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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Distributes Funds to those Affected by Fires in Greece



The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America announces the distribution of more than $1 million to aid those affected by the catastrophic fires in Greece this past summer. Under the leadership of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, a delegation, consisting of His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia, Treasurer of the Archdiocesan Council Elaine Allen, and the 2nd Vice President of the National Philoptochos Ms. Anita Kartalopoulos, is currently visiting the affected areas to determine the best way to help. The delegation is working with International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) in the United States and its representatives in Greece.

The Archdiocese delegation was received by His Beatitude Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece on December 9th, and later on the same day met with the Deputy Prerfect of Evia, George Kelaiditis, who provided them with a list of local companies and individuals in Northern Evia who were directly affected by the fires.

In the afternoon, the delegation was received by His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Halkis. The Metropolitan was given a donation towards the costs

of repair for the monastery of St. David, a monastery with which Archbishop Elpidophoros has a deep connection.

The Archdiocese has provided IOCC with a first tranche of funding to support short-term needs in Evia. Initial assistance was provided to two affected groups: individuals or families impacted by the fires and businesses that were severely impacted by the fires. Eligible recipients for funding were based on lists provided by the Perfecture of Evia.

In the case of business owners in need, support is being provided in the form of supermarket vouchers for food and sustenance to supplemental lost income on a monthly basis through at least May of 2022. Criteria for selection include documentation of need: proof of home destruction, proof of residency, income verification and size of the household and subsequently verified by a site visit. For affected households, they received access to a hardware chain to purchase needed items for their homes or businesses up to 1,000 Euros. Affected businesses also have the opportunity to obtain technical equipment needed to restart their businesses. Similar criteria are used before funds are disbursed including proof of destruction, proof of residency and past income verification of the business.

Future plans for assistance will be decided based on the needs moving forward, in consultation with IOCC, and may include livestock feed, additional assistance to those currently receiving aid and other affected groups that are not being adequately assisted by others. The visit by the delegation led by His Grace Bishop Apostolos confirmed that the need continues to be significant and that the efforts of the Archdiocese are much appreciated and will continue as the area continues to recover from the wildfires of the summer.

Starting on Friday, and during this weekend, the delegation will be visiting areas in northern Evia affected by the forest fires, including Limnes, Rovies and Chronia.

“I am glad we can start dispersing the funds to some of those deeply affected by the devastating fires in Greece this past summer,” said Archbishop Elpidophoros. “I am grateful to our faithful and the Omogeneia organizations in America for responding to our call. The love that binds Greece and our Omogeneia is profound, and the response from the Faithful manifests that love.”

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