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

Philoxenia Times

Summer 2023



Philoxenia volunteers gather for another successful Pop-Up Pantry with St. George & St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church this past March. Details on page 2.

President's Message

This edition of the *Philoxenia Times* continues to report on the challenges New Yorkers face with food insecurity and homelessness and, thanks to the extraordinary support of our friends and allies, the opportunities we have had to help those in need.

Despite the end of COVID as a classified public health emergency in May 2023, the long-lasting impact of

the pandemic, coupled with pre-existing economic and societal challenges, mean vast numbers of fellow New Yorkers continue to struggle to secure food. And the hardships are not limited to the city's homeless. According to a 2023 report from the New York State Comptroller, approximately one in 10, or about 800,000, New York households have

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President's Message *(continued)*

experienced food insecurity at some point in recent times.

We are proud to join in the ongoing effort to provide food, clothing and, critically, dignity and compassion, to those in our communities. We hope the pages that follow help illustrate our commitment, and we invite you to be part of the solution by connecting with us and volunteering.

On behalf of Philoxenia, I wish you and your families an enjoyable summer.

Despina



Philoxenia's "Sandwiches & Socks" program in April.

Philoxenia Continues Signature Programs to Help Our Community

Over the past six months, Philoxenia volunteers have worked to help feed and clothe New York City's homeless and those in need through two primary means of community engagement.

Pop-Up Pantries. Our traditional mobile food pantries in Upper Manhattan have helped hundreds of families and individuals impacted by food insecurity and other challenges they face as New York grapples with a post-pandemic environment. We continue to provide this service thanks to the time and contributions of our volunteers and donors; and the extraordinary generosity of our friends at the **Urban Outreach Center of NYC** and **Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church NYC.**

On March 4, we partnered with **Sts. George & Demetrius Greek Orthodox Church** in East Harlem, giving away over 180 bags of fresh and shelf-stable food. And just recently on June 2, we held a similar pantry at **Goodwill New York/New Jersey**, also in East Harlem, to distribute food and toiletry kits in the neighborhood, with over 150 bags handed out.

Sandwiches & Socks. Launched in 2022 as a collaboration with grassroots nonprofit **One Sandwich at a Time**, Philoxenia has hosted two "Sandwiches and Socks" events with food and clothing donations, including from **Bombas** and the **Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity**. This included an evening with **Emmaus House** in Central Harlem on April 7, where our team was supported by **Life Experience and Faith Sharing Associates**. Notably, our clothing donations for these events often include handmade contributions from our friends and donors. You can learn more about this extraordinary gift of creativity and kindness in our "Community Conversations" spotlight.



Volunteers have given away 350+ bags of food at our East Harlem Pop-Up Pantries to date this year.

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Save the Date!

Interested in volunteering with Philoxenia or donating to support our work? Upcoming events include:

- **September 22, 2023 @12:00pm.** Our next pop-up pantry will be held in collaboration with **St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church**, located at 359 West 24th Street in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan.
- **November 17, 2023 @12:00pm.** Philoxenia will host its annual Thanksgiving pantry with seasonal food items to help families and individuals celebrate the holiday. Our pantry will be held at **Goodwill New York/New Jersey**, located at 413 East 120th Street in East Harlem. We have once again secured the law firm of **BakerHostetler LLP** as a sponsor for this critical event and thank them for their generosity and support!

DM us on Facebook or email us at info@philoxeniainc.org for more information or to volunteer.

2022 Annual Report

Our latest Annual Report, covering activities, donations, programs and expenses, is now available at www.philoxeniainc.org.

We thank everyone who supported us in 2022 and look forward to continued success this year.



Community Conversations

In this edition of the *Philoxenia Times*, we continue to share insights and reflections from friends who share our values and are generous supporters of our organization and activities.



A Close-Knit Community: Legal Profession Leaders Contribute Hats for Those in Need

Over the past three years, many have often pointed to reconnecting with friends and colleagues as a silver lining of the pandemic. On occasion, shared interests have been the catalyst for fostering these relationships.

A common love of knitting and crocheting, coupled with a shared commitment to helping those in need, brought together several friends who work in the legal profession during COVID. **Nancy Stein** (CEO, Nancy Stein & Associates, LLC), **Beth Huffman** (Director of Marketing, Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP) and **Monica Rodis** (General Partner, Interperm Resources, Inc.), all longtime friends of Philoxenia Founder and President **Despina Kartson**, have devoted invaluable time, creativity and ingenuity to provide our organization with hundreds of beautiful knit hats, in a variety of colors and patterns, to the adults and children who rely on our services.

For this edition of Community Conversations, we asked Nancy, Beth and Monica about what motivates them to take the time to create these special items for the communities Philoxenia serves.

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Community Conversations (continued)

Nancy Stein

When I worked in the city, as I walked to my office from Penn Station, I saw so many homeless people. I know how cold winter can be on the streets as the wind whips around corners. During COVID, Beth Huffman, Despina Kartson and I formed a group of legal marketers who do crafts. When Despina told us about her organization helping the homeless, I was happy to lend a hand.

I create items to keep people warm, making pretty hats for the homeless because when you have so little, it means a lot to have something beautiful. Charity has always been important to me. Opening your heart to others and helping when you can make the world a far better place. I hope sharing my story encourages others to do what they can to help those in need.



Beth Huffman

I love to crochet, and everyone in my family knows to expect an afghan as a wedding or baby shower gift, but over the years I've found myself with piles of extra yarn. We do a coat collection every year for needy families, and when I asked if I could contribute hats and scarves, they were very enthusiastic. I'm pretty prolific, especially on long road trips, so I have expanded my giving to three charities, including Philoxenia. I often get thank-you from the organization, and it really warms my soul, so I won't stop any time soon. In fact, I taught some

people on my team to crochet the past couple of years, and now we are all contributing.

Monica Rodis

When my friend, Despina Kartson, started Philoxenia, I wanted to find a way to participate. I like to keep my hands busy while binge-watching TV, and making hats for the homeless is a way for me to create something meaningful while vegging out on the couch. Last spring when I cleaned my closets, I found enough leftover yarn to make over 40 hats. If you are a knitter or crocheter, please consider donating your leftover yarn to Philoxenia; we can put it to good use.

What We're Reading

Tackling hunger and loneliness is something the **Blanchet House** in Portland, Oregon seeks to achieve with the free meals it provides to the community. According to a *New York Times* spotlight on [giving the homeless dignity](#), Blanchet House serves its meals by placing people at small tables together. According to their executive director, "loneliness is a significant problem for people who are houseless, and especially for some of the elderly and disabled people who may be housed in the region ... one of the things people will say is that eating here makes them feel normal again."

Drinking Gourd Farms is an impressive organization that helps people create urban gardens of healthy and sustainable food. Their network of urban farms provides weekly food boxes for families in need in the Phoenix area. As a recent [Modern Farmer](#) article notes, in addition to helping hundreds each week during the pandemic, Drinking Gourd has helped start 20 to 30 gardens around the city.

As the *New York Times* reported earlier this year, the [March cuts in Covid-era U.S. food stamp allocations](#) come at a particularly bad time for low-income Americans, with inflation causing a 10 percent increase in grocery costs over the past year. The article notes that the situation "**amounts to a one-two punch: The country's neediest have less aid to pay for food as it's getting more expensive.**"



Blanchet House guests enjoy a meal and one another's company.

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