



Hellenic Birthright™



PANHELLENIC
SCHOLARSHIP
FOUNDATION



A life-changing
opportunity for
Greek American youth



Hellenic Birthright™

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For more information about the impact of *Hellenic Birthright* visit our blog at greekships.net where participants shared their experiences through weekly journal entries.

Connecting an Ancient Past with the Modern World

In five short weeks, *Hellenic Birthright* participants toured many of Greece's famous and historic sites. In addition to Thessaloniki and the surrounding archeological sites, students had the opportunity to visit countless cities in southern Greece, as well as the Acropolis and the new Acropolis Museum in Athens. Anna Colby, a junior at Azusa Pacific University in Hawaii, mused with her fellow participants "Can you believe this is where we are right now?!" upon seeing the Parthenon for the first time. After their stay in the capital, they traveled to Corinth. A weekend excursion to the island of Corfu was a highlight for many of the participants. "Corfu was beautiful and the people there were all so friendly and nice. The salt water was amazing" says Trisha Christakes, a freshman at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Parthenon, Athens

However, the excursion to Troy clearly surpassed all of the participants' expectations. "Troy made me feel more connected to my Greek roots," said Nicole Christakes, a molecular biology major at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "People told us that going to Troy would feel more like a pilgrimage than a visit to an archeological site," wrote Anna Colby. "We were in the place where history meets legend. The Iliad, a story we had each growing up hearing had new meaning and significance on this day. It was a grand way to wrap-up the time we've had," concluded Anna.

The outpour of appreciation is testimony to the program's value. Each student has expressed heartfelt gratitude to have been a participant. Many like Jonathan Mitchell, a junior at Indiana University were overwhelmed. "Words cannot begin to give justice as to how thankful I am for this opportunity." "What stood out to me most is the life experience I was gaining from being part of *Hellenic Birthright*," said George Romniou, a freshman at Boston College. St. Louis University student Grace Johnson felt that "every second I am treasuring so I can remember it the rest of my life." "Just the overall experience of finally learning what it means to be Greek was amazing," says Anastasia Typaldos, a junior at Florida Gulf Coast University.

"Upon reading the students' comments about their participation in *Hellenic Birthright*, it reaffirmed my belief that creating this new program would have a resounding impact on their education and on their Greek identity," said Chris Tomaras, Founder and Chairman of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation.

"I want to give young Greek Americans the opportunity to experience their Hellenic roots, establish their own ties to their ancestral home and strengthen their ethnic identity. *Hellenic Birthright* has accomplished these goals and much more. It has instilled a desire to help Greece. Many of the students would like the opportunity to assist Greece in the future. This is an important link that *Hellenic Birthright* has established," continued Mr. Tomaras.



Dear Friend,

Hellenic Birthright™ is a life-changing opportunity for our youth.

The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation is about creating life-changing opportunities for young Greek American college students. Our newest program, **Hellenic Birthright**, has given 14 students ages 18-25, an experience of a lifetime by sponsoring their first trip to Greece.

With the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and other caring donors and the collaboration of the American College of Thessaloniki (ACT), participants were able to tour the historic sites of Greece, earn college credits and forge a meaningful bond with their ancestral home. For all of the students, this five-week program was filled with lasting memories and a desire to further their connection to Hellenism.

Programs like **Hellenic Birthright** play a significant role in fostering and preserving one's ethnic identity. Every one of the participants has expressed renewed pride in being a Greek American with a new found appreciation for Greece and its people. With college tuition increasing, future job prospects remaining slim, many of these students may have never had the opportunity in their lifetime to visit Greece. We are proud to have been instrumental in enriching their lives.

Our goal is to continue **Hellenic Birthright** and you can help us.

The best charitable investment you can make is in the life of a young person. I am asking you to make a donation now or a pledge. The more we raise, the more students will be able to participate in **Hellenic Birthright**. How great it would be if 25 or 30 students who have never been to Greece could attend this program!

As you read this special newsletter, I believe that you will share my passion and join me in supporting **Hellenic Birthright**. Thank you for your consideration of this request. I hope you will join us in our mission to promote Education and Hellenism.

With best wishes,

Chris P. Tomaras
Founder & Chairman

Hellenic Birthright A Life-Changing Experience

Greece—cradle of civilization, birthplace of democracy and a country filled with wonder for 14 college students, ages 18-25 who were the inaugural participants in the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation's newest program, **Hellenic Birthright**. This cultural enrichment program expands the Foundation's mission of promoting education. **Hellenic Birthright** is a five-week journey of a lifetime for college students who have never been to Greece. While students were responsible for their round-trip airfare, the program covered all in-country excursions and college tuition thanks to our generous sponsors.

