



# THE HELLENIC WOMEN'S CLUB



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

Spring 2020

## Message from the President



As the new decade begins, our world faces historic challenges. We will navigate these times together guided by our Greek Orthodox faith and values of philotimo and philanthropy.

The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., EOK, sends heartfelt thanks to our generous donors and friends, like you, for your devotion and loyalty to contributing to advance our philanthropic efforts. Now more than ever, others will need our financial support.

Here are examples of how your donations made an impact in 2019:

- **BLOOMING PINK** on May 1st, to benefit our Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research and Patient Care, raised over \$60,000. This successful fundraiser empowers EOK to fund a new, three-year \$100,000 grant for breast cancer research to Dr. Priscilla Brastianos at Massachusetts General Hospital.

- The Mistletoe Ball on November 30th, brought a sold-out crowd to celebrate the start of the holiday season. That evening our EOK Scholarship Program awarded a total of \$30,000 in merit-based scholarships to six women of Greek descent pursuing their educational goals at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

For more details about EOK's history, programming, and charitable giving to worthy non-profits in Greater Boston and abroad, visit our website at [www.hellenicwomensclub.org](http://www.hellenicwomensclub.org).

As my term as President ends, thank you for your extraordinary kindness, thoughtful generosity and crucial contributions which allow The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., EOK, to carry on our eighty-four year mission of agape and charity.

God bless,

Despina Koules Anton  
President, The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., EOK

## Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., EOK Officers 2018-2020

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Jackie Gigantes McCabe	

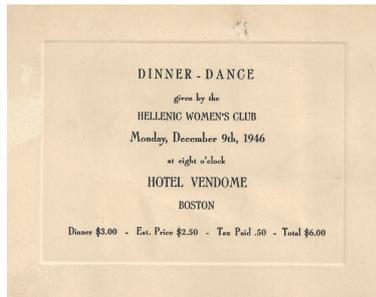
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Alexis Lelon*	**Former Two-Term President

### THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF INK

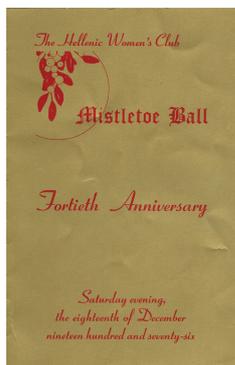
Stephanie C. Andrews, Jane P. Kourtis,  
Jackie Gigantes McCabe,  
Mary Lynn Pergantis, Diane Speare Triant

# Through the Past The Mistletoe Ball: A Melding of Festivity and Philanthropy



1946

1946: The 10-year-old EOK held its first benefit in response to the Greek war relief effort, a “Dinner Dance” at Boston’s Hotel Vendome (\$6). It was the precursor to the Mistletoe Ball, which for 74 years has benefited the club’s philanthropic endeavors and is believed to be the longest running charitable event of its kind in Boston. From the beginning, the dance was popular with college students as one of their few Greek social outlets.



1976

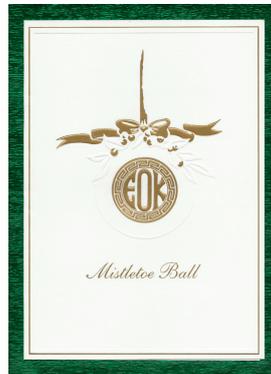
1951: When Prince George of Greece traveled to Boston for his wife’s medical treatment, he accepted an invitation to be guest of honor at the Dinner Dance at the Hotel Statler. The modest fundraiser with its home-crafted centerpieces had morphed into a royal affair, with Grecian urns and cypress trees recreating ancient Hellenic gardens.



1983

1963: On November 22, the club was preparing for its 18th annual Dinner Dance to be held that evening in the

Louis XIV Ballroom of the Somerset Hotel when word arrived that President Kennedy had been shot. With sadness in their hearts, the members canceled the festivities, later rescheduling to the only remaining hotel date: the Saturday before Christmas. Thus, in a time of upheaval, the Dinner Dance was reborn as the “Mistletoe Ball.”



