

St. John the Merciful Outreach Ministry Newsletter

HOLY TRINITY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, RALEIGH, NC



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SAMP Program Support a Mission Priest

What is SAMP? SAMP is a program within OCMC (Orthodox Christian Mission Center) that offers monthly financial assistance to indigenous priests in extremely poor areas around the world. Through SAMP donations, the priest is able to apply himself more fully to the needs of the parish and hierarchs are able to ordain more clergy to meet the growing needs of their flock. Holy Trinity began supporting SAMP in 1999 with an annual commitment of \$600. \$600 is the stipend amount a missionary priest, deacon, or catechist receives to perform the duties of the church (liturgy, sacraments,

(etc.), thereby following Christ’s mandate of “Go then to all nations and make them my disciples.” Matthew 28:19-20. Mission priests serve in areas where Christians are a very small and persecuted minority and they travel by foot, bicycle, and bus to their scattered flocks. Some of the mission priests that Holy Trinity has supported have been located in Kenya, Indonesia, Nigeria, and India.

Want to support a mission priest? Drop your donation in the offering tray at church. Please be sure to earmark your check for SAMP in the memo line.

Cell Phones Needed

Upgrading to a new cell phone? Please donate your used cell phones to our Outreach Ministry. The Women’s Center and Interact have a constant need for cell phones to give to their clients. There is also a need for cell phones among the homeless. The Raleigh Police Department has a program to provide those in the streets with cell phones for emergency situations. Used cell phones and chargers can be given to Deacon Gavriilo or any member of the Outreach Ministry.



Let the Little Children Come To Me



“Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Matthew 9:13-14



Above - Back Row: Matthew Pusic, GOYAN Matthew Pusic, Domenica Pusic, Fr. Paul, Nada Milkovich. Bottom Row: Deacon Gavriilo, Rhonda Milkovich, and Fr. Theodore in front of the Christmas Tree at the Men’s Shelter decorated by the Pusic Family.

My name is Matthew Pusic and I am member of Boy Scout Troop 413. This fall, I have been working on my Alpha-Omega Boy Scout religious award and needed to work on a service project. Previously, the Sunday School students at Holy Trinity made ornaments for the Christmas tree at the Men’s shelter and since we were going to decorate it, we also made bagged lunches to deliver that day. My fellow GOYANS helped to prepare the bagged lunches. We worked as a team, one making the sandwiches and the other packing them up. We made over 100 sandwiches.

The Christmas tree was very fun to set up. I was shocked at how many ornaments were donated. I thank my fellow GOYANS for getting their hands sticky with peanut butter while preparing the bagged lunches. And thanks to Deacon Gavriilo for his continued support. I hope the men enjoyed the lunches and enjoyed the beautiful Christmas tree during the blessed season.



Preschool Sunday School teacher, Stephanie McEnteer, with Preschool Sunday School students making ornaments for the Christmas Tree at the Men’s Shelter.

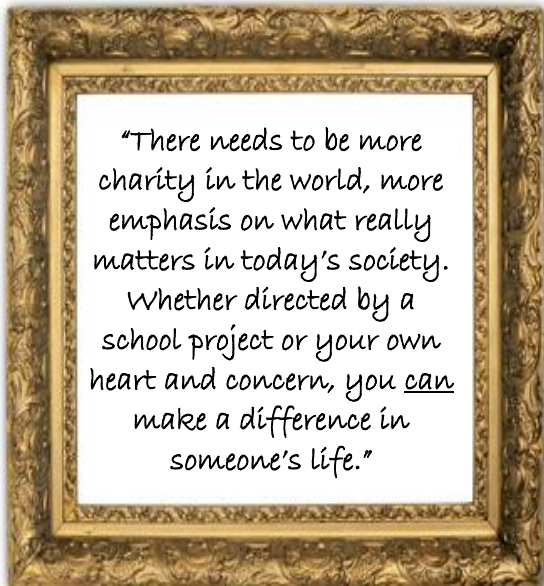


Christmas ornaments made by the 5th Grade Sunday School class.



A Family Affair

My name is Matthew Pusic and I'm a 7th grade middle schooler. I needed to do a service project outside of school for the National Junior Honor Society. Thanks to Deacon Gavriilo, I was able to go to the South Wilmington Street Men's Shelter and help to serve dinner most Wednesday evenings. I helped on the food line, poured and served drinks, and helped to clean up. I felt like I made a difference and gave something back to my community. Just one meal goes a long way and the men at the shelter were thankful for any support we could give. I could've cared less if I got dirty. The grease stains are proof! With Deacon's help, I have done a lot and given a lot to the homeless. I would like to continue to volunteer in the future so I can keep helping those in need. Thank you, Deacon, for this opportunity and to all the others who helped me make a difference.



