

## **For One Year, GOARCH's "Greek Fires Relief Fund" Provides Relief in Northern Evia**



After raising over \$1.1 million for the Greek Fires Relief Fund since its launch in August 2021, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOARCH) is pleased to announce that, over the course of the past year, the funds raised have been employed for relief efforts aiding individuals, businesses, and health care facilities affected by the destructive wildfires in Northern Evia during the summer of 2021.

Under the guidance of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, GOARCH partnered with International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) to perform a needs assessment and to develop effective plans for both immediate and long-term distribution of funds. This included: long-term (one year) financial assistance to affected individuals; 6-months financial assistance to resin collectors who lost a significant source of income as a result of the destruction of pine forests; financial assistance to businesses which suffered material damage; and assistance with regional health care needs exacerbated by the wildfire devastation.

Informed by IOCC's logistical expertise and on-the-ground capabilities, GOARCH's initiative was one of the first responses to provide direct monetary assistance to affected individuals and businesses in Northern Evia. Overall, GOARCH has provided assistance to approximately 1,725 direct beneficiaries in the region.

"The individuals and businesses in Northern Evia suffered greatly by witnessing the immediate devastation of the fires and enduring ongoing financial hardship in the months after the destruction of their homes and livelihoods," said His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros "Through the charitable endeavors and generosity of our parishes and the faithful members of our Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, we were able to marshal the resources of IOCC quickly and effectively to provide the assistance our families, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ were in desperate need of. We pray for their ongoing health and well-being."

His Eminence also expressed his gratitude to His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia who led a delegation, including Archdiocesan Treasurer Elaine Allen and 1st Vice President of the National Philoptochos Society Anita Kartalopoulos, that travelled to

Northern Evia to survey the damage caused by the wildfires and review the needs assessment and the plan for distribution of funds by IOCC.

#### Highlighted Efforts:

- 301 families of resin collectors received supermarket vouchers of up to 200 Euros per month from June to December 2022.
- 9 small family businesses received technical equipment, each worth approximately 10,000 Euros. The recipient businesses included construction companies, carpenters, wood trade, agriculture, and others.
- 182 livestock farmers received or will receive 400 metric tons of animal feed which covered their need in animal feed for several months.
- 182 livestock farmers received supermarket vouchers for their families' needs.
- 34 fire-affected homeowners received household vouchers, each worth approximately 1,000 Euros. Funds were used to purchase sofas, beds, laundry machines, refrigerators, etc.
- 60 fire-affected homeowners received supermarket vouchers up to 200 Euros per month through December 2022.
- 16 small family-owned businesses received supermarket vouchers up to 200 Euros per month from November 2021 to December 2022.
- One ambulance procured for the Health Center of Mantoudi, which provides medical care to 12,000 people. The ambulance is expected to be delivered at the end of 2022 or early 2023. Another ambulance will be provided to the Health Center of Istiaia in 2023.

Medical equipment (10 electrocardiograms) to be provided to the Health Centers of Mantoudi and Istiaia in 2023.

Of the \$1,128,000 raised by the Greek Fires Relief Fund, \$915,000 have currently been expended or committed to the relief efforts noted above. The remaining \$213,000 have been retained for the renovation of a church in Northern Evia.

Throughout the process, the due diligence of GOARCH personnel, together with IOCC's proven track record in humanitarian and emergency relief and development programming, has ensured transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness. No monies from the Greek Fires Relief Fund have been employed for administrative management or overhead costs, as these are covered by Archdiocesan restricted funds reserved explicitly for this purpose. As a result, 100% of every dollar raised went directly to assistance for those affected by the fires.

A full accounting of the funds raised and expended will be included in the audited

financial statements of GOARCH for 2022.

[goarch.org](http://goarch.org)