

The Panepirotic Federation Announces "My Epiros" Essay Contest

TNH Staff

WESTBOROUGH, MA – The Panepirotic Federation of America is sponsoring an essay contest for college students who trace their ancestry to the legendary region of Epiros. "We plan to give two prizes of \$2,500 each for the best essays about the two parts of Epiros- the northern region, which was made part of Albania a century ago despite its totally Greek identity, as well as the area that constitutes the northwestern region of Greece," said Nicholas Gage, President of the Federa-



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tion. The theme of the essay is "What Epiros Means to Me" and the students will be free to describe in 1,500 words what they know, value, and love about their ancestral homeland. The two winners will be chosen by a committee made up of at least two college professors who know about Epiros, but are not members of the Panepirotic Federation, the president said. "We

want the selection to be made entirely on merit," Gage noted. The essays may be mailed to the Panepirotic Federation 36 East Main Street, Westborough, MA 01581. The deadline for submissions is April 1.

The essay contest is part of an extensive effort by the Panepirotic Federation to reach young people whose parents or grandparents were born in the two parts of the historic Epiros region where Aristotle said the Greek language originated.

As part of that effort, the Federation each year sends young

men and women to an intensive language and cultural program conducted by the University of Ioannina every summer during the month of July. Several dozen students have participated in the program so far and have returned with a deeper understanding and appreciation of their Hellenic heritage. "With this essay contest, we hope to deepen the interest of our young people in the culture and history of the legendary region of Epiros where Aristotle tells us the Greek language and identity originated," Gage said.

Preview of Hellenic Dancers of NJ 45th Anniversary Taverna Night

TNH Staff

HOLMDEL, NJ – The nationally regarded Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey (HDNJ) present its 45th Anniversary Taverna Night Dinner Dance on January 28, at the Kimisis Tis Theotokou Greek Orthodox Church in Holmdel.

All proceeds from the event, which includes dinner, music, and a fashion show, will support HDNJ in preserving the folk dance customs of Greece, perpetuating Greek heritage in America, and the dance troupe's 2017 touring schedule.

As the first organization of its kind in New Jersey, HDNJ has evolved to assume a vital cultural role in the community. It has inspired the creation of Greek folk dance groups all over the country, and functions as an integral component in maintaining the tradition of Greek folk dance in America through performances, historical research, and teaching. Spiro Petroutsos, Artistic Director spoke about the important milestone the troupe has reached, "This year marks the 45th anniversary of the Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey. It is because of this milestone that this year's program will not only aim to educate and entertain as always, but will also serve to celebrate HDNJ's 45 years of excellence. It is an honor to carry on this group's legacy, as well as showcase some of the amazing things we are capable of going forward."

While the 45th Anniversary Taverna Night is a dinner dance that will celebrate the history of



Courtesy of Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey

Hellenic Dancers of New Jersey pose for a photo. From left to right, Back row: Christine Khalil, Ronnie Filippatos, Katina Vosinas, Stephanie Karatzia, Anna-Maria Delardas, Panayiota Kalimanis, Stavroula Wagner, Delia Noone, Marie Khalil Front row: Dimitri Koutsoras, Artistic Director Spiro Petroutsos, Anthony Favara, George Markos, Nick Vosinas.

HDNJ in terms of the performance and fashion show, the event is a chance for the troupe's friends, supporters, alumni, and anyone who has a love of Greek culture to dance the night away.

Founded in 1972, by Fr. Jim and Eleni Chakalos, the HDNJ has researched, presented, and preserved over 350 folk dances, songs, and traditions from mainland Greece, its islands, Cyprus, and Asia Minor, and passed

them on to three generations of Greek-Americans. The troupe has been commended numerous times throughout its 45-year history, for its dedication to its mission, as well as the enthusiasm and excitement of its performances. The dance troupe is currently comprised of first, second, third, and fourth generation Greek-Americans, ranging in age from 16-45, and representing the many Greek communities of New Jersey.

"I myself, and the instructional staff have the privilege of continuing what Fr. Jim and Mrs. C started, and that is not a privilege that any of us take lightly," said Petroutsos. "We understand the importance of the position that we are in, and are extremely excited about the opportunity to leave our stamp on the HDNJ, while remembering and honoring all of the instructors and dancers that came before us. Without the Hellenic Dancer of NJ's rich history, we would not have the amazing opportunities that lay before us today. This year's Taverna Night is not only intended to entertain (which we know it will!), but it is also meant for the dancers of today to say 'thank you' to Mrs. C, Fr. Jim, the dancers of yesterday, and the 45-year legacy that they have left behind."

