

Background

“Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?...Feed My sheep (John 21:17).” With these words our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ instructed the Apostle Peter in the way he should express his love toward Him. As Orthodox Christians we too are instructed by Christ to love Him by feeding His sheep and sharing with others the Good News that has been passed down to us throughout the generations. It is our sacred duty to offer spiritual food to the members of Christ’s flock, which will edify them and assist them in their journey toward Him.

A major focus in our efforts of sharing the saving message of Jesus Christ is the great number of young people in our Orthodox Church. Our society today is becoming increasingly secularized and void of moral direction. With our children facing countless harmful influences each and every day, it is imperative that we do everything in our power to incorporate them into the Body of Christ, His holy Church. We read in Proverbs, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it (22:6).” Now is the time that we must take advantage of the opportunity to impact the lives of young Orthodox Christians so that they may become, and remain active sacramental members of the Church, and through this, attain the reward of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Metropolis of Denver

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver is one of nine diocesan regions in the United States which make up the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The Archdiocese in turn is an eparchy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, established in the year 33A.D. by the Apostle Andrew.

Under the spiritual guidance of His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah, the Metropolis of Denver is headquartered in Denver, Colorado. Covering a land area of 1.3 million square miles the Metropolis is comprised of 48 parishes in 14 states: Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries works to sustain and enhance ministry to children and young adults throughout the Metropolis. To achieve this goal, the training of adult youth workers who function on the parish level is a main focus of the Metropolis Office. This effort strives to give the parish priests and youth workers, who have direct and frequent contact with young people, the tools and knowledge that they require to effectively minister to our parishes’ youth. In addition, by offering Metropolis-wide events and programs, as well as, supporting local parish efforts the Office works to help our Orthodox young people form personal relationships with Jesus Christ. Central to this is striving to give them a better understanding of who Christ is and how we, as members of His Church, approach the world around us.

The Office incorporates several areas of ministry which are directed toward different groups of individuals. Each of these ministries is based on the following four characteristics; Worship (Liturgia), Fellowship (Koinonia), Service (Diakonia), and Witness (Martyria), which are key components of an Orthodox Christian lifestyle. Through the teaching and sharing of these important aspects young people and youth workers are encouraged to become well-rounded members of the Church community.

Ministries

Youth Worker Training

Youth Worker Training focuses on supplying youth workers and teachers of the Metropolis with the tools they require to effectively minister to the youth with whom they come into contact.

HOPE

Holy Orthodox Primary Education—grades K through 3. This ministry lays very basic foundations of instruction and introduces children to the Orthodox faith during their primary formative years.

JOY

Junior Orthodox Youth—grades 4 through 6. This ministry builds on the foundations begun in the HOPE ministry and continues to introduce basic teachings of the Orthodox Church as young people approach adolescence.

GOYA

Greek Orthodox Youth of America—grades 6 through 12. This ministry focuses on helping adolescents incorporate their Orthodox faith into every day life as they continue to formulate their own personal identities.

OCF

The Orthodox Christian Fellowship is a ministry to Orthodox students on college campuses. The OCF is an inter-Orthodox effort sanctioned by the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA).

Young Adult Ministry

This ministry is geared toward assisting young adults as they transition from academic pursuits to mainstream life. As well, it works to encourage these individuals to assume active roles within their parishes.

Religious Education

The Religious Education ministry oversees the youth catechesis programs that are conducted on the parish level. It serves an advisory role and as a resource for the catechism directors and teachers of the Metropolis.

Metropolis Sponsored Events

- Regional GOYA Retreats
- Camp Emmanuel Summer Camping Program
- St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival
- GOYA Basketball Tournament
- Young Adult Retreats and Snow Conference
- Youth Worker Training Seminar Series

Metropolis Youth Ministry Team

The Metropolis Youth Ministry Team is an advisory board which assists the Metropolis Office in creating and implementing the ministries of the Metropolis. The members of this board are appointed by His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah to a two-year term.

Archdiocese Youth Ministry Team

The Director of the Metropolis Office serves with the directors from other Metropolises on the Archdiocese Youth Ministry Team. This board works to coordinate ministry efforts throughout the Archdiocese, as well as, to create resources for use in the parishes of the Archdiocese.

