



Philoxenia Charities

2025 Annual Report and Spring 2026 Newsletter



www.philoxeniacharities.org

A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters of Philoxenia Charities,

I came to the ministry of Philoxenia less than two years ago, but as I write, that is hard to believe. The past twenty-two months have been filled with challenges and opportunities. Most of all, I have witnessed miraculous healing. We provide refuge for the healing of the stranger suffering illness, hardship, or trauma. Christ our Lord brings to us so many different kinds of strangers who are suffering. Some are destitute, having nothing; others are wealthy, able to bless. Some are from a few miles away, others from across the world. Some experience transformative healing almost overnight; others face an arduous road.

We cannot provide the healing. We are just the place of refuge. But there are always two teams of doctors on site. One is employed at the medical complex that the Mayo brothers established, which often serves as the final hope for those seeking solutions. The other team is comprised of the holy healers and benefactors of our parish, led by the holy anargyroi, Sts. Cosmas and Damianos, our resident surgeons of the heart. In my experience so far, the ministrations of this second team have been more lasting and profound than the first.

I'm excited to share the progress we have made since I arrived! We have become a more sustainable, transparent, and mission-focused organization. And we are ready to grow with the right support. Whether you have been part of our mission already or are interested to learn how you can join us, I wish you the love of Christ, who meets the stranger with undying and limitless compassion.

In Christ,



Christopher Evangelos John Brenna, Ph.D.

The Road to Financial Stability, 2023-2025

In 2023, Philoxenia made a big push to overcome serious challenges. We invested over \$50,000 in repairs to our Philoxenia House to make it available to guests again after three years of lying fallow.

2023	\$172,000	\$90,000	-\$82,000
2024	\$186,000	\$158,000	-\$28,000
2025	\$121,000	\$175,000	\$54,000

Since March 2024, we've focused on sustainability and transparency. We spent some serious time re-examining our mission and vision, which helped us to see what's most important. We want to give as many guests as we can a transformative, healing experience. We took a careful look at how the houses were being used, finding ways to increase our occupancy. But we also improved the comfort of our homes by renovating them. Most of all, we made practical changes to bring our spending in line with our income, reducing expenses by almost 40% in 2025. We built reliable relationships in the Metropolis as well as creating new connections.

Because of these changes—and the generosity of our donors—Philoxenia moved from an \$81,000 loss in 2023 to a \$54,000 surplus in 2025. We now have a healthier, more sustainable way of serving our guests in a way that reflects good stewardship.

Net Operating Result by Year

From deficit to surplus



Growth in Hospitality

2023



385 Nights

2024



1,003 Nights

2025



1,098 Nights

2026?

After renovations in May 2024, we expanded our capacity to its maximum. Since then, we've focused on longer stays for more severe patients, which increased our nights of occupancy. This year, to provide even more hospitality, we're instituting an overflow model that makes use of nearby properties that we can rent at low cost and offer to additional guests for free. **We turn away four guests for every guest we accommodate. Now we can do more, but only with additional support.** Consider sponsoring a stay by going to philoxeniacharities.org/sponsor.html to sign up for a recurring or one-time donation.

philoxeniacharities.org/sponsor.html



A Home to Return to...

"Having a home away from home at the Philoxenia house was very comforting to us."

Karen and Darrell Baker first began traveling to Rochester in the fall of 2023, when Darrell was evaluated at the Mayo Clinic for leukemia. What they expected to be a short medical journey quickly became a long and complex one.



By early 2024, Darrell was diagnosed with carcinoma and underwent major surgery, followed by intensive treatments including a month of proton therapy. During those months, Karen and Darrell stayed in several temporary locations while trying to remain close to the clinic.

In August of 2024, they returned to Rochester for follow-up care—only to learn that Darrell's cancer had spread to his lungs. Treatment began immediately. That fall, they stayed at Philoxenia for the first time.

"It was such a relief to not have to keep moving around and to be so close to the clinic."

Over the following months, Karen and Darrell returned to Rochester repeatedly for ongoing procedures, including additional surgery. Each stay lasted weeks at a time. Living on a fixed income, with mounting medical costs, the burden of travel and lodging could have made continued treatment impossible.

