ST. MICHAEL'S HOME
Celebrating 50 Years of Quality Care for the Elderly
1958 - 2008
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39th CLERGY – LAITY CONGRESS

Washington, DC – July 2008

We beseech You and ask You, embrace with Your all-powerful grace this institution which has been established to care for those encumbered by old age and to show love to our elderly pioneer brethren who have offered so much

With these words from a prayer offered during the Agiasmos Service, the late Archbishop Michael opened the doors of this only Archdiocesan institution serving the needs of Greek Orthodox elderly on May 25, 1958. Less than two months later, the Archbishop would depart this world but the institution upon which he invoked the blessings of the Almighty continues the sacred ministry of caring for those encumbered by old age and shows love not only to the elderly pioneers of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America but a growing number of the next generation.

This year, St. Michael's celebrates its 50th Anniversary and the Home stands as a vibrant testimony to the vision and the pastoral sensitivity of the late Archbishop who saw the need for such a facility to serve the needs of the elderly of our community. St. Michael's was known then as the "Spiti Tou Protoporou" - "Home of the Pioneer" (the name of the Home was changed in 1966 to honor its founder, Archbishop Michael) since the first residents were the pioneers of the Greek American community in the United States, those individuals responsible for establishing many of the parishes and institutions of our Holy Archdiocese.

His Eminence was assisted in this endeavor by the Clergy Syndesmos of the New York metropolitan area and a Certificate of Incorporation was issued on January 25, 1957. On July 17, 1957, the Trustees at a cost of $125,000 purchased a former B'nai Brith nursing home and during the next 10 months the building was renovated to accommodate the first Greek Orthodox residents. By the end of the 80's, the building was showing the wear and tear of so many years of service. Serious consideration was given to moving the Home to another site but it was decided to remain at its locale

because of its proximity to the metropolitan area and because of the ability to secure Greek-speaking staff which was a priority since most of the residents spoke only Greek. Therefore, it was decided to renovate and expand the existing facility, a project which was completed at a cost of over $4,100,000 and which has transformed the building into a very pleasant and comfortable environment.

Nestled in a quiet neighborhood 15 minutes from the heart of New York City, St. Michael's is truly one of the hidden treasures of our Archdiocese. Within the confines of the Home, residents enjoy the care and comfort they so deserve in a Greek Orthodox environment. The facility encompasses: private and semi-private bedrooms for 60 individuals; a magnificent chapel; a beautiful dining hall with French doors leading onto a terrace; a spacious recreation room; an airy T.V. room; a modern medical office; a fully equipped beauty salon and other accommodations needed for the quality care of the elderly. St. Michael's is a New York State Department of Health certified residential adult care facility and is proud to say that it offers a level of care above and beyond those mandated by the State.

Some Often Asked Questions About St. Michael's

1. What is the relationship of St. Michael's to the Archdiocese?

St. Michael's is the only adult care facility in the United States under the direct aegis of the Holy Archdiocese of America and is listed as one of the Church's institutions. The Archbishop appoints most of the members of the Board of Trustees and serves as Chairman of the Board. ***Throughout its history, the Home has always been financially self-sustaining and has never received subsidies from the Archdiocese or any governmental agencies.*** The Archdiocese does assist in other ways such as allowing the Home to use its mailing list for the tri-state area (NY, CT & NJ) for its annual Christmas Appeal and assisted the facility during the 90's when the Home encountered financial difficulties associated with its expansion/renovation project.

2. How many facilities in the United States are there like St. Michael's?

St. Michael's is the **ONLY** institution of its kind in the entire United States and it provides the elderly with services above and beyond those mandated by the government. Licensed (and annually inspected) by the New York State Department of Health, the Home offers a unique environment where **ALL** residents are Greek Orthodox and they are afforded the opportunity to continue to practice their traditions and customs as well as to worship on a regular basis

3. What is the difference between St. Michael's and other facilities serving the elderly?

In the United States, there are various types/levels of facilities serving the needs of the elderly. The first category would include senior citizen housing such as the *Archbishop Iakovos Residence* (Astoria, NY) and the many facilities built by Ahepa throughout the nation. These provide subsidized housing to the elderly and as government supported agencies must accept individuals regardless of race or creed. The individual has their

apartment and in most cases provides for themselves while there are common areas for socialization, etc.

The second category would include St. Michael's. In this type of facility, the individual has his/her own bedroom and the institution provides ALL of the services i.e., three meals, daily housekeeper & laundry, etc., and like assisted living facilities, the Home offers assistance with daily routine, i.e., bathing, dressing, distribution of medications, round the clock supervision, etc. St. Michael's is a religious not-for-profit institution of the Archdiocese and can restrict admission only to Greek Orthodox since it does not receive subsidies from the government.

The third category would include nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, etc. such as the Hellenic Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center (Canton, MA) and the Greek American Rehabilitation & Nursing Centre (Wheeling, IL) which provide a higher level of care.

4. How many residents are there in St. Michael's?

The capacity of St. Michael's is 60 residents and for the last five years the Home has been operating at between 95% - 100% occupancy (presently, there is a waiting list of close to 10 people). While the majority of our residents are from New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, individuals have been admitted from other states such as Mississippi, Florida, Indiana, New Hampshire and South Carolina. Many residents have families but there are also a number of individuals who either never married or whose children have passed away. While in the past most residents were first generation Greek-Americans (i.e., those who had immigrated to the U.S.), there are a growing number of American-born residents of Greek extraction. (According to the constitution of the Home all residents must be Greek Orthodox.)