The Endowment

ENDOWMENT OBJECTIVES

The Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries budget has historically been comprised primarily of donations by parishes, local Philoptochos Chapters, and individuals, along with the proceeds of the annual GOYA Basketball Tournament. This income is not always consistent and often insufficient to cover the operational needs of the Office. For this reason The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Denver Youth and Young Adult Ministry Endowment Fund has been created to provide necessary monies for the functioning of the Office.

Major expenses of the Office include travel, resources, publication, and participation scholarships. As well, funds are needed to hire seasonal staff such as: Summer Camp Staff, Seminarian Interns, Special Projects Assistants, etc. The Endowment Fund serves to provide a dependable and adequate income of monies to cover these, and other operational expenses of the Office.

It is with a clear focus and vision for the future that the Endowment Fund has been formed. The Metropolis of Denver Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries has achieved remarkable levels of ministry over the years, however, a great amount of work remains to be done. By ensuring necessary financial resources, the Endowment Fund allows more attention to be placed on ministry and sharing the saving message of Jesus Christ with the faithful of our holy Metropolis of Denver.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Endowment Fund Committee is comprised of the Metropolitan of Denver, the Metropolis of Denver Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, the Treasurer of the Metropolis Council, and one other member chosen by the Metropolis Council. This Committee's role is the administration of the Fund, including the assignment of an outside financial advisor (to avoid conflicts of interest) who will manage the investment of the Fund.

Proceeds from the Fund will be placed in an accessible account and used for the above mentioned purposes pertaining to Youth Ministry at the discretion of the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, with the approval of the Metropolitan of Denver.

Amendments, modifications, and/or invasions of the parameters set forth for this endowment are the responsibility and right of the Endowment Fund Committee with the approval of the Metropolis Council. Further, if for any reason the Endowment outlives its usefulness or otherwise becomes unnecessary (i.e. complete funding of the Metropolis Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is provided by another source), the disbursement of the principal will be carried out by the Endowment Fund Committee.

An initial amount of one million dollars has been set as the goal for the Endowment. The appropriateness of this figure may be reviewed by the Endowment Fund Committee on an annual basis and increased if necessary to reflect current situations and needs.

GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY

Contributions which are given to the Endowment Fund are accepted or rejected at the discretion of the Endowment Fund Committee. All potential gifts will be evaluated to determine the appropriateness of their origin and to be certain that they are given in accordance with principles of Orthodox Christian stewardship.

As stated above, monies included in the Fund will be managed by an independent financial advisor and proceeds will be utilized for youth ministry purposes at the discretion of the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries in consultation with the Metropolitan of Denver. While these individuals may attempt to honor a donor's usage request, monies given to the fund and generated by it will not be officially "earmarked" for specific purposes within the realm of youth ministry. This is done to maintain and ensure the integrity of the fund as a tool for the use of the Office in working toward its ministry objectives.

FUND INVESTMENT

An investment firm chosen by the Endowment Fund Committee will assign the account management to a qualified and impartial account manager. The investment strategy will be developed by the Committee in consultation with the account manager. This strategy will include, but will not be limited to investment vehicles and diversification of investments.

The principal of the Endowment is to be invested in perpetuity and the annual yield (interest and dividends) will be utilized in the fashion outlined above. This is done with the understanding that the purpose of the Fund is not to accumulate assets, but rather to provide usable funds intended for ministry.

REPORTING STRUCTURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A report will be presented annually to the Metropolis Council which will include an accounting of Endowment Fund principal, income (interest and dividends), and spending, as well as, the number and size of new gifts received. At this time the appropriate additional recognition and acknowledgement of donors (if permitted) will be done by the Metropolitan and the officers of the Metropolis Council.

CONCLUSION

It is imperative that the opportunity to fulfill our sacred duty is not missed. Just as in holy Scripture where Christ instructs that the young children be allowed to come near, He instructs each of us to provide the means for young people to approach Him. Each of us is invited in one form or another to heed this high calling. In providing the financial resources necessary for conducting youth and young adult ministry in our holy Metropolis of Denver we make great strides toward incorporating and retaining future generations in the Orthodox Church.

The future possibilities in the area of Youth and Young Adult Ministry are exciting and limitless. With proper funding the Metropolis of Denver Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries is able to more sincerely focus on cultivating, nurturing, and ministering to the young Orthodox Christians of our Metropolis of Denver. You are kindly thanked in advance for your generous support and prayers.