Hellenic Birthright was launched in collaboration with Anatolia College and their school of Higher Studies, the American College of Thessaloniki (ACT). This is the oldest and highly credible American University in Greece, incorporated in Massachusetts and member of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, making their courses and degrees transferrable to and acceptable by any accredited educational institution in the U.S. "We could not have found a better partner, more sensitive to our goal and more capable than ACT to carry out this mission. We express our thanks and gratitude for making this project a success" said Chris Tomaras at a recent interview.



Ancient site at Delphi

"We have been welcomed into the ACT family, said Despina Sfikas, a sophomore at Monroe Community College in New York. "The professors and faculty at ACT are all kind and understanding" expressed University of Illinois sophomore, Evanthia Arianas. "Our guide Maria explained in detail the ancient buildings when we were in Delphi," continued Despina. "Visiting the birthplace of Alexander's journey in Pella and King Philip's tomb in Vergina were my clear favorites," said Dimitrios Roumeliotis from Georgetown University.

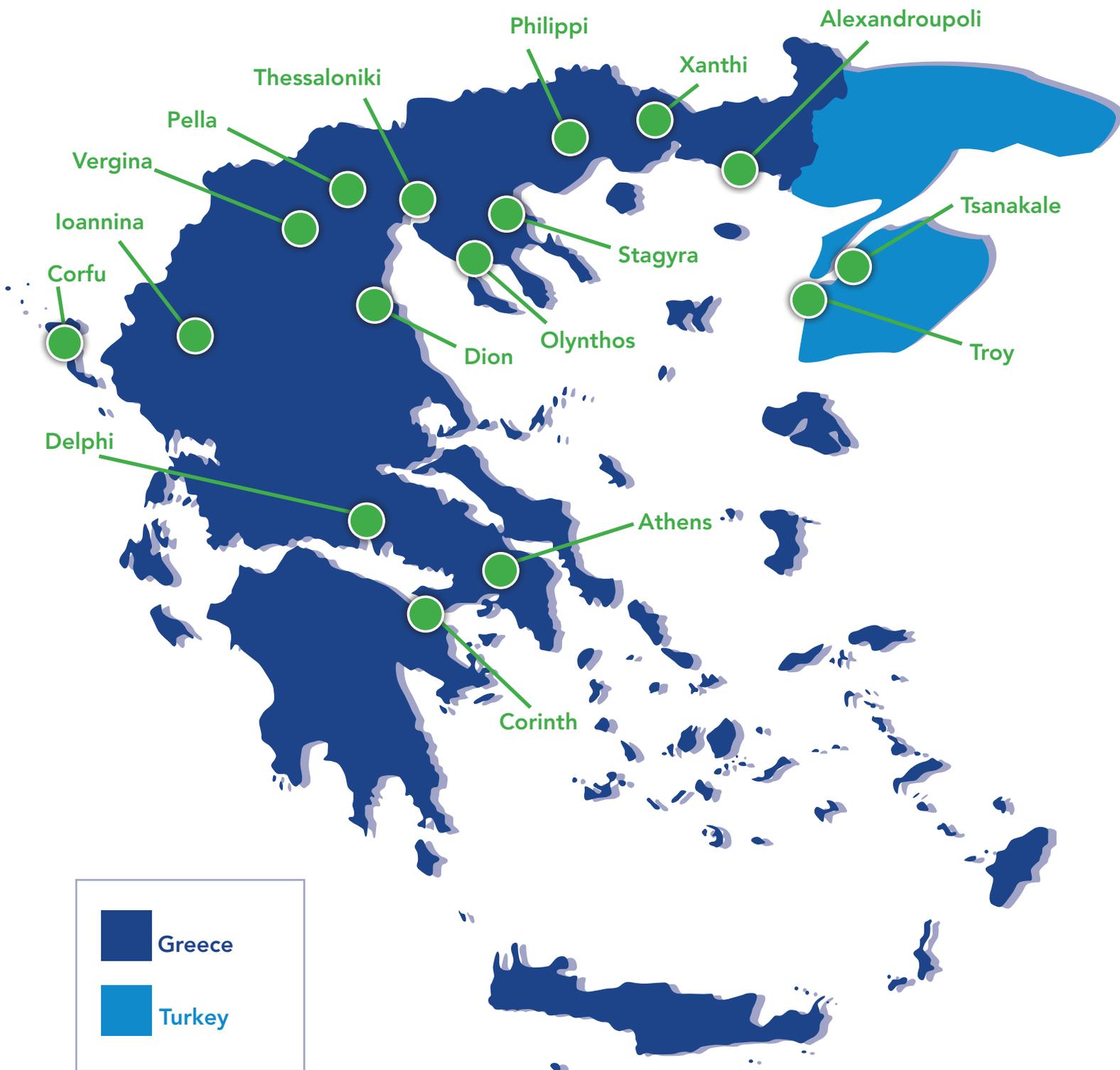
As the young Greek Americans explored the art, architecture, history and people of their ancestral home – something remarkable happened – their ethnic identity re-awakened, and a new appreciation for their Hellenic heritage emerged as their bond to Greece was reaffirmed. "There are definitely distinctions between life in America and life in Greece," said Alexa Moulakis, a junior at Loyola University in New Orleans. "The people and culture here offer more than I thought was possible when I first arrived," continued Alexa. "Thank you for the opportunity to meet amazing people and see great places."

" I am more in touch with my identity as a Greek and as a person."

—Rachel Contos, Marquette University

2012 Hellenic Birthright Highlights:

Beginning June 18 to July 20, 2012, **Hellenic Birthright** participants not only toured Greece in a series of day and over-night excursions, they were also part of ACT's "Pella Project," a comprehensive study-abroad educational program, where students received up to six transferable college credits. Courses included "Thessaloniki and its Inhabitants" taught by Dr. Maria Kyriakidou, which covered the rich cultural history of Greece's "second city", while Dr. Joseph Michael Gratale's course, "The World of Alexander" quite literally re-traced the footsteps of Alexander the Great, and took participants to two continents and countless cities.





Anatolia College Campus, Thessaloniki



White Tower, Thessaloniki



Site of Lydia's Baptism, Philippi



Caryatid Porch, Acropolis, Athens

Believing in a Future with many Greek American Leaders

The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation was founded on the belief that “Morfofis,” (education) is the most important ingredient of human existence. When combined with a Hellenic upbringing, education delivers leaders and individuals making significant contributions to society. The 227 scholarship recipients of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation, together with the participants of **Hellenic Birthright**, comprise a future network of Greek American leaders. Our goal is to promote education and foster the values of Hellenism, inspiring the next generation of leaders to make significant and meaningful contributions to America.

The best charitable investment you can make is in the life of a young person. When you make a donation to the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation you give an academically outstanding, financially deserving Greek American the opportunity to attain their life’s goal. We invite you to become our philanthropic partner by making a contribution to the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation.

Inaugural Participants Say “Thank You”

*“As a member of the first year of **Hellenic Birthright** I would like to say thank you for this once in a lifetime experience. Through this trip, you have not only allowed some of us to connect with our Greek roots, but also make us into seasoned travelers and true world citizens. I think I speak for the whole group when I say that there are truly no words to express the level of our gratitude.”*

–Alexa Moulakis

“Its hard to believe that only three weeks ago I had never left the US. This trip to Greece has been the best experience of my life! Thank you for the opportunity to meet amazing people, see great places, and step out of my comfort zone!”

–Rachel Contos

“This experience has been truly life changing, and for that I sincerely thank you. Not only has this been an educational experience for me, but one that is also very meaningful to me on a deeper level. I have been given the chance to meet family of mine for the first time here and now have a greater understanding of the lives of my Yiayia and Pappou.”

–Jonathan Mitchell

2012 Hellenic Birthright Participants

Evanthia A. Arianas, University of Illinois at Chicago

Zacharias G. Bouras, University of Chicago

Nicole M. Christakes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Patricia A. Christakes, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Anna D. Colby, Azusa Pacific University

Rachel C. Contos, Marquette University

Grace E. Johnson, Saint Louis University

Jonathan N. Mitchell, Indiana University – Bloomington

Alexa J. Moulakis, Loyola University – New Orleans

Emily J. Poulis, Pratt Institute

George M. Romniou, Boston College

Dimitrios V. Roumeliotis, Georgetown University

Despina E. Sfikas, Monroe Community College

Anastasia H. Typaldos, Florida Gulf Coast University





2012 *Hellenic Birthright* participants in front of the Parthenon for the first time.



A Singular Mission:



"To promote education by providing scholarships and educational programs to Greek American students who, guided by the values of their Hellenic upbringing, have the potential to become life-long significant achievers and contribute meaningfully to society."

Building a Better America through Education and Hellenism is at the core of the Foundation's mission, and in that spirit, we aim to strengthen our civic fabric and deliver enlightened and engaged citizens. The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) national Greek American organization that recognizes and honors exceptional undergraduate students of Hellenic descent, and supports their efforts with significant financial grants and unique educational opportunities.

Visit our blog at greeksscholarships.net