During the past three years that our family has lived in Raleigh, if our children needed to do a service project for Scouts or for school and needed direction on what exactly to do, we could always count on our Deacon Gavriilo to lead us in the right direction. This past Fall was no exception. My son, Matthew, a 7th grader, needed to accrue service hours for the National Junior Honor Society. He fell right into place at the South Wilmington Street Men's Shelter, where he helped to serve dinner for several weeks. My husband and I also helped to serve—it was kind of like a family affair. As father and son helped on the food line and I helped to serve the drinks, it was a wonderful yet humbling experience. But what does it mean for us? What do we take away from this?

For my young son, he is learning to help others and is appreciating what he has. We all are. Offering a meal, a smile and a "Hi, how are you doing?" goes a long way to someone who really needs it. Matthew learned that and so much more. There needs to be more charity in the world, more emphasis on what really matters in today's society. Whether directed by a school project or your own heart and concern, you can make a difference in someone's life. Our family feels great after having helped in such a way. We are proud of our son who takes his service to the community seriously; the first of what we hope will be many steps towards helping others in need.

Respectfully Submitted By Zoe Pusic



Deacon Gavriilo, GOYANS Matthew Pusic and Roman Risvelto, and Matthew Pusic with Men's Shelter workers.

Raleigh Project Homeless

On September 23, 2010, the 4th annual Project Homeless Connect event took place at Moore Square in downtown Raleigh. I had the chance to attend and volunteer at this event with the Deacon and his godson, Seraphim. The perimeter of Moore Square was lined with white tents, each tent housing a different agency or service provider available to assist those in need. Some tents offered information on attaining housing, employment, social service benefits as well as mental, dental and medical care while others focused on very basic and immediate needs such as food, clothing, showers and haircuts. The main goal of all was to reach out and connect those in need with the resources and services available to assist them in reestablishing their lives and reclaiming their dignity.

As I looked around Moore Square that day I saw that many had gathered – some were representatives and volunteers of agencies and others were people in need - old, young, short, tall, male, female – all different people seeking out some type of help. I wondered “who” they were, “how” they got there, did they have families, what did they feel – were they scared, did they feel alone, sad, were they overwhelmed?

Days later I was still thinking of that morning at Moore Square – trying to understand- trying to somehow connect to what the homeless might be experiencing. I could only imagine the darkest of days lacking the warmth and reassurance of sunlight - feeling lost, alone, filled with fear and overwhelmed by a world unknown to me.



Deacon Gavriilo and his Godson, Seraphim, preparing bagged lunches for homeless attending Raleigh Project Homeless.

Project Homeless Connect offers a beginning - a way for many to begin to understand and navigate their way through this unknown world – a simplified way to learn what resources are available, to coordinate efforts and services and to begin a new path leading to a different life.

Beyond the essential, practical information provided by Project Homeless Connect is the invaluable and inexpressible feeling of hope. The small ray of light overtaking the darkness – a community of people, volunteers, workers and the homeless - seeking and offering – working together, in one place and for the one purpose of ending homelessness.

Submitted By: Ioanna Schmidt

FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT, I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO DRINK, I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU INVITED ME IN, I WAS SICK AND YOU LOOKED AFTER ME, I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU CAME TO VISIT ME. MATTHEW 25:35-36

Philoptochos Outreach



Lenten Food Drive

The Philoptochos Outreach Ministry is sponsoring a Lenten Food Drive to benefit North Raleigh Ministries Food Pantry. Please place non-perishable food items on the table in the foyer through the end of Lent. Also, Philoptochos is collecting Easter candy through April 10 for Easter Baskets that North Raleigh Ministries puts together for the children of the families that they serve. Please place Easter candy donations in the designated box located on the food collection table. Questions? Contact Beba Zevgolis, Lilo Means, or Laura Saparilas.

Philoptochos
and the



In December 2010, Holy Trinity Ladies Philoptochos donated \$5,000.00 from the proceeds of their annual bake sale event to the Pretty In Pink Foundation. Pretty In Pink Foundation serves people diagnosed with breast cancer who have limited health insurance benefits, or in many cases, no health insurance at all. Typically, these people do not qualify for government funded or assisted programs. When breast cancer is present and medical insurance is not enough, care is delayed or simply not ever received because of cost barriers. Once diagnosed with breast cancer, many people experience financial hardships in trying to keep up with paying for quality treatment. Oftentimes this is simply because they are choosing between breast cancer treatment and quality of life needs like shelter and food.

