

Stephen Cherpelis

Stephen Cherpelis was born in Agalianos a tiny village in rural Evrytania Greece. He married his wife of 50 years Arete and together they have four daughters and five Grandchildren. In 1943 the village that Stephen was born in was occupied by German forces and was mostly destroyed.

In 1947 the village was the site of two major battles between the armed forces of Greece and the Communist guerillas. The village was burned to the ground and was totally destroyed by the Communists. The surviving inhabitants were dispersed to nearby cities at first and eventually immigrated to the western democracies, mostly to the United States of America. Stephen is a graduate from the Gymnasio of Amaroussion in Athens, Greece with high honors. As a teenager in the 1950's, he immigrated to the USA as a refugee "Antartoplectos". Stephen served in the United States Army. After serving for two years as a Sergeant in the Military police, stationed in Korea, Stephen was honorably discharged.

Currently, Mr. Cherpelis is the CEO of Stephen Cherpelis Enterprise, Inc. a conglomerate of Real Estate and Restaurants. Throughout the years, Stephen and his family have sponsored tens of families to emigrate from war – torn Greece to the United States of America and provided free room and board until they were able to settle on their own. He continually donates time, effort and finances to Society as a "Thank You" to this great country which gave him the opportunity and ability to give to others.



Mr. Cherpelis currently serves on the following boards:

- The National Council Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of St. Andrew the Apostle
- The Archdiocese Council serving on the Finance and Administrative Committees
- The Direct Archdiocesan District Council as Vice President, appointed by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios
- Member of Leadership 100 of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.
- The Board of Trustees of the Archdiocesan Cathedral of Holy Trinity as President, appointed by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios
- The Parish Council of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. Past President for 2 years, Past Treasurer for 1 year, chairman of the fundraising committee "Builders of the Future", raising approximately 8 Million Dollars to construct a new school building, a community center, an athletic center and parking facilities.
- A Major contributor, and appointed walk-a thon and fundraiser chairman for the Ronald McDonald House.
- Financed the opening of the First Greek Orthodox Church in Havana, Cuba 2001

Mr. Cherpelis has been Honored by the Following:

- Received the Offikion of Archon "Dikaiophylax" of the Order of St. Andrew the Apostle. The Highest Honor bestowed upon any lay person by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.
- Received the Medal of St. Paul by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. The Highest Honor bestowed upon any lay person by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.
- Declared "Axios" and given the title of "Anagnostis" by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios. The Highest Honor bestowed upon any lay person by a Parish.
- Declared a Great Benefactor of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church. The Greek Afternoon school was named in Honor of Stephen and Arete Cherpelis
- Awarded Honorary plaques by His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew for the active participation in the school of E.R.T.O in Constantinople, 1988
- Received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, approved by the U.S. Congress for his interfaith, interreligion and intercultural Activities.
- Newsday Queens Profile, 2000 for many Philanthropic and Educational Activities
- The New York University Hospital "Kerynia Center" for his major contributions.

Cyprus Children's Fund, INC.

We care for the children of Cyprus

Origins and Evolution

In the aftermath of the brutal Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus in the summer of 1974, Greeks around the world rallied to the aid of the Cypriot people. The Cyprus Children's Fund, Inc., was established then as a one-on-one sponsorship program. Its primary scope was to provide relief and aid to the thousands of refugee children and their families. Over the years this program has evolved into one that seeks to assist refugee and non-refugee children alike.

