



the plan Strategic

Release Announcement

Effective June 11, 2015

Service Learning Training

Strategic Area: Philanthropic Outreach



Goal: Finalize an effective Service Learning Training model to equip Parishes with the processes and tools to effectively conduct philanthropic outreach.

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“Connecting the Cross”

Program Description: Our Metropolis of San Francisco Philoptochos has created and grown wonderful and meaningful opportunities for our parishes to serve their communities. Through innovative programs like Kids N’ Cancer and their support of our seminarians at our sacred school of the Holy Cross, they have truly inspired our Metropolis, and even the national Archdiocese, to make serving others a priority.

Serving others through philanthropy can also be a way for us to learn more about our Orthodox Christian faith.

Service learning is a strategy in which philanthropic outreach activities become directly linked to learning opportunities. For example, volunteering at a local health clinic can provide an opportunity for reflection on the life of St. Luke the Surgeon. Cleaning up a local park can be done in conjunction with a lesson on Orthodox environmentalism. To support the interest and needs of parishes in this area, a ½ day training session, *Connecting the Cross*, has been created to provide Philoptochos, parishioners, lay leaders, and clergy practical tools they can use to plan and implement high-quality service learning projects in their respective parishes.

Service learning is a powerful tool to help us simultaneously grow closer to God and to grow closer to our fellow man by serving them with love and compassion.

Current Status: *Connecting the Cross* has been tested with a group of parishioners and Philoptochos members representing several parishes (Marin, Vallejo, Belmont, and San Francisco, CA). After receiving excellent feedback and suggestions from participants, the original session design has been modified and made even stronger. Sts. Constantine and Helen in Vallejo just recently participated in a parish-specific Service Learning Training on May 31.

Recommended Parish Action: Parishes and Philoptochos organizations that are interested in participating in a *Connecting the Cross* session should contact Nick Metrakos. Whether your parish has existing philanthropic ministries that you would like to transform into service learning or your parish would like to establish a new service learning ministry, this seminar will help you do so. Parishes who participate in these sessions will help drive the completion of an Orthodox Service Learning toolkit for distribution to all parishes in the Metropolis.

Anticipated Parish Impact: Moderate to host a *Connecting the Cross* seminar. High to create and implement service learning projects in the parish.