5. What are the accommodations at St. Michael's?

There are three types of rooms: a private bedroom with private bathroom; a private bedroom with use of common bathrooms in hallway; and, semi-private bedrooms with use of common bathrooms in hallway. The resident pays the appropriate boarding fee the first of each month and the cost includes room and board and all daily housekeeping and laundry services.

The Home is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week and in addition to the administrative staff there are health aides who are responsible for overseeing the health of the residents as well as distributing their medications and there are resident aides who help the residents bathe, dress and also handle the daily cleaning of the rooms, laundry, serving of meals, etc.

In addition, there are two geriatric specialists, two psychologists (one is Greek speaking), a psychiatrist and a podiatrist who all make weekly visitations. Also, there are a dermatologist, optometrist and audiologist who visit on a regular basis. A certified nutritionist monthly reviews the diet of the residents and the menu of the Home, and

arrangements have been made with the appropriate providers to be able to do blood tests, x-rays, EKG's and other tests within the facility.

All residents, regardless of the type of room they occupy and the boarding fee they pay, receive the same level of care and attentiveness. At NO time is any applicant expected to turn over his/her assets to the Home **nor is anyone denied admission because they cannot afford to pay for their stay** and the Home subsidizes the stay of these individuals who on average represent one-third to one-half of the total number of residents.

St. Michael's current certification from the State is that of a residential "adult home". While not licensed as such, the Home does offer "assisted living". The primary criteria for admission in an "adult home" is that the individual must be able to ambulate (even with a walker/cane) by his/herself, i.e., cannot be permanently confined to bed or a wheelchair. Many residents suffer some degree of dementia including Alzheimer's and the staff offers these residents assistance with bathing, dressing, 24 hour supervision and toileting (a number of residents suffer from incontinence). The Home cannot accept or keep individuals who cannot ambulate on their own or who need chronic nursing care. In 2007, 14 residents had to be transferred to nursing homes and for this reason St. Michael's is seeking to either expand both the number of beds and the level of care which the facility is licensed to offer. This expansion would mean that the Home could offer a higher level of care thus retaining many of those who eventually have to be transferred and will be able to also accept others who do not meet the present criteria for admission.

6. How much does it cost to run St. Michael's?

In 2007, our costs directly related to the care of the elderly were over $1,350,000 while our total expenses were $1,596,000 which included extraordinary capital improvements and miscellaneous expenditures for fundraising, etc. Our income in 2007 was comprised of about $1,200,000 in boarding fees which the elderly were able to pay, while the balance came from donations. You can imagine how different life would be at the Home without these contributions, especially since St. Michael's does not receive any financial subsidies from outside sources such as the government.

7. Plans for the future?

For the past 5 or 6 years, the Board of Trustees of St. Michael's has aggressively been trying to expand both the number of beds and the level of care which the Home is licensed to offer. First and foremost, this decision to move forward was made so as to remain faithful to the original mission of the Home which in the Certificate of Incorporation of May 18th, 1957 stated *to provide adequate and suitable facilities and services to meet the physical, social and spiritual needs* of the elderly. The present size and license of the facility no longer meets those criteria since the demand for a larger facility and higher level of care is increasing on an almost daily basis. The challenge in accomplishing this goal has been the difficult real estate market in which the Board has been repeatedly thwarted in its numerous attempts to purchase appropriate properties.

The present site of St. Michael's will not allow any expansion and the Home must be moved to another locale. The Board remains committed to this endeavor and will shortly officially embark upon a capital campaign to raise funds for this project. Already over $1,000,000 has either been collected or pledged for this expansion which eventually will cost close to $20,000,000 to build an appropriate continuum care facility with different levels of care and between 100-150 beds to meet the needs of the Greek Orthodox faithful.

IN CONCLUSION

The 50th Anniversary of St. Michael's is an occasion to celebrate five decades of outstanding ministry to the elderly of our community. Truly, the Home brings much honor to the entire Greek-American community, providing the elderly with the quality care they so deserve for over 50 years. Countless visitors who include both non-Orthodox professionals who visit the facility throughout the year to treat the elderly and the many faithful of the surrounding area (Philoptochos chapters, youth groups, numerous societies representing different areas of Greece and others) marvel at the facility and applaud the Archdiocese for having such a beautiful home-away-from-home for our seniors. Always treated with love and respect, they maintain a level of independence in a safe surrounding where they are provided with the assistance they need at this point in their lives. This is the unique and sacred ministry which St. Michael's has fulfilled for 50 years and with the assistance of the Holy Archdiocese and all Greek Orthodox communicants, the Home will provide many more years of quality care to the elderly.

According to national statistics, the fastest growing segment of the American population is that group 65 years old and older and by the year 2020, over 25% of the population will be in this age group. These statistics also indicate that most people in this age group are opting to live in facilities specifically serving the needs of the elderly rather than live with their children. Based on this trend, there will be a much greater need for the services which St. Michael's provides and the need for the establishment of other similar facilities throughout the Archdiocese.

The Home will officially celebrate its 50th Anniversary at its annual Name Day Gala which will be held this year at the Metropolitan Club in New York City on Sunday, November 9, 2008. In conjunction with this event, St. Michael's Home will also be honoring His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, recipient of the *2008 Archangel Michael Award*, in recognition of his over 40 years of Episcopal ministry, his 10th Anniversary as Archbishop in 2009 and above all, his distinguished and exemplary offering to the Church and community. For more information about the Home and to view our video or to make an on-line contribution in honor of the Home's 50th Anniversary, please visit our website or at stmichaelshome.org.