This troupe is nationally recognized for its presentation of Greek traditions and has performed at a number of local and national events during its 45-year history, including: Dukakis Presidential Rally, Inaugural Festivities for former President

Ronald Reagan, Statue of Liberty Weekend Grand Finale, 20/20 ABC Television Program, Queens College of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies Benefit, O. Elytis Chair of Modern

All proceeds from the event will support HDNJ in preserving the folk dance customs of Greece and Greek culture

Greek Studies at Rutgers University Benefit, Union County College Folk Arts Festival, the NJ State Ethnic and Diversity Festival, for Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew upon his first official visit to New Jersey, and Greek Heritage Day with the Metrostars. Members of the troupe participated in the Closing Ceremonies of the 2004 Olympics in Athens and at the 2006 Centennial Epiphany celebrations in Tarpon Springs, FL.

Reservations for the January 28 event can be made by contacting Cheryl Bontales at hellenicdancersofnj.org.

MAHI Society of Vancouver Helping Those in Need in Greece

TNH Staff

VANCOUVER, BC – The non-profit MAHI Society (Mothers Assisting Humanitarian Initiatives) began four years ago with a mission to provide humanitarian aid to Greece. Golfo Tsakumis, Founder of MAHI Society told The National Herald of the many accomplishments of the organization which began she said with no money, "only our love and care for the mothers and children in Greece who are suffering." Since 7 mothers in Vancouver began it, Tsakumis noted that MAHI Society has shipped "5 containers full of gently used clothing in the amount of \$3 million went to organizations like Hamogelo, Kyvotos, SOS villages, Mitera, and Alkioni AMEA, and many more. We are still collecting almost new, used clothing to send in the spring."

The organization also provides food, medical supplies, and basic items to those in need in Europe and Canada. As noted on the MAHI Society website, "the Canadian Government registered non-profit, philanthropic society was created out of concern for the daily struggle and pain faced by the most vulnerable among us both here at home and in Greece. Our society's name is rooted in the Greek word mahi ("MA-hee) which translates to the word battle. MAHI is pragmatic about hunger and poverty in both of these countries. These situations affect millions of people who struggle to live a healthy life in a respectful environment. MAHI will strive to create better and healthier environment for those who find it difficult to survive under adverse conditions by providing food and clothing. MAHI would like to provide the hope of a better future."

The founding members of MAHI are: Golfo Tsakumis-Founder, co-President; Anna Zibarras- President; Beverley Gerolymatos- Vice president & Head of Animal Care Division; Sophia Tsakumis-Communications; Christina Zambas- Secretary; Dr. Angela Hutchinson-Medical Advisor, Treasurer; Dr.



Courtesy of MAHI Society

MAHI Society founder and CEO Golfo Tsakumis and President Anna Zibarras with a container of items ready to be shipped to those in need in Greece.

Marylene Kyriazis- Pharmaceutical Advisor

Tsakumis told TNH that "MAHI has the support of our churches, our organizations, and recently we were awarded by the AHEPA in Vancouver."

She was recently interviewed on the Greek TV station ERT about the organization and its dream. Encouraging everyone to help as best they can, Tsakumis observed that, "Our brothers and sisters in Greece need us now, not later."

She also noted that "a new campaign has been started by the former Canadian Ambassador to Greece Robert Peck. MAHI Society is part of these efforts to fundraise enough money to remodel a house in Lesvos which was donated by a lady to the Hamogelo [Greek nonprofit

organization]. The house will host 25 orphan refugee children. The house is called 'the house of Canada and the Americas' so as you can see we will have to work together with the Greeks in the USA to help Hamogelo on this effort. Mr. [Kostas] Yiannopoulos [of Hamogelo] will be coming to Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver for this in May."

Past humanitarian projects include the relief effort after the Kefalonia earthquake in 2014 and the continuing efforts to aid Greece during the economic crisis. For those interested in helping the humanitarian efforts of the organization, more information is available on the MAHI Society website www.mahisociety.com and on the MAHI Society Facebook page.

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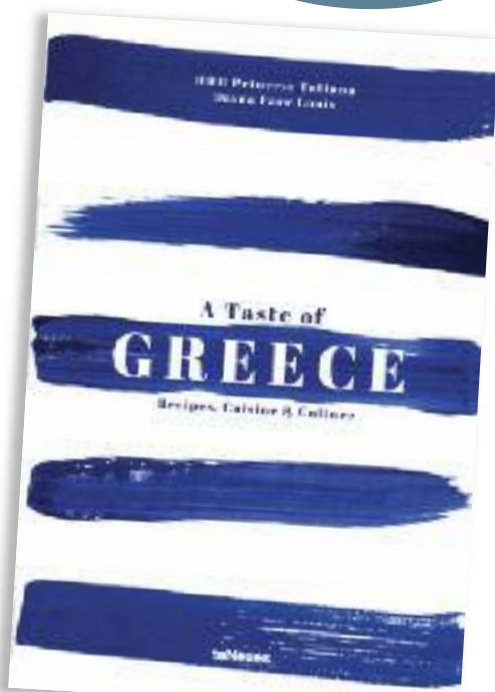


A Taste of Greece

HRH Princess Tatiana
Diana Farr Louis

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