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*"There but for the grace of God, go I"*

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# Philoxenia Times

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Spring 2022

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*Some of the bags of fresh produce and shelf-stable food assembled by our volunteers for Hunger Action Day in September. Details on page 2.*

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## President's Message

Since our last newsletter, the Philoxenia team has been involved in a wide array of efforts to help those in need in our community.

We all continue to live through extraordinary times, with the challenges of the global pandemic still deeply impacting New York City's homeless and hungry. One silver lining has

been the opportunity for Philoxenia to collaborate with more individual volunteers seeking to assist in our efforts, and with like-minded nonprofit organizations who share our mission to help care for those who need us most. The stories that follow offer some insights into these wonderful people and nonprofits we've come to know over the past 12 months.

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## President's Message *(continued)*

We invite you to join us. If you're able to volunteer at an event, we'd be thrilled to have you attend. If you're willing to consider a donation to help support our operations, we'd be grateful for your generosity. If you aren't able to do either, we invite you to engage in Philoxenia's work by following us on social media and sharing our organization's story with your family and friends.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in and support of Philoxenia. We hope the coming spring season offers you good health, safety and well-being.

### **Despina**



Volunteers at our "Back to School in New York City" event.

## Back to School in the Bronx ... and Beyond!

In August 2021, the Philoxenia team contributed to its first-ever program in the South Bronx by working with long-time community partner Vibrant Emotional Health, national nonprofit FOCUS North America and over 10 local parishes to produce "Back to School in New York City."

Our donation helped to provide 288 backpacks filled with school supplies for students in the South Bronx, whose neighborhoods were profoundly impacted by the pandemic in myriad of ways, including severely limiting the role its schools traditionally serve in educating and feeding children.

On hand for the event was Philoxenia friend and ally

V. Rev. Archimandrite Father Chrysostomos Gilbert, who was helping lead the volunteer effort for FOCUS, which is a national movement of Orthodox Christians, united in faith and joined by a desire to provide solutions to poverty in communities across America.

"So many have contributed today," said, Fr. Chrysostomos. "There's been amazing outreach here in New York City. The show of love for all in the greater [area] ... we thank everyone for that."

The back-to-school spirit extended to Fr. Chrysostomos, who shortly after the event left his role of eight years as presiding priest at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Manhattan to spend a year in Thessaloniki studying Greek language on a Leadership Development Grant made possible through Leadership 100. We look forward to Fr. Chrysostomos coming home in 2022 and rejoining Philoxenia at future events.



## 2021 Hunger Action Day

On Hunger Action Day (September 17), Philoxenia volunteers distributed 170 bags of groceries to food-insecure families in New York City. As a Mobile Pantry Partner of Urban Outreach Center of NYC, we worked with Vibrant Emotional Health, Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church and FOCUS North America to make sure hundreds of our neighbors in Harlem are able to fill their pantries.

Founded by Feeding America, Hunger Action Day (which expanded to the entire month of September in 2008) seeks to mobilize individuals and food banks nationwide to raise awareness of and take action in the fight against food insecurity in the United States.

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## Feeding Families on Thanksgiving

Thanks to the overwhelming support from the law firm of BakerHostetler and our friends at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, NYC, Philoxenia volunteers provided turkeys and large bags of fresh and shelf-stable food to over 100 families in East Harlem on November 12. Our community partners Vibrant Emotional Health once again provided us with the space to connect with as many residents as possible.

Prior to the pandemic, the East Harlem community was already reflecting some of the worst health statistics in New York City and, per the city's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, significantly high rates of food insecurity. Philoxenia is grateful for the opportunity to help East Harlem residents in any way we can, including restoring some sense of normalcy and dignity through celebrating Thanksgiving.



*Our volunteers at Philoxenia's Thanksgiving pantry event.*

## Sandwiches, Socks and More!

On November 15, Philoxenia partnered with One Sandwich at a Time and Bombas to assemble and distribute over 150 bags of sandwiches (made by teen volunteers from JCC Manhattan), Bombas socks, knit hats (made by Philoxenia friend, Monica Rodis) and toiletry kits to homeless citizens in East Harlem in the corridor between Marcus Garvey Park and the Metro-North Harlem - 125th Street train station, which is one of the largest concentrations of East Harlem's homeless population.

A grassroots nonprofit in New York City, One Sandwich at a Time constructs peanut butter & jelly and ham & cheese sandwiches, bagging them up and delivering them to the areas in which they are most needed - including food pantries, homeless shelters and food distribution centers. We look forward to future opportunities to collaborate with them.

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## Community Spotlight: Shaun Kennedy



*Photo: nycfoodpolicy.org*

Philoxenia congratulates our friend and fellow community volunteer, Shaun Kennedy, on her recent selection to "40 Under 40; The Rising Stars in NYC Food Policy" for 2021.

The Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center publishes this annual list of "New York City's 40 individuals under 40 years old who are working to transform and improve the food system."

Shaun is the Program Director for the Urban Outreach Center of NYC, which generously helps Philoxenia by supplying much of the fresh produce and shelf-stable food we use for our pop-up pantry events. Urban Outreach is a food justice-centered nonprofit committed to ending the hunger gap in East Harlem and the Upper East Side.

In her 40 Under 40 profile, Shaun noted she seeks to leverage her community outreach experience and education to "bolster the voices of folks served at the food pantry to ensure their needs are met, and that we (as a society) are moving the lever toward a more inclusive and just food system both in New York City and nationally." You can read her complete profile, and those of others on this year's list, on Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center's website.

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**Instagram:** [https://instagram.com/philoxenia\\_inc](https://instagram.com/philoxenia_inc)

**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/philoxenia-inc/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/philoxeniainc>

To learn more about who we are and what we do, you can also visit our website at <https://philoxenia.org/>.



(Left) our volunteers at Hunger Action Day in September; (above) donations to our November "Sandwiches, Socks and More" giveaway.



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