1994

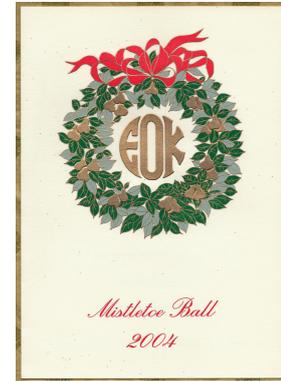
1986: Creativity was on full display at the Ball, where the club’s 50th anniversary was celebrated with golden balloons, EOK Champagne, and a white Christmas-tree-shaped cake adorned with gold-icing bows. A proclamation from the Governor of the Commonwealth, Michael S. Dukakis, “honored and commended” the club for its ever-expanding philanthropy. Two years later, after running for the nation’s presidency, Governor Dukakis would attend the Ball to thank his many Greek supporters.



2003

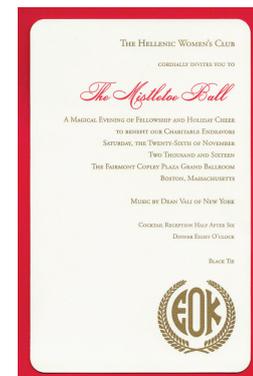
1990: By century’s end, the Mistletoe Ball had become synonymous with the holidays in New England’s Hellenic-American community. Generations of guests had danced their way across the ballrooms of Boston’s major hotels (most frequently the Fairmont Copley Plaza) to bands playing Greek, swing, rock, pop, and Christmas music.

A *Boston Globe* lifestyle reporter portrayed the gala as “glamour and grace in the Greek tradition,” with “women in gowns cut as straight as a Parthenon column, or in flounced dresses inspired by the uniforms of that elite corps – the evzones.”



2004

2011: To mark its 75-year Diamond Jubilee, the Hellenic Women’s Club established scholarships in higher education for Massachusetts Greek-American women. The annual awards (\$5,000 apiece) recognize leadership, community service, and academic success. Each year, the five or six recipients are honored at the Mistletoe Ball, joining the many singles who comprise nearly one-third of the guests.



2016

2020: The Mistletoe Ball will continue its vital role in furthering EOK’s charitable mission to the Greek and American communities: to honor Greek religious and cultural life, to assist the homeless and the aged, to support education and the arts, and to foster medical research in a variety of disorders, with breast cancer a focal point through the Demetra Fund.

**A heartfelt “thank you” for your steadfast support of the Mistletoe Ball through 74 years!**

# One of EOK's Own Honored at Red Sox Greek Night



This past summer, under the bright lights of Fenway Park, Greek Heritage Night was celebrated by the Boston Red Sox.

The event took place on August 5th, and included Greek dancing on Jersey street and a pre-game ceremony with evzones in traditional dress carrying Greek flags on the field. Several individuals, including Hellenic Women's Club member Frances Levas, were recognized for their leadership and contributions to the Greek community.

Frances is the Director of Development and Annual Fund at Hellenic College. She is also a past president and current member of the Metropolis of Boston Philoptochos Board. Frances is a devoted Red Sox

fan and is familiar with the ins and outs of Fenway Park, as she has served as a volunteer for the Red Sox Foundation for many years.

"It was surreal for me being on the field especially since I am a huge Red Sox fan. I had goosebumps when I saw the Greek flags on the field. My parents immigrated to this country. My dad was the biggest Red Sox fan and I am sure he was smiling as I was on the field," said Frances. Also honored were Eleni Vidalis, Angelo Stamoulis, Nick Tsiotos and Fred Smerlas. In 2018, Hellenic Women's Club associate member Cathy Sakellaris was an honoree. Francis said of the experience, "I was humbled to be in the company of my fellow recipients, who I feel have done so much in the Greek American Community. It was truly an honor to be among them." Spearheaded by the Alpha Omega Council, Greek Heritage Night will take place again this year on June 30.

## DePrisco Jewelers...a long time friend to the EOK

DePrisco Jewelers opened its doors in Boston in 1948. Frank DePrisco became a popular jeweler to the many



Bostonians and in particular to the greater Greek American community. Many prominent Greeks frequented DePrisco's in the 1950s, helping Frank to build his business when he was just starting out. Frank stated, "I have fond memories of Katherine Pappas, Helen Crane, Edith Varkas, and Mary Maliotis visiting the store. I recall them asking

me to design a circular member pin that would be given to new members." DePrisco's made the first die for that member pin and continues to use it today. Over the years, Donna DePrisco picked up where her father left off and has been an avid supporter of the EOK. Over the last thirty years many a lucky guest has won the raffle drawing at a Spring Fashion show; or the Mistletoe Ball gift box surprise, raffle or silent auction, all generously donated by Donna. Thank you to the DePrisco family for all its past support!

