

NORTH AMERICAN BOARD
ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN NORTH AMERICAN BOARD

HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS COORDINATOR



*As we seek to serve one another in the Holy Church,
and those who are sent to us by God,
let us remember the words of Christ:*

“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND... AND YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” (Matthew 22:37-39)

“COME, YOU BLESSED OF MY FATHER, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD: FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD; I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME DRINK; I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU TOOK ME IN; I WAS NAKED AND YOU CLOTHED ME; I WAS SICK AND YOU VISITED ME; I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU CAME TO ME.” (Matthew 25: 34-36)

“FOR WHOEVER GIVES A CUP OF WATER TO DRINK IN MY NAME, BECAUSE YOU BELONG TO CHRIST, ASSUREDLY, I SAY TO YOU, HE WILL BY NO MEANS LOSE HIS REWARD.” (Mark 9:41)

*"A Sisterhood
Serving Christ*



through Serving Others"

Acts of Mercy

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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN HUMANITARIAN

"Acts of Mercy"

1. ANNUAL NAB "ACT OF MERCY":

Each year, the North American Board of the Antiochian Women participates in an "Act of Mercy". This activity encourages women of all chapters to support a general, humanitarian cause. In the last decade, the women have worked with International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) in the preparation of health/hygiene kits and school kits.

For more information, go to: <https://iocc.org/take-action/assemble-emergency-kits>.

The women have also partnered with FOCUS North America to provide meals for underprivileged school children, as well as helping with support and resources for children to obtain access to a better education.

For more information, go to the following site: www.focusnorthamerica.org/antiochianwomen.

2. ORTHODOX MONASTERIES: In addition to organizing a religious retreat, offer to assist a nearby Orthodox monastery with any needed tasks – gardening, cleaning, food preparation, etc. Also contact the monastery to determine items they may need (paper products, food, etc.), as well as providing a monetary donation.



16. MISSION TRIPS: Organize a mission trip such as Project Mexico to help build homes and provide aid to impoverished communities.

THANKSGIVING & CHRISTMAS

THANKSGIVING:

Serve meals at local homeless shelters; collect cans of food or other items to donate to families in need for a Thanksgiving meal; or hold food drives and organize Thanksgiving baskets.

CHRISTMAS:

*Give your priest a gift. *Send Christmas cards to those on your parish's "Friends in Need" list. *Take a family's name from the "Angel Tree" in your community [or contact your local Salvation Army for names] and give generously. *Take donations of socks, caps, etc. to a local homeless shelter. *Send cards to the local VA Hospital, or visit the patients with cards, candy, fruit, etc. *Visit those at nursing homes who may not have close family or friends. *Organize carolling events for the elderly, shut-ins, nursing homes.



This handbook contains several suggestions for your parish's Antiochian Women Humanitarian "Acts of Mercy." Take these ideas and customize them to suit your parish's unique opportunities for service to others in the Name of Christ. We urge each parish chapter to work with their priest and add their own "Acts of Mercy." This handbook was compiled by NAB Humanitarian Coordinators Kh. Dannie Moore (2010) and Lauren Ferris (2019). It was edited by AW-NAB President, Dianne O'Regan (2019). This handbook was designed for the Antiochian Women North American Board by Fr. Gregory-Lazarus Murphy, the husband of NAB Vice President Kh. Suzanne Murphy, in May of 2019. Your suggestions and comments are welcome. Please send them to: doregan40299@gmail.com or suzannem@rochester.rr.com Photos in this booklet: St. John Chrysostom Parish, Ft. Wayne, IN; St. Athanasius Parish, Santa Barbara, CA; St. Andrew Parish, Riverside, CA.

12. HOMELESS SHELTERS: Organize a collection of toiletries, socks, blankets to deliver to nearby homeless shelters. Hold a blanket or coat drive for the winter months. Volunteer to do manual labor, or become a mentor to someone at the shelter. Offer to help serve meals throughout the year (not just during the holidays).

