



# GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

## DEPARTMENT OF GREEK EDUCATION

### Report to the 40<sup>th</sup> Biennial Clergy Laity Congress

#### TWO-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT 2008-2010

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#### **Introduction**

Over the past two years 2008-2010 the Department of Greek Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese continues its dedicated efforts, through its numerous programs and activities, to strengthen the teaching, learning and preservation of the Greek language in the United States. In achieving these objectives, our vision and work remain focused on these four pillars:

- a. Continuous and above board communication with our Greek Schools and their constituencies (clergy, school board, parish council, teachers and parents)
- b. Ongoing training and support to our teachers, and acquiring and utilizing current innovative and effective teaching methods for today's Greek-American students,
- c. and Completion of writing and production of new text books for all levels of our Greek Schools.

A further aspect of our work has keenly focused on regularly taking the pulse of our teachers and school administrators, observing the teaching and operational environments, being aware of the challenges they may present, and maintaining an open dialogue.

#### **The new books «Τα Ελληνικά μου»**

At the Archdiocesan Council in May 2009, we had the pleasure and privilege to announce to this audience that the Department of Greek Education was in the process of receiving the new Greek language instruction textbooks of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese generously sponsored by Faith an Endowment.

Then, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios presented the first copies of the books "Ta Ellinika mou", Part A', level 1.

It was a great moment for all, especially those who envisioned and worked for the success of such an educational endeavor. The Archbishop's dream was fulfilled.

The first book shipment arrived in the U.S. in May, while the remaining books arrived on August 8, 2009 and were forwarded to all Metropolises.

We are also proudly informing you that most of our schools have and use the new books “Ta Ellinika mou”, Part A’ level 1 in the first year of Greek School, as a new groundbreaking methodological approach in Greek language instruction. This accomplishment was realized even in remote areas of the continent, such as the Greek school in Anchorage, Alaska, to which the Department of Greek Education personally undertook the responsibility of sending.

## **Evaluation**

In the context of monitoring educational progress, the Department of Greek Education has conducted an evaluation in May 2010 by distributing a questionnaire to all level 1 teachers on their use and delivery of “**Ta Ellinika mou**” Level 1 in the current school year. We have already received back a large number of completed questionnaires. All teacher responses and comments will be carefully studied for process input and ongoing improvement.

Furthermore, the Department has started since past November to do teacher classroom observations to classes of primary instruction that used the Archdiocese’s new books of Greek language instruction. As of now, the Department has focused on schools within the Archdiocesan District and plans to visit all the Metropolises.

## **“Ta Ellinika mou”, Part B’, LEVEL 1**

The production of the books “Ta Ellinika mou” Part B’, is in the last phase. We anticipate by the end of July to have completed the printing of the three Part B’ books: the Student’s Book, Part B’, the Student’s Supplementary Book, Part B’, and the Teacher’s Handbook, Part B’, completing with them Level 1.

In August 2010 we anticipate having the books shipped to US and delivered to each Metropolis.

To accomplish this, the Department of Greek Education is working tirelessly with our U.S.-based Team and the publication team in Thessaloniki. We work hard and under challenging constraints and limitations to create, publish, deliver, and promote the new books of Part B’ as a continuation of Part A’ textbooks.

## **Training Seminars**

In order for the new textbooks to become a highly effective educational tool for all our schools and students, suitable and adequate teacher training in their use was required. The Department of Greek Education under the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, and in collaboration with the Offices of Education of all Metropolises, organized and held a series of teacher-training seminars on the new teaching materials, as follows:

- For the Direct Archdiocese District: Hicksville, Bridgeport and Astoria.
- For the Metropolis of New Jersey: Trenton and Falls Church.

- For the Metropolis of Detroit: Detroit.
- For the Metropolis of Chicago: Chicago.
- For the Metropolis of Atlanta: Atlanta and Tarpon Springs.
- For the Metropolis of San Francisco: San Jose, Seattle, and Los Angeles.
- For the Metropolis of Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh.
- For the Metropolis of Boston and New England: Weston.
- For the Metropolis of Denver: Dallas and Houston.

The above seminars were well attended and enthusiastically received by teachers across the Archdiocese's Community schools. The presenters were Dr. Ioannis Efthymiopoulos and Mrs. Maria Teleiopoulos of the Department of Greek Education. They both collaborated with the writing team and had overall supervision of the creation and publication of the new books. The presenters addressed teachers delivering book content, new teaching methodologies, and guidelines to enhance the teachers' educational practice through workshops modeling teaching techniques as a reinforcement of teaching applications of the new books.

Once the new textbooks "**Ta Ellinika mou**", **Part B**' are published similar training seminars will be held in every Metropolis.

The Department of Greek Education takes seriously its ultimate responsibility of teacher training. This objective needs to be met and carried out at each Metropolis at time and location that will enable greatest teacher participation. For this to happen, the communities would need to cover travel and lodging expenses, a small investment in teacher effectiveness and long-term personal and professional growth.