"Because of the help of organizations like Philoxenia and the American Cancer Society, we have been able to keep paying our home bills—and we still have a home to return to."

Today, Darrell continues to receive immunotherapy and is responding well to treatment.

"I still have my husband of 55 years," Karen says. "I praise God for this fact—and for your help in making it possible for us to stay near the care he needs."

Karen and Darrell Baker, Nashville, TN

The Power of Volunteers!

We were blessed this year to host three different youth groups from Chicago-area parishes for weekends of volunteer activity!

In the spring, Fr. George Lamberis and his GOYA youth came from St. Spyridon to do some painting of our Eisenberg House. They transformed walls that had old, fading wallpaper into something bright and inviting! We were grateful for their service!



St. Spyridon

Youth from St. George's Chicago came in September to help us clean up the grounds and do some landscaping. They also helped put together fifty welcome baskets for our guests. Now whenever a new guest arrives, they receive a welcome basket with hand-written notes! The youth of St. Haralambos worked hard to paint the interior of our Iakovos House and finish up the fall cleanup. What a transformation!



St. George's
(Chicago)

All of these trips were subsidized by a generous initiative of The Hellenic Foundation of Chicago. When the Foundation heard that we were hoping to make better connections with parishes in the Chicagoland area, they were excited to partner with us by making it easier for these groups to make the trip up to Minnesota.



Holy Taxiarchai/
St. Haralambos

Thanks to Hellenic Foundation of Chicago

We focused on growing our capacity in 2025 by connecting with stakeholders and supporters in the Metropolis of Chicago. One of the most vibrant new partnerships we formed was with Hellenic Foundation of Chicago. Hellenic Foundation supports the missions and programs of organizations that enhance and preserve Greek language, culture, heritage, and religion in the Chicago area. In 2025, the Foundation created an initiative to support youth groups coming from Chicago to volunteer at events for Philoxenia Charities. Hellenic Foundation awarded a grant for 2026 to Philoxenia Charities to expand the number of guests we can serve who visit from the Chicago area. Starting this year, when we receive a request from the Chicago area, Hellenic Foundation will subsidize the stay. We express our gratitude to Hellenic Foundation for their generosity for this grant award!



Executive Director Christopher Brenna pictured with Hellenic Foundation Director of Communications Kathy Stamatis

Thanks to Philoptochos



Pictured with Christopher Brenna are (from left) Vonnice Karafotias, Kathy Katrakis, Pat Gerbanas, and Marilyn Tzakis

The Philoptochos societies of our Metropolis, both the parish chapters and the Metropolitan and National Philoptochos boards, have been the life-blood of Philoxenia for over twenty years. This year, the Metropolitan Philoptochos board visited our hospitality lodges and delivered a donation from their board and a very generous gift from the St. Demetrios Philoptochos Society! We couldn't do it without the continued support of Philoptochos!

Become a Philoxenia Advocate

We have provided hospitality to hundreds of guests from all over the world for over twenty years. We have received constant support from other Orthodox Christian parishes in the Metropolis and throughout the world. We need a dedicated contact person in as many of our supporting parishes as possible to promote the work of Philoxenia. If you become a Philoxenia Advocate, you will serve as the representative at your local parish to:

- distribute physical materials like brochures and newsletters
- help local parish members access Philoxenia services
- connect with local parish members who have stayed at Philoxenia to tell their stories
- organize events to raise awareness and support
- serve on the Philoxenia board of directors or on sub-committees

To get started as a Philoxenia Advocate, please contact Christopher Brenna (email: christopher@philoxeniarities.org or call 507-218-1078). Thanks!

Give to Philoxenia!

In the past year and a half, we've made extraordinary progress towards increased solvency and transparency. We've matched our vision with discipline, which positions us to grow our impact in 2026. With the right support, we're confident that we can increase our occupancy by over two hundred additional nights of stay.

Two hundred additional nights of occupancy translates into time —time for guests to rest, be with their families in a home, and make decisions together in a stable and safe environment.

Go to philoxeniacharities.org/donate.html to give online and discover other ways to give.