13. VETERANS: Contact your local VA Hospital and ask about their needs. Work with the parish's Church School classes to make cards to send to VA Hospital patients. On Veteran's Day, have a group to visit the hospital and take candy, cards, socks, etc. (teens LOVE to do this!). During the Nativity season, arrange for visits and small gifts.

14. THOSE IN PRISON: Many priests in the Archdiocese work with the Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry. The Antiochian Women have found a way to assist in this ministry by collecting clothing and personal items for inmates. There are specific procedures and requirements; your priest can provide information and coordinate the effort. In addition, most institutions allow money orders to be sent to the prison store so the inmate can shop against his/her account. Unfortunately, many inmates do not have assistance from their families or others. If your chapter would like to consider the possibility of helping women inmates, your priest can contact: info@ocpm.org. More information can also be found at the Antiochian Archdiocese website under "Prison Ministries" (www.antiochian.org).

15. HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: A faith-based, non-profit housing organization, Habitat for Humanity builds homes around the globe. Their vision is of a world where everyone has a decent place to live. Contact a local chapter about volunteering for a home build or other activities. More information can be found at www.habitat.org.



3. "FRIENDS IN NEED LIST": This activity can be performed on the local level by creating a "Friends in Need List" – the elderly, the homebound, those in nursing homes, the ill, or those who have a special need. A church can organize the list with names and addresses. Depending on the size of the parish, divide the names among the ladies and send "Thinking of You" cards (Nativity and Pascha cards are especially cherished).

4. FOOD PANTRY: Each parish in the Archdiocese should be involved with giving to those in need. Establishing a food pantry is not difficult. Find an empty room in your church or parish hall. Build or buy shelves. Have parishioners sign up to bring certain food items. Contact local shelters or schools for families in need. There may also be an existing food pantry at a nearby university where the church can help less fortunate students.

5. MEALS FOR THOSE IN NEED: Through the ministry of sharing food, friendships are made. Get in touch with local shelters that may need meal donations. Some areas in North America have seen an increase in migrants; parishioners prepare sandwiches and meals for them to take on their journey. A church can also make sandwiches and distribute them to the homeless. Keep granola bars, snacks or water in the car to hand to the homeless who are on the streets.

6. SCHOOL SUPPLIES: Collect supplies for schools in the community, especially those in low-income areas. Schools usually



post lists of “needed items” or, if you have teachers in your parish, ask them for suggestions.

7. ORPHANAGES: Contact nearby orphanages. Send “care” packages and spend time with the children, even bringing them age-appropriate games and toys. Collect shampoo, soap, toothpaste, deodorant and other hygiene products and deliver these items throughout the year.

8. PREGNANCY CENTERS: Over the years, the Antiochian Women have given generously to “The Treehouse,” a crisis pregnancy center in Wichita, Kansas, that was founded by the Orthodox faithful in 2002. Go to www.wichitatreehouse.org for more information.

Also contact a local pregnancy center and ask about their needs, such as diapers, baby wipes, clothes, bottles, formula, etc., plus maternity clothes for mothers-to-be.

Finally, think about organizing a “baby bottle” campaign at the church – purchase small baby bottles for parishioners to fill with their loose change. Set a date for the return of the baby bottles (six to eight weeks). Combine all of the money to donate to the local pregnancy center.

9. DOMESTIC ABUSE CENTERS: Contact nearby facilities and

ask about needed items, including hygiene products, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and deodorant. Also consider purchasing cosmetics – lipstick, eye shadow, nail polish, etc. If there are children who reside at the center, donate new or gently used age-appropriate toys or games.

10. CHARITY WALKS: Check with your local community regarding “walks” for charitable events, and make donations towards the respective causes. Some suggestions are the National Right-to-Life organization and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

11. NURSING HOMES: Find a local nursing or assisted living home, get permission from those in charge, and visit often. While there, seek out those who do not have regular visitors (the staff can give you this information); read to those who are blind; give gifts at special times of the year (Valentine’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas); or volunteer to play Bingo or other games. Also donate puzzles, card games, or other fun activities.