### **Cyprus seminar**

For the fourth consecutive year, the educational seminar for teachers representing Greek Orthodox Archdiocese schools will take place at the University of Cyprus in Lefkosia. The Ministry of Education of Cyprus and the University of Cyprus, and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese continue in their gracious role as seminar sponsors and have our gratitude and appreciation.

Twenty teachers will attend lessons in the Greek Language, History and Culture, as well as in Religious Studies for a total of 54 hours at the University of Cyprus from July 13-28, 2010.

During their stay in Cyprus the participants will have the opportunity to visit His Beatitude Chrysostom, President Christofias and other dignitaries.

Moreover they will visit archaeological sites and historical landmarks of Cyprus such as the Archaeological Park in Paphos, the Archaeological Museum, the Tomb of Macedonitissa and "Filakismena Mnimata".

We wish to once again express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the leadership of the Republic of Cyprus and to officials at the Ministry of Education and Culture and at the University of Cyprus for making the realization of this seminar possible and for guaranteeing its success.

### **Cultural Activities**

### *Theatrical Youth Group*

Another innovative endeavor by the Department of Greek Education is the creation of an experimental theatrical youth group from Archdiocese schools.

This effort began in September 2008 by the Department of Greek Education with the blessings of His Eminence and Academic Educator Archbishop Demetrios and proceeded with the formation of the Archdiocese Experimental Theatrical Youth Group.

Our primary goal with this new direction is to provide children of the Greek-American community with the unique opportunity for greater exposure to spiritual creativity through the domain of literature, poetry, history, and theater. With inviolate sanctity we proceeded to help shape ethos and behavior intertwined with our heritage, culture, history, and orthodoxy.

On January 31 2009, under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the theatrical presentation "4,000 Years of Hellenic Language" was presented in celebration of the life and work of our Three Hierarchs and the Day of Hellenic Letters. This unprecedented event was exceedingly successful as reported by Greek-American news media.

Such worthy efforts were accomplished not without obstacles and challenges. We want to believe this initiative will be embraced by all, supported, and continued as its benefits are educational, spiritual, cultural, and a labor of love tangibly demonstrated by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

We anticipate that with everyone's support, the Archdiocese Experimental Theatrical Youth Group will grow, thrive, and blaze the same successful path as the Archdiocese Youth Choir.

### *Other cultural activities*

On the occasion of this year's annual celebration of Greek Letters Day, the Director of Greek Education Dr. I. Efthymiopoulos presented a lecture entitled "*The Spirituality of the Three Hierarchs as a Foundation to Educational and Cultural Development*" to the Hellenic Teachers Federation and to the Prometheus Teachers Association at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Manhattan. Over 300 people were in attendance.

### **Summary**

The present educational work carried out with the blessing, support and guidance of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, with the collaboration and support of the Metropolitans, and the financial support of Faith an Endowment, is well under way and its dividends are starting to pay.

It is work of enormous proportion and reach. It paves the way for Greek education in America.

No other Greek textbook ever used by our schools has been tested, tried and proven true in addressing the needs and challenges of our schools.

With humility we want to reassure you that this project goes beyond persons and expectations. We have delivered to our schools the first set of books for which we worked our hardest. It is a project dearly loved because we believed in its critical need and long-

term, lasting benefits. We are enormously gratified and proud to have endured and succeeded. And we are continuing on our mission.

We made the beginning and placed the foundation for addressing the problems and needs of Greek Education in the United States. We will continue to work to preserve our language, our history, our culture, and our religion — the unfading fibers that weave tightly the fabric of our Greek identity.

The road ahead is steep and uphill. We will walk it and reach the peak with your blessings and support. Fulfilling our mission is our duty and moral obligation to the generations of Greek-Americans yet to be born and grow in the beautiful world of Orthodoxy. Our work is, indeed, a challenge, which formed into a 'calling', it is a historic need.

We encourage you to give your love and support in fulfilling our mission.

### **Acknowledgements**

It brings me particular honor and joy to take this opportunity to extend special thanks and gratitude to:

- a. **The FAITH: An Endowment for Orthodoxy and Hellenism**, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America for sponsoring the writing and publication of the new books .
- b. Mr. Jerry Dimitriou, Executive Director, for his interest, continued support in our work and his cooperation.
- c. The Ministry of Education of Cyprus and the University of Cyprus for graciously hosting and sponsoring the teacher-training seminar in Cyprus.
- d. Mr. Panikos Papanikolaou, President of Cyprus Federation of New York, for his continued support in our work.
- e. Also kindly convey special thanks to Prof. Babiniotis for his cooperation and academic guidance and support, offering his services in the new books without compensation, and
- f. All those who worked with us to meet our goals.

Your Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, the Department of Greek Education is thus, once again, deeply indebted to your Holiness for your continuous guidance, both spiritual and academic, for your creative vision and for your firm commitment to Greek Education, as we move forward into the future and face the challenges in order to achieve the optimum for our children.

**It is our sincere hope, and prayer, that our children will grow and learn within the beautiful world of Orthodoxy and HELLENISM.**