

AHEPA OMEGA Chapter 371 Supports Area Churches During Pandemic



Hellenic Service Organization Provides Second Round of COVID Relief Funds

As we near the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 “shelter in place” orders and business shut-downs in Michigan, the economic impact of the pandemic has radically affected Churches in general and many Michigan Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (GOA) churches have been hard hit. GOA churches are locally owned and finances are managed by their parishoners. With the pandemic, Congregants are not attending services or giving to churches as they have in the past. In addition, Churches who rely on fund raising programs, such as festivals, catering halls and daycare centers, have lost important income supporting general operating expenses. At the same time, churches are called to find innovative new ways to continue important ministries for their parishioners and the greater community.

John Hatzis, AHEPA Omega Chapter 371 President said “Recognizing the economic impact on the Michigan GOA churches, our Chapter wanted to help. We enlisted the assistance of our AHEPA District #10 leadership and received immediate support for a relief effort.” Omega Chapter provided \$13,650 in COVID relief funds to

Michigan GOA churches, along with an additional \$1,500 per church to be used for family support in five Detroit area GOA parishes. AHEPA District #10 leadership engaged other Michigan AHEPA and affiliated Daughters of Penelope Chapters in the COVID relief support effort and a total of \$25,300 was distributed to 13 GOA churches throughout Michigan in the first round of relief effort.

AHEPA Omega Chapter 371 is now planning a second round of COVID relief funding of \$1000 per parish to Michigan GOA churches facing continuing financial challenges.

“During this time of pandemic, each parish and person has faced hardships unique to their situation, whether it be emotionally, spiritually, or financially” says Metropolitan Nicholas of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit diocese. “I am especially grateful to AHEPA Omega Chapter for stepping up to help both parishes and people in need with financial and emotional support. As we waded through these waters together, we better understand the truth that love toward people and the person, Jesus Christ, is most important and will carry us through any difficulties we face.”

AHEPA Omega Chapter 371 has distributed a total of \$265,000 in charitable gifts since January of 2020 – \$132,000 of those funds were directed toward local GOA church support. Other areas of giving include: youth scholarships, national Greek Orthodox and Hellenic organizations, and local community support. The organization also maintains an affordable low-income senior housing facility in Harrison Township. AHEPA stands for the American, Hellenic, Educational Progressive Association. Founded in 1922, this service organization is now the oldest and largest Greek heritage membership organization in the United States. With over 400 chapters worldwide, AHEPA promotes values of ancient Greece, which involve Hellenism, Education, Civic Responsibility, Family and Individual Excellence and Philanthropy.

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Contact: Annette Madias, 734.525.6789 or [\[email protected\]](#)

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