The trauma of war in Cyprus did not spare children. As in any conflict, the highest percentage of victims was among civilians. The war resulted in a refugee population of 200,000 displaced persons, 1,619 missing and unaccounted for, and hundreds of casualties. Having lost its cohesion, the traditional family unit in Cyprus, operating as the basic social institution, has been irrevocably altered by war and conflict. During and after the hostilities, the secure environment offering protection and safety was no longer there, especially for children who became vulnerable and had sustained grave psychological effects aggravated by the declining social and economic conditions. In farming and rural communities, such as Kyrenia, the peninsula of Karpasia, the plain of Mesaoria and the orchards of Morphou, the village traditions, structures and institutions that were the foundations of daily life for centuries had ceased. These communities had seen a dramatic change. Farming communities were uprooted, their population fled to safety living in makeshift tents for months, later to be relocated in larger communities where they literally felt like strangers. When the sustaining organic roots which provided a sense of belonging, a nourishing environment and which helped define identity were destroyed, the manifestations of significant trauma surfaced. The outbreak of war brought on increased vulnerability, especially in children. Contributing factors were stress and anxiety resulting from war violence and displacement. The affected population experienced depression, anxiety for the future, and the stark realization of having to face losses, i.e. loss of loved ones and property. In effect, post-traumatic stress disorders emerged as seriously threatening the fabric of society. Absence of members of the family due to death, or disappearance, injury or displacement, created gaps in the functioning of the family unit. The uncertainty and grief caused disruption and disharmony within the family. When a father disappeared or was killed, children felt helpless and wives experienced domestic life as a bleak prospect.

Manifestations of the trauma in Cyprus could be seen through generations. Intergenerational stress and anxiety created a trying environment (displacement, human and material losses, loss of self-reliance and motivation, high unemployment rates). Another psychosocial effect was the breakdown in social ethics and morals, manifesting in the abandonment of families, resulting in the increase of single parent households, illegitimate births, etc. Rebuilding the family and social structures warranted the build-up of awareness and reeducation of a large segment of the population. Some families needed to steer into new vocations and professions. These children are helpless human beings, unable to affect changes in their lives, living under circumstances beyond their control. The Department of Social Welfare in Cyprus refers these children to the Cyprus Children's Fund, through the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance. Selection is made after compilation of information and examination of each case, and subsequent determination of the status is based on strict criteria of need. Many children need emotional support through foster parent contact, as well as financial support, which they receive through the Cyprus Children's Fund sponsorship of \$20 per month (minimum). The effects of war and conflict ripple through a society for generations. The children who have lived through the Turkish invasion and occupation of Cyprus were faced, as adults, with a multitude of social and economic issues. In adulthood, these men and women continue to experience trauma, dysfunction and hardship. Currently, 40% of the children receiving aid originate from displaced families. They represent problems of abandonment, single parenthood, substance abuse, neglect and other ills. One fourth of these children are from underprivileged single-parent households. Other cases include children of parents who battle mental illness. Enclaved children (living in the Turkish occupied parts of Cyprus), as well as children whose parents continue to live in the occupied parts of Cyprus, are also aided through this program.

Societal Offerings To These Children

The cost of the Cyprus Children's Fund sponsorship is only 66 cents a day, \$20 per month. Your donation reaches a child in its totality. For this small amount you can make a difference to a youngster's life – share your kindness with one of the many children who need the caring of a stranger to help them in their lives. You provide caring support and security to orphaned, abandoned, underprivileged, and enclaved children who continue to live in the Turkish occupied village of Rizokarpaso. For many families, the disintegration of life continues. Many are still caught in the grip of helplessness and dysfunction. A donation is a practical way to provide financial and moral assistance.

Rewards

You will not be a stranger for long. You will find fulfillment and gratification through the sponsorship of a child in Cyprus. Frequent correspondence and communication lead to the blossoming of integral relationships over the years. Donors have visited with the children in Cyprus to attend important celebrations such as graduations and weddings. Long standing and nurturing relationships across the Atlantic become reality



Cyprus Children's Fund, Inc.

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Thecla Colon

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Cyprus Children's Fund, Inc.



Cyprus Children's Fund

2012

Annual Testimonial Dinner

Honoring

Mr. Stephen Cherpelis

With

The Humanitarian and Philanthropic Award

Keynote Speaker

The Honorable Ms. Koula Sophianou

Consul General of the Republic of Cyprus in New York

And Former Cyprus Children's Fund Foster Child

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2012

7:00 PM

**TERRACE ON THE PARK
FLUSHING MEADOWS PARK, NY 11368**