In North Carolina, nearly 20% of the women have no health insurance coverage and more than 14% live at or below the federal poverty level (FPL). Adding to the statistical impact is that nearly 1/3 of North Carolinian households are managed by single or divorced women with limited financial resources.

The process of managing breast cancer treatment includes the careful coordination of medical professionals, surgeons, hospitals, oncologists and radiation oncologists. Once diagnosed, people with breast cancer are immediately thrust into a process unlike anything they have ever experienced. To make managing breast cancer a little easier on, Pretty In Pink Foundation provides access to quality of life support, education and resources through relationships with vendors and providers who understand individuals' needs.

The mission of Pretty In Pink Foundation is simple . . . to ensure that quality, life-saving medical treatment (surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy) is available to breast cancer patients residing in North Carolina, regardless of their ability to pay. To learn more about the Pretty In Pink Foundation, visit their website at www.prettyinpinkfoundation.org.

GOYA

The CROP walk for Hunger

On the morning of October 2, 2010, various church groups assembled at the Marbles Kids Museum for the CROP Hunger Walk, including GOYA. This year, GOYA raised approximately \$500 dollars. GOYAN members, as well as several parents and advisors, participated in the 3.1 mile walk around downtown Raleigh. Following the walk, GOYANs and parents gathered in The Mecca Restaurant for a meal and a meeting, where they discussed upcoming events such as the Winter Youth Rally and GOYAN Luncheon.



This year during their annual Souper Bowl of Caring event, GOYA netted approximately 300 pounds of food (canned and non-perishable goods), which were donated to The Women's Center, along with a \$75.00 gift card for additional food purchases. Nationwide, 251,402 youth participated in this year's event and raised \$4,812,100 and collected 4,257,336 pounds of food, which were donated to various organizations that supply food to those in need.

ANGELS, HOPE

The Angels, Hope and Joy youth group of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church came together to work on a service project during their November meeting. The children, ages 4 - 10, assembled trail mix baggies that were distributed at a local men's shelter during the Thanksgiving season. They eagerly formed a line, quickly filled their baggies with the trail mix ingredients, handed them to an adult to be sealed and got back in the line again. After a short while, there were over 125 baggies made. Coupled with a lesson from Father Theodore, the children learned how important it is to be thankful for their blessings in life. Another lesson learned is how important it is to help those in need, especially during the holiday season.

PEACE & JOY

We must teach our children how to be charitable, and at a young age, they must learn that things are not always easy for everyone. By completing these types of service projects, we are showing our children that there is a way to give back, to do something good for someone less fortunate, to make a difference in someone's life, no matter how big or small the act may be. How hard is it to donate to a clothing drive when the weather turns, to a toy drive during the Christmas season or a canned food drive at any time of year? And such a small act, such as preparing a trail mix bag, can go such a long way. In Proverbs, chapter 19, verse 17 states: "He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, and He will repay him for his good deed." While we are showing our young children the way, we are building a foundation that they will hopefully take with them as they grow into adulthood. This foundation will help them to be good Orthodox Christians and to live a life worthy of our Lord.

Submitted By: Zoe Pusic

Have You Ever.....?

Have you ever given to someone in need and worried about what they might do with your offering? For instance money, being the most obvious. Or given something to someone only to find out they sold it for money. It's easy to feel a little betrayed, like you were fooled and they "got over on your kindness". But do we really need to take offense? Let me relate a story about Peter the Merciful to you.

Peter lived in the 6th Century and was a chief imperial tax collector in Africa and was very wealthy, but also very hard and merciless. After a life-changing event with a beggar, Peter sold all he had and gave it to the poor; and if that wasn't enough he sold himself into slavery for thirty gold pieces and gave even this to the poor as alms in the name of Christ, thereby receiving the name Peter the Merciful.

One day Peter encountered a shipwrecked man who barely managed to save his own life. He was completely naked from the wreck and begged Peter for some clothing. Peter gave him his costly cloak. Later Peter saw his cloak in a merchants shop for sale. He was upset and sad because the man sold his cloak instead of keeping it for himself. Peter thought that he wasn't worthy since the Lord didn't accept his alms.

