
Liz Karagianis	Zacharie Haseotes Vinos
Christine Kondoleon	

## Associate Members

Ann Agris	Helen Papoulias O'Leary
Crystal Condakes	Maria Karagianis O'Neill
Angelyn Konugres Coupounas	Maria Papageorge
Harriet Kotsilimbas Davis	Thalia Papageorgiou
Carolyn Pappas Diamandis	Lee Polley
Constance Georgaklis	Cathy Papoulias Sakellaris
Sandra Gomas	Matia Sculos
Katherine Karagianis	Diana Tsomides
Alexis Lelon	Alexis Hasiotis Wintersteen
Valentine Mason	Clotilde Zannetos
Joanne Nikitas	Cynthia Zervas

# THE HELLENIC WOMEN'S CLUB GIVING HISTORY

## Established Charities

*(receiving annual donations for the past 10 to 45 years):*

American Farm School  
Children's Hospital Boston, Hellenic Cardiac Fund  
Children's Hospital Boston, Hematology/Oncology Division-  
Thalassemia research  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Massachusetts  
And Rhode Island  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute- Dr. George Canellos  
Fund  
EOK Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research  
EOK Major Gift Fund  
Hellenic Nursing and Rehabilitation Center  
Lupus Foundation of New England  
Massachusetts General Hospital, Alzheimer's and Related  
Diseases Fund  
Perkins School for the Blind  
Philoxenia House, Metropolis of Boston  
Pine Street Inn  
Rosie's Place  
Shriner's Hospital for Children-Boston  
Scholarship Funds:  
Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox  
School of Theology  
Wellesley College (endowed fund)  
Hellenic Women's Club General Scholarship

## Other Donations include

Ace Bailey Children's Fund  
American Cancer Society  
American Heart Association  
American Red Cross (Japan tsunami relief;  
Hurricane Sandy and other aid)  
Anatolia College  
Athens College  
Athens Symphony Orchestra  
Battered Women Fighting Back, Inc.  
Boston Ballet  
Boston Latin Schools (scholarships)  
Boston Med Flight (transport of critical patients)  
Boston Opera Company  
Boston Symphony Orchestra  
Central Asia Institute (schools for Afghan girls)  
Children's Hospital Phenylketonuria (PKU) Dept.  
College Year in Athens  
Colonel Daniel Marr Boys and Girls Club  
Cristo Rey High School, Boston  
Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch (healing abused children)  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (clinical trial supported  
by Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research)  
Deree Pierce College, Athens  
Diana, Princess of Wales Foundation  
Doctors Without Borders  
Evangelismos Hospital, Athens (microscope)  
Girls, Inc. of Lynn  
Globe Santa  
Greek Consulate of Boston

Greek Orthodox Cathedral of Boston, Evangelismos  
(senior citizens, psychosavato, chandelier cleaning)  
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Boston (camp program,  
youth ministries, mosaic cross for retreat center)  
Harvard University (scholarships, rare Greek books)  
Hatzikiriakion Orphanage, Piraeus  
Hellenic College/Holy Cross (computers, chapel repairs,  
Dean's chair, Archbishop Iakovos library, 75th Anniversary)  
Heroes Welcome Fund (9/11 first responders)  
International Orthodox Christian Charities  
(Peloponnesus fires relief)  
Ionian Island Earthquake Relief  
Iron Lung to hospital in Greece  
Cynthia Kangos (Olympic swimmer)  
Kyparisia Orphanage, Athens  
LOGOS  
Maliotis Cultural Center (kitchen)  
Massachusetts Chapter of the Nature Conservancy  
Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund  
Massachusetts 9/11 Fund  
Michael Carter Lisnow Respite Center  
Mitera Orphanage, Athens  
Museum of Fine Arts (Art in Bloom, art restoration)  
Museum of Science  
National Brain Tumor Society  
National Conference for Community and Justice  
National Orthodox Campus Ministry  
National Philoptochos Foster Parents Program  
Neighbor Brigade  
New England Conservatory of Music (scholarship)  
Northeastern University (scholarship)  
Ox-Fam (hunger relief)  
Panagia Kalyviani Orphanage, Crete  
Patras Foundling Home, Vrefokomion (refrigerator  
and playground equipment)  
Patriarchate Orphans, Istanbul  
Princess Alice Fund (Greek princess' aid to the infirm)  
Ronald McDonald House (Greek Division)  
Salvation Army (Katrina Fund)  
Sloan-Kettering Hospital (Greek children's cancer)  
SPARK Center Children's AIDS Program  
(Boston Medical Center)  
Sparta Workshop for the Blind  
Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital  
St. Basil's Academy (orphans, Iakovos Athletic Field)  
St. Nicholas Church, NY, 9/11 Fund  
Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Foundation  
Sumeria Foundation  
Taxiarchae Greek Orthodox Church, Watertown  
Orphanage in Thessaly (clothes dryer)  
Tripolis School for the Blind  
Tufts University ( dental scholarships)  
United Red Feather  
Vision 21 (Greek Orthodox Diocese)  
WGBH, Public Television  
World Wildlife Fund (conservation efforts in Greece)

AWARDED IN THE PAST DECADE ALONE:  
IN EXCESS OF \$1 MILLION DOLLARS

