

Cyprus: Larnaca Zenon Bridge Club supports Phyloptochos Chrysopolitissa



With the advent of the coronavirus earlier this year, the Larnaca Zenon Bridge Club, like other sporting clubs, found itself restricted from holding its regular in-person games.

Those of you who are fans of bridge will understand that this situation is untenable for a true bridge aficionado. Thus, taking an attitude of can-do, Errikos Leonidou, Treasurer of the Cyprus Bridge Federation and Zenon club member, proposed to Kathryn Andreas, Zenon Chairperson, that members bring out their laptops and organise virtual bridge games via the Bridge Base Online platform.

The fee normally paid to play live bridge would be recorded for each person playing, and eventually the amount collected would go to charity. This idea was put into practice and the online bridge games have proved to be a huge success, indeed a real 'life-saver' for many members.

The Zenon Club chose to support two charities: Phyloptochos Chrysopolitissa and

the Friendship Circle. Our criteria in choosing the charities was that any money donated would go directly to those in need and not get funnelled into administrative expenses.

Each charity was to receive 1000 euros. Both charities have provided invaluable support to people in need, and this was particularly evident during the Covid-19 crisis.

On our visit to each of these charities, we were humbled and impressed by the dedication of the volunteers and their determination to reach out to the greatest number of people in need.

Phyloptochos Chrysopolitissa was set up by Archbishop Makarios in 1948 during a period of extreme hardship for Cypriots. The charity aids those with life-threatening illnesses by providing funds to purchase non-free medicine or for treatment.

It assists poor students and orphans and will give exceptional funds in order to meet urgent needs (i.e. unable to pay utility bill or rent). It is also a tradition of the charity to extend financial aid to those in greatest need at Easter and Christmas.

Friendship Circle was established in 2008 to support children and adults with special needs, as well as to their families. Volunteers will make hospital care visits, go to children's wards dressed as Peppa Pig or Spider-Man and distribute toys and other gifts.

During this Covid-19 crisis, they are now extending support to those who are vulnerable or alone. Currently the charity provides over 1000 hot meals a day. Home kitchens and restaurants are volunteering to create meals six days a week. In addition, the charity hands out boxes of food, clothing and essential supplies. Their thrift shop, Kindness in Cyprus, located in Larnaca, currently supports over 70 families.

Those from the Zenon Bridge Club who visited both charities and spoke with those involved were touched by their repeated expression of gratitude for our small donation. In all honesty, it is rather we who should be grateful to them for the gifts they are giving to those in need.

The gifts of kindness, of empathy, of tireless energy to those in need are given from the heart. Combined with the financial and material offerings distributed by the charities, all of these are worth much more than we were able to give to these two wonderful charities.

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