Later the Lord appeared to Peter in a dream, brighter than the sun, with a cross on His head, and wearing Peter's cloak. The Lord asked Peter, "Why art thou sad?" Peter answered: "My Lord, why would I not be sad, when I see that which I gave to the poor being sold at the market?" the Lord asked him: "Dost thou recognize this garment on Me?" Peter answered: "I recognize it, my Lord, that is my garment with which I clothed the naked man." Then the Lord spoke to him again: "Therefore do not be sad, thou gave it to the poor man, and I received it, and I praise thy deed."

You see my brothers and sisters it is said, "He who give to the poor, gives to Christ." This is the meaning of the Gospel teaching, and this is what is most important. Whenever you give to the poor, you can never really be fooled, God sees and knows what is in each of our hearts and He will recognize your kindness and surely you will be praised for these deeds. As for anything else, this should be left to God. *Submitted By: Deacon Gavriilo*

"For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20

The above verse was evident when Ann Johnson came from the Women's Center to pick up a generous donation from our parish. We were able to provide enough food to feed 30-40 women lunch at the Women's Center, cooked by our Ladies Philoptochos through their annual fundraiser. We also presented The Women's Center with 100 vouchers valid for free flu-shots at any one of six Walgreens' pharmacies and two cases of Lance Snacks. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Lekita Essa for her generous donation of the lunches, Bill Christopolous, District manager for Walgreen's, and Robert for his donation of the Lance product snacks. May Our Lord continue to bless your good works for His glory!

The Women's Center



Pres. Evi assisting Ann Johnson with picking up a food donation for the Women's Center.



Left: YAM in action, again, helping us with furniture donations to those in need.



Above: Various donations from our parishioners, which benefited Helping Hand Mission who service the needy in our community. There is never an items to large or too small...all can help those in need!

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for donating all the food for our school's backpack buddies program. Many kids will be effected by your kindness!

Sincerely,
 Katie Trueeman & Mrs. Rivette
 (School counselors)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS
 I will be small
 You're of a kind!
 MIKE W.
 Keep at the good work!
 Evana for me!
 Juan
 Keep on
 Corbin
 Thank you
 Paul Williams
 James Dupree

God Bless you
 For Everything,
 Randy & Debra White
 Thank you for every thing
 Leah Jennifer
 Holy Trinity
 Giggly
 Remember those we love
 at Christmas and all year through.
 God Bless!
 Dwight
 Thank you
 my mach
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE
 HAPPY HOLIDAYS
 ROY WRIGHT
 Roy & Wrielt

Abdullah
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Thank you for all you do... all year!
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 Thanks
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 Christmas
 and all year through.
 God Bless!
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 Thank you
 my mach
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE
 HAPPY HOLIDAYS
 ROY WRIGHT
 Roy & Wrielt

Matthew Thompson
 HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Craig Burns

The above thank you notes are from two organizations that the St John's Outreach Ministry recently provided assistance. The first is from a couple of local school counselors thanking us for our involvement with the Backpack Buddies Program. Backpacks are filled with non-perishable food on Fridays for at-risk children to take home so that they have food over the weekend. The backpacks are returned to the schools each Monday throughout the school year so that children will have food each weekend throughout the school year. The second "thank you" note is from a Christmas card that our ministry received from the Men's Shelter thanking us for our service throughout the year.

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*We wish to thank all those who
have given of themselves
unselfishly in His name to all that is
in this newsletter. Without your
time, talents and stewardship, none
of this would have been possible.
In Christ—Deacon Gavriilo*

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Sunday School Outreach

Lenten Mission Coin Boxes

Sunday School is participating in the annual Lenten Mission Coin Box Program. Funds raised through the Mission Coin Boxes will assist the further growth of ministries that support the reach of Christ's Church around our world. In 2010, the Mission Coin Box Program raised over \$44,500! We ask that our Sunday School students place spare coins in the box each day during Great Lent and pray for those serving around the world in mission countries. Parents, how can you help? Talk with your children about the importance of missions around the world, pray with your children for our missionaries, set a time each day that your children place their coins into the Coin Box (e.g., at the beginning of a meal or before bedtime), and get your children's collection going by placing coins or dollar bills into the box. Sunday School students should turn their Mission Coin Box into their Sunday School Teacher on Palm Sunday, April 17.

Grocery Bag Collection

Through the end of May, the Sunday School Department is collecting plastic grocery bags which will be donated to the Men's Shelter. The plastic grocery bags are needed to transport lunches that the Men's Shelter prepares for the clients of the Alcohol Treatment Center. A collection bin is located in the Sunday School Education wing.

Upcoming Events

**Lenten Food Drive—throughout Lent
Easter Candy Drive due April 10
Lenten Mission Coin Boxes due April 17
Grocery Bag Collection through May**