At a recent club meeting, EOK member and Tufts School of Dental Medicine professor Dr. Athena Papas shared details of a humanitarian trip to Peru. She traveled with Tufts dental faculty and



students to the remote mountain village of Granja Porcon (alt. 12,000 feet) to treat grade-schoolers, using mobile equipment. The dentists were the first the children had ever encountered.

*Dr. Papas, on far right, treating children.*



*Dr. Papas, second from right, with faculty*

# The Hellenic Women's Club Philanthropy

EOK Established Charities-receiving annual donations for the past 15 to 60 years:

## American Farm School – Tuition Support

Seeks to educate youth and adults to become professionally accomplished in the agriculture, ecology and life sciences in order to make Greece and its neighbors a better place.

## Boston's Childrens Hospital - Thalassemia Research

Works to understand the causes of cancer and blood diseases and to develop better treatments. The main research focus is clinical trials in non-malignant blood disorders, including thalassemia and iron overload, ITP and hemophilia.

## Hellenic Women's Benevolent Association - Hellenic Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

Seeks to provide long-term health care to the acutely ill and those with memory impairment in an environment of compassion and quality of life. In addition, rehabilitation services are also provided.

## Hellenic Women's Club, Inc., EOK Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research and Patient Assistance

Provides funds for internationally recognized research focused on basic science, clinical research programs, and/or patient care.

## MassGeneral Institute for Neurodegenerative Disease (MIND) – Alzheimer's Research

Strives to translate laboratory discoveries into prevention, treatment and cures for Alzheimer's, ALS, Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative diseases. MIND, a division of MassGeneral, seeks to accelerate therapies that lessen the devastating toll of these diseases on patients and families.

## Metropolis of Boston Camp

Under the direction of the Metropolis of Boston, this camp provides an experience to thousands of youth from the Greek Orthodox community of New England and beyond. The goal of the camp is to produce young people who are future leaders in their community, country, and society.

## Perkins School for the Blind – Infant and Toddler Program - Toy Lending Library

Provides education and services that build productive, meaningful lives for children and adults, starting at a young age who are blind, deaf blind or visually impaired with or without other disabilities.

## Philoxenia House

Under the direction of the Metropolis of Boston, this Orthodox Home of Hope provides a “home away from home” for those who come mainly from Greece but also from around the US and the world for medical treatment of serious illnesses.

## Rosie's Place

Provides a safe and nurturing environment for poor and homeless women in order to maintain their dignity, seek opportunity and find security in their lives.

## SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

### Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology – EOK Scholarship

Supports a student from the school of Theology who is a USA citizen of Greek heritage.

### Wellesley College – EOK Scholarship

Enables talented young women who are USA citizens of Greek-American heritage to pursue the dream of a college education.

### Hellenic Women's Club – General Scholarship Fund

Provides scholarships to deserving young women who are USA citizens of Greek –American heritage based on academic achievement, community service and leadership.

## YES, I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A GIFT TO EOK

Assist us in helping students, aiding patients, sheltering the homeless, fostering education, supporting medical research, and honoring our faith and heritage with your donation in any amount

### DONATE ONLINE

[www.hellenicwomensclub.org](http://www.hellenicwomensclub.org)  
At bottom of page, click on “donate”

OR

### DONATE BY CHECK

Payable to: The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc.  
Mary Lynn Pergantis, Treasurer  
The Hellenic Women's Club, Inc.  
45 York Terrace  
Brookline, MA 02446

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT!**

## EOK Demetra Fund

The Demetra Fund for Breast Cancer Research and Patient Assistance was established in 2001 through a generous gift of a club member, Dr. Helen Papoulias O'Leary, to honor her sister Demetra "Toulie" Samellas who lost her battle with breast cancer. To date, the Demetra Fund has gifted and/or pledged a total of \$525,000 to both research and patient assistance programs at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI) and Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center (MGH).



This spring, EOK pledged a three-year, \$100,000 gift to Dr. Priscilla K. Brastianos, MD of MGH. Dr. Brastianos' research focuses on the genetic drivers of human brain tumors, which include those resulting from metastatic breast cancer. A significant percentage of patients with advanced breast cancer develop brain metastases, and while their disease may be very treatable in areas outside the brain, options for treatment of the brain remain extremely limited and generally unsuccessful. Dr. Brastianos is performing genome sequencing on brain metastases to understand their specific genetic mutations and differences from their primary tumors, with the ultimate goal of identifying novel therapeutic approaches to address these brain metastases. Through national and international collaborations, Dr. Brastianos' lab now has the largest collection of brain metastasis tissue samples. With the help of funding provided by EOK, her lab will be able to sequence and analyze 200 metastasis samples along with their original primary breast tumors with an eye to identifying novel therapeutic targets in the brain tumors. The Brastianos Lab will also launch clinical trials based on their findings.



Also this spring, EOK has given \$25,000 to further advance the research efforts at DFCI of Eugen Dhimolea, PhD and Constantine Mitsiades, MD, PhD. This gift follows a prior gift of \$100,000 which EOK granted to the Doctors from 2016 – 2018. These researchers have developed a type of laboratory model that more accurately simulates how tumors, including metastatic ones, function within a body. Using this model, their research grows tumor cells from various breast cancer types, which are then analyzed to study different treatment options. Major progress is being made on the question of why existing therapies are unable to cure breast cancer in a substantial number of patients, suggesting concrete leads for new therapies to target breast cancer cells which resist existing therapies.



In support of these gifts, last May, EOK members Susan Anton Pasanen and Elaine Zouzas Thibault served as Chairs of **BLOOMING PINK**, a fundraiser to benefit the Demetra Fund. Neiman Marcus Natick generously hosted this lively afternoon of fashion and beauty, which featured a runway show, cocktails and light bites. Over 120 guests attended the event. The EOK Demetra Award was presented to Stellene Volandes, Editor in Chief of *Town & Country* magazine and author of *Jeweler: Masters, Mavericks, and Visionaries of Modern Design*. Stellene was delighted to discover the Demetra Award was actually a piece of jewelry! Finally, EOK's own Tania Lingos-Webb was honored for her 25 years of dedicated service to the Club and was presented with a crystal platter at the afternoon event.



Photos by Michael Blanchard

## EOK Awards 2019-2020 Scholarships to Six Deserving Women

The EOK continued its nearly decade old program of recognizing young women by awarding well deserving recipients a \$5000 scholarship. Six worthy recipients were chosen who exemplified academic excellence, leadership and community service.



*Jenna Nikolopoulos, Joanna Archambault, Theodora Veronis, Maria Theodore, Juliana Barounis, and Maria Constantine*

**Joanna Archambault** of Andover is a nursing student at Saint Anselm College. At Andover High School, she was captain of the Varsity Field Hockey team and on the board of the National Honor Society.

**Maria Theodore** of Quincy is a freshman at Harvard College and an internationally ranked fencer. Maria is a United States Congressional Award Gold Medal winner, a Boston Globe Scholastics Arts and Writing Award Gold Key recipient.

**Theodora Veronis** of Dudley is a freshman at Temple University where she is studying International Relations and Political Science. A repeat volunteer at Project Mexico, she started her year of service as an intern in Tijuana and went on to teach in Uganda, Albania, and Greece.

**Maria Constantine** of Brighton is studying to become a Physician Assistant at the Tufts University School of Medicine. While an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University, she was the president of Orthodox Christian Fellowship and the vice president of the Hellenic Student Association

**Jenna Nikolopoulos** of Andover is pursuing a Master of Art in Clinical Counseling Psychology at Assumption College after graduating from the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she served as a peer advisor as well as a teaching assistant

**Juliana Barounis** of Westwood has begun her Master of Public Health degree at Boston University. While an undergraduate, at Boston College, Juliana was an active leader of the Hellenic Society, and a Health Coach through the Office of Health Promotion.

### Where is she now? A look at a prior recipient of the EOK scholarship:

Julia Bowling received an EOK Scholarship in 2015. “I graduated in 2017 from The New School with a Master’s of Science in urban policy.

While completing my degree, I began working at the Institute for State and Local Governance at the City University of New York, where I continue to work today. I have worked on several projects providing research support and technical assistance

to criminal justice agencies and other branches of government in New York City and across the country. Building from the invaluable experience I gained in this position, made possible by my graduate studies that were generously supported by the Hellenic Women’s Club EOK Scholarship, I am in the process of taking the next step in my career. This fall I will return to graduate school to pursue a PhD in criminology where I plan to study the role of prison labor in individual post-release outcomes and institutional operations.”



#### SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Hellenic Women’s Club, Inc., EOK is pleased to announce a scholarship program for deserving young women who have demonstrated community service, leadership and academic achievement.

**Each Award will be \$5,000**

For more information, including all application materials, please visit our website  
**[www.hellenicwomensclub.org](http://www.hellenicwomensclub.org)**

Deadline for 2020-2021 academic year is June 30, 2020

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## *Spotlight on an Established Charity: Philoxenia House*

Philoxenia House is a “home away from home” for people from around the world who have come to Boston to receive medical treatment that is not available or not easily accessible where they live. Patients at Philoxenia House have come from Greece and Cyprus, Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Albania, and parts of the United States. The patients have included premature babies, cancer patients, transplant recipients, burn victims, and patients with other medical needs.

Philoxenia House was founded in 1986 by His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios. The House is located on the campus of Hellenic College Holy Cross in Brookline, MA. The house has ten private bedrooms, a common area with a kitchen, a dining area, and a TV room, laundry facilities, and a patio. There is also an outdoor play area for children.

“Philoxenia” is a Greek word with a literal meaning of “friend of the stranger.” “Philoxenia” is often translated simply as “hospitality.” Philoxenia House provides accommodations and meals to patients and their families. With the warm embrace of His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios and the compassionate support of the many volunteers and supporting charitable organizations, including EOK, Philoxenia House has expanded and flourished through the years. Philoxenia House offers a loving haven during a time of fear and worry for the patients and their families. The Philoxenia House runs solely on donations.

It is remarkable to see the global impact of the Philoxenia House. One of our EOK members, Jane

Kourtis, recounted a recent experience she had on a trip to London, where she met a young man who had stayed at the Philoxenia House. While out to dinner one evening, Jane and her husband Nick struck up a conversation with their waiter who they learned was from Greece. The young man was an accounting student from Thessaloniki who was in London for the summer, working to make money for school. When he learned Jane and Nick were from Boston, he was excited to tell them that he and his younger brother had stayed at Philoxenia House for several months. His brother had been a patient at Boston Shriner’s Hospital for burns he had sustained from a kitchen hot oil spill. The young man spoke with appreciation of the generosity he and his brother had received during their stay at Philoxenia House. He also remembered with fondness the friends he had made, playing basketball with the students on the Hellenic College Holy Cross campus. He could not express his gratitude enough for the Philoxenia House. His brother was back in Greece and doing well.

For all of us at EOK, this is a meaningful story on so many levels. Not only has EOK been a supporter of Philoxenia House for many years, EOK has also been a supporter of Hellenic College Holy Cross and Boston Shriner’s Hospital. We are so touched to hear the stories of the good that has come from the charities we support. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our Sustaining Sponsors, for opening your hearts and for your support of our many charities. With your generosity, we are humbled to make a lasting and compassionate impact in the world.

## *Mission Statement*

*Founded in 1936 in Boston, the Hellenic Women’s Club, Inc., also known as Epsilon Omicron Kappa, promotes fellowship among its members and engages in numerous philanthropic endeavors. Limited to a membership of forty-five and meeting monthly, EOK is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization characterized by a close, hard-working group of uniquely dedicated women who offer their talents, energies and spirit to the mission of charity.*

*For more than eight decades, the Hellenic Women’s Club activities have embodied the values of selflessness and achievement for the benefit of others. Made possible through the generous and continued support of its patrons, the Club sponsors two major charitable events each year: the Mistletoe Ball in November and a benefit in the spring. These fundraisers enable the Hellenic Women’s Club to support a variety of worthy causes.*



THE HELLENIC WOMEN'S CLUB

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

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## *Upcoming events*

**June 30, 2020**

EOK Scholarship applications due

**November 28, 2020**

Mistletoe Ball

For more information email us at:  
[contact@hellenicwomensclub.org](mailto:contact@hellenicwomensclub.org)

Visit us at:

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

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[www.instagram.com/hellenicwomensclubinc](https://www.instagram.com/hellenicwomensclubinc)

## Mistletoe Ball 2019

Thank you to our loyal supporters who helped to make the 2019 Mistletoe Ball a night to remember! For information about Mistletoe Ball 2020, which will be held at The Fairmont Copley Plaza on November 28, 2020, look for an invitation in the fall or visit [www.hellenicwomensclub.org](http://www.hellenicwomensclub.org)



Photos by Alex Mavradis