14/05/2024

# St. Demetrios Seattle Philoxenia House Ministry Is Underway



SEATTLE – Preparations are underway for a new and exciting ministry at St. Demetrios Church. A home owned by the parish and located adjacent to its parking lot is being renovated to become the Philoxenia House. This new parish Ministry will provide at no cost individuals and families from outside the greater Seattle area with lodging while receiving care at either Fred Hutch Cancer Center or Seattle Children's Hospital.

With the recent approval and support of the Parish Council, the generous commitment of cash donations by several Parishioners, and the dedicated work of Parish members – specifically architects, designers, contractors and a host of qualified professional electricians, plumbers and carpentry experts, the establishment of the St Demetrios Philoxenia House Ministry is underway. His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco has also given his blessing to the project.

The house is being enhanced to include two complete separate living units (upper and lower floors) able to accommodate two families. Upgrades are now being constructed. They include adding a kitchen to the lower unit, remodeling of the upper kitchen as well as very substantial upgrades to both bathrooms for ease of use by those seeking treatment. New furnaces as well as new flooring and

complete painting are an additional part of the scope of the work.

A late summer 2024 blessing and opening is planned.

The need for such parish-sponsored lodging has been a topic for many years. In the past, individual parishioners have housed families from Greece for extended and repeated stays for those seeking medical treatment – who otherwise would have expended money for lodging above and beyond the medical expenses already incurred. In addition, representatives from Fred Hutch – who advised the church during the planning phase – have repeatedly stated that there is a strong demand for such housing and have encouraged the parish to develop accommodations.

This long-discussed and proposed Ministry, under the leadership of John John, consists of six sub-committees which coordinate the various aspects of the venture – including Finance, Administration; Technology; Outreach; Construction and Fundraising. These committees have worked for the past several months developing policies and procedures for the House as well as documents for facility upgrades. They have undertaken significant fund-raising, resulting in a comprehensive plan overwhelmingly approved by the Parish Council.

In brief – these committees are tasked with the following:

Finance: Develop operating budget for yearly expenses (utilities; insurance etc.) and track current and pending expenses for facility (house)upgrades.

Administration: develop operating parameters for the day to day usage of the living quarters for prospective guests – i.e. wait list, application & registration procedures; house rules; emergency contacts; license agreement, end of stay cleaning procedures etc.

Technology: web site creation and maintenance.

Outreach – while the Ministry will be open to all individuals and/or families in the U. S. and beyond, Orthodox parishes throughout the country will be made aware of this opportunity for lodging as will Greek Consulate offices in the US be notified. Fred Hutch staff will also provide referrals. Making the Ministry known & available is this Committee’s task.

Construction – ready the house for occupancy by providing a much-needed face-lift to the house. Creating two separate living units able to provide a functional and inviting home in which patients and family members can have a respite while receiving the medical attention they require.

Fundraising – secure the funding needed to make Philoxenia a true success! Thus far, cash and material donation commitments total $258,500 : (a) $142,500 to pay off the existing house mortgage, (b) $63,000 in material donations such as doors, flooring and paint for the remodel; and (c) $53,000 thus far for the upgrades to the house (d) leaving a need for additional cash donations of $75,500 to complete the upgrades.

Fortunately – and thankfully – significant amounts of the labor (much of the electrical; plumbing; carpentry; painting; construction management and architecture & design) needed to accomplish these two-floor upgrades is being donated by parishioners – valued at $120,000 – who see this Ministry as an integral part of the outreach that St Demetrios can be proud of.

The project still needs an additional $75,500 to complete this phase of the upgrades and need additional dollars to purchase the necessary new appliances and furniture (ranges; refrigerators; Washer/dryer; dishwashers; kitchen cabinets; beds; dressers; tables/chairs; couches etc) The Philoxenia House Ministry website, philoxenia.org, will soon be online and provide the opportunity to make donations to cover the cost of one or more of these needed pieces of furniture or appliances as well as to offer general cash donations. St. Demetrios Philoptochos has agreed to fund part of the kitchen needs – while the Cookbook Committee will provide the funds to furnish one of the bedrooms.

Members serving on the Committee for the Philoxenia House Ministry Project are Fr. Photios Dumont, Pandora Dudler Christie; Emilie John; Deena Maroutsos; Patrick Howard; George Hatziantoniou; Stephanie Dikeakos; Paul Plumis; and Chairman John John.

Photos: St. Demetrios Church of Seattle

goarch.org