



PANHELLENIC AFFAIRS

Building a better America through Education & Hellenism

September 2015

PanHellenic Scholarship Gala an "Ultra" Spectacular Success

On Saturday, June 20, 2015, the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation hosted an evening filled with excitement, enthusiasm and resounding success for both the scholarship recipients and its attendees. The spectacular event of nearly 500 guests was held at the Hilton Chicago and honored 40 of today's shining academic stars as they received a total of \$250,000 in scholarship awards. The proud parents and guests enjoyed a social interlude over cocktails, followed by a delightful dinner and great entertainment with dancing by the Chris Sarlas Orchestra.

To date, the Foundation has awarded \$2.3 million in scholarships to 324 undergraduate students, making it one of the leading scholarship

shared her favorite quote from Napoleon Hill, an American author who pioneered the personal success movement in the 1930s: *"Cherish your visions and your dreams, as they are the blueprints of your ultimate achievements."*

The Foundation's prestigious **Paradigm Award** is presented annually to a distinguished Greek-American for being a role model to collegestudents. Since its inception, the Paradigm Award has served to honor the outstanding accomplishments of an individual, as well as his or her dedication to Hellenic virtues and principles. This year's Paradigm Award recipient, **Dean Karnazes**, was no exception. Known as the ultra-marathon man for his tremendous running



award institutions in the United States. Greek-American students from across the nation have received scholarships to use toward their higher education. Given the financial burden many students face to complete their education, the sizeable award of \$10,000 each to financially deserving students enables them to continue their education and stay on course to receiving their Bachelor's degree.

Krystal White, actress, screenwriter, and film producer was the Mistress of Ceremonies. Delighted to be the Emcee, Ms. White recounted her personal journey of how her dreams inspired her to become an actress while she was a child living in Greece. She

abilities and feats of endurance, Dean Karnazes graciously accepted the award by echoing the ancient Greek saying *"O Tolmon Nika—Who Dares Wins."* He reminded the scholarship recipients and guests *"that only with mind, body and spirit in alignment could someone achieve 'Arete'—your personal best."* Quoting Hippocrates, Karnazes shared how *"when health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless and intelligence cannot be applied."* Karnazes encouraged guests to make a *"paradigm shift"* to be active and eat healthy, and reminded everyone, *"Health is Wealth."*

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In presenting the Paradigm Award to Mr. Karnazes, the Foundation's Chairman, **Chris Tomaras**, remarked, *"We are fortunate to have Dean Karnazes as this year's Paradigm Award recipient as he exemplifies the meaning of super athlete, but also that of a true Hellenic as he lives by and applies constantly the Hellenic values every day of his life."*

Before introducing the scholarship award recipients, Executive Director **Yanni Valsamas** congratulated the award recipients and the generous donors who made the event a success. He encouraged guests to become *"Ambassadors"* of the Foundation's mission to help accomplish even greater goals next year. In addressing the award recipients, Valsamas urged them to value interpersonal communication and go beyond the confines of social media. He advised recipients to *"connect, create and collaborate"* with each other by coming together to network and share personal experiences.

The 2015/16 Application will be available soon!

Please visit
www.panhellenicscholarships.org
to download the application
when it is available,
or call (312) 357-6432.

You can also join our mailing list and
receive a notification that the scholarship
application has been released.

This year's scholarship recipients were once again among the best and brightest Greek-American students in the country. Their remarkable accomplishments earn them not only a monetary award, but also the honor of being inducted into the Foundation's prestigious PanHellenic Honor Society. From Harvard to Hellenic College, the 40 award recipients proved they are shining academic stars. As each student received their scholarship award, parents, relatives, and guests beamed with pride and gratitude for recognizing the academic accomplishments of these exceptional students.

Athanasia Giannetos, a sophomore at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who is pursuing a BFA in Theater, made remarks on behalf of her fellow recipients. She expressed *"immeasurable gratitude"* to all who support the Foundation and recognized Mr. Tomaras for his persistence, kindness and generosity for making the Foundation a truly innovative and one of a kind institution.

This year's awards presentation took on a special meaning with the announcement of the establishment of the *"Georgia Sfondouris*

Mitchell Music and Arts Scholarship," made possible by a \$500,000 gift from the **George A. Paterakis Family**. Mrs. Mitchell was instrumental in inspiring Mr. Paterakis to donate to the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation. In presenting the scholarships for arts and music, Mrs. Mitchell said, *"To say I am honored by giving this prototypical scholarship made possible by George Paterakis is an understatement. Among his many philanthropic deeds, he understood that the arts define the human soul."*

With the event an overwhelming success, Founder and Chairman Chris Tomaras graciously thanked the donors for their continued generosity. For a second year, the Foundation conducted the **Chairman's Challenge**, where Mr. Tomaras personally matches, dollar for dollar, all contributions over \$1,000. This year, the **Chairman's Challenge** increased the number of Premier Benefactors of \$10,000 to 20, doubling amounts raised in 2014. Donations across the board increased, surpassing all fundraising goals. As part of the **Chairman's Challenge**, \$225,000 was raised and matched by Mr. Tomaras—for a total of **\$450,000**, which will go toward the Foundation's scholarships and educational programs. Mr. Tomaras expressed his deep gratitude to every donor for whatever amount they contributed, saying, *"You are the key to our success and we are truly grateful."*

Mr. Tomaras also recognized the memory of the late Theodore G. Spyropoulos, community leader, philanthropist and benefactor. He announced that the Foundation has dedicated one of the \$10,000 scholarships in his memory, and expressed his condolences and gratitude for Mr. Spyropoulos' support to his wife Erika and daughter, Mariyana Spyropoulos, President of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

Recognizing this year's event theme as *"unlocking a student's potential"*, Mr. Tomaras, in his remarks to the scholarship recipients offered words of wisdom as *"keys"* to success. His first key was to challenge recipients to *"dare to dream,"* saying that, *"we must first dream the impossible before it can be made possible."* He advised recipients to tap into the unlimited power of the mind, citing that the mind has infinite capacity to convert ideas into reality. He also stated that to succeed one must have a strong will and a burning desire, encouraging recipients to stand up and try again, even if they fail at first. His final key to success was asking students to *"go the distance"* to complete their education and receive their degree. Despite the challenges, he reinforced the importance of self-discipline and commitment to stay on course to completing their college degrees.

Passionate as always, Mr. Tomaras encouraged guests to embrace the Foundation's mission and go the distance with him in supporting the newly established Endowment Fund, generously launched by the late George Paterakis. He announced that the Foundation would soon share more information about the fund and how supporters can assist in making a difference in the lives of deserving Greek-American youth. Mr. Tomaras thanked Mrs. Georgia Sfondouris Mitchell for her significant role in guiding Mr. Paterakis to support the Foundation.

Mr. Tomaras also acknowledged the success of **Hellenic Birthright**, the Foundation's cultural enrichment and study abroad program, in collaboration with Anatolia College in Thessaloniki. He proudly announced that 22 students were on their way to Greece for the very



A Message from our Chairman

"Together, We Go the Distance"

Over a decade ago, I founded the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation—a non-profit organization that provides Greek-American youth the means to pursue a higher education, with the ultimate goal of becoming lifelong achievers, engaged citizens, and useful members of society.

It is with this mission, and with the preservation and practice of our Hellenic values, that we continue to go the distance as an organization and as a community. Over several years, we have awarded \$2.3 million dollars to 324 Greek-American undergraduates. This, my friends, is no easy feat and would not have been possible without the hard work of our staff, all board members, as well as the generous contributions of our supporters who believe in this mission.

With this support, we were also able to create a life-changing opportunity for Greek-American students who have *never been to Greece*. This program, **Hellenic Birthright**, has allowed 56 students with the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore their ancestral roots *for the very first time*—all while earning transferable college credits.

Programs such as this allow our Greek-American youth to connect with one another and create a foundation for networking. We also have our **PanHellenic Honors Society**, which brings together past and present award recipients to foster a community of young, striving, and successful Greek-Americans.

These students are the future—and together with your help—we truly can go the distance.

With endless gratitude,
Chris P. Tomaras

first time. To date, the Foundation has sponsored 56 undergraduates of Hellenic descent with this once in a life time opportunity. Mr. Tomaras thanked the donors who, once again, made this program possible with their support, thus enriching the lives and creating additional learning opportunities for college students.

In a surprise presentation by the Foundation's Executive Director, along with Vice Chairman Robert Buhler and the members of the Board of Directors of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation, three proclamations were presented to Mr. Tomaras from all the governmental agencies of Illinois: Governor of Illinois Bruce Rauner, Secretary of State Jesse White, and Mayor of Chicago Rahm Emmanuel. Each proclamation expressed gratitude to Mr. Tomaras for his commitment to education, Hellenism and philanthropy, recognizing his many untiring efforts to create life-long achievers and meaningful contributors to American society.

The evening of entertainment also made three guests very happy winners of \$17,500 in raffle prizes. Congratulations to Nicholas Apostol who won the 3rd cash prize of \$2,500; Bill J. Vranas, 2nd prize winner of \$5,000; and Steven Psihogios, who won the Grand Raffle prize of \$10,000!

Chris Tomaras, the Board of Directors, Academic Committee and Board of Advisors, along with Yanni Valsamas, Executive Director, express their congratulations to the award recipients and their gratitude to the guests and donors who made the Annual Awards Ceremony and Gala an ultra-spectacular success.

For more information about the Foundation and the event, please visit www.panhellenicscholarships.org.





"Superhuman" Dean Karnazes - 2015 Paradigm Award Recipient

Exercising Ethnic Pride

The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation was proud to honor ultra-marathon man **Dean Karnazes**, one of Time's "100 Most Influential People," as this year's Paradigm Award recipient. The Paradigm Award is given to a distinguished Greek-American whose career and personal achievements serve as an example for our scholarship recipients and align with the Foundation's mission. As the only individual to run 50 marathons, in 50 states, in **50 consecutive days**, Dean Karnazes truly exemplifies what it means to be a *paradigma*.

PHSF: What was your reaction when you were notified that the Foundation wanted to honor you with the Paradigm Award?

Dean: I was deeply honored, though I thought it was probably a mistake. We Greeks all have names that sound alike.

PHSF: How did you feel walking across the stage and accepting the award on June 20, 2015?

Dean: Being recognized in front of so many people I greatly admired was an emotional experience for me. As you can imagine, I was quite nervous. But having my running shoes on made me feel a bit more comfortable.

PHSF: What was your favorite part of the evening?

Dean: There were so many memorable moments, but talking with all of the student award recipients was certainly a highlight. They had so many questions to ask and their passion and energy was remarkable.

PHSF: How did it make you feel to be embraced by the Greek community of Chicago?

Dean: It felt terrific. I have many friends and relatives in the area and coming to Chicago feels like a homecoming of sorts. Chicago has such a vibrant and inclusive Greek community, I am grateful to have been so welcomed. I'll be back in October for the marathon if anyone wants to run with me.

PHSF: If you could give students a piece of advice, what would it be?

Dean: Don't neglect your body. Make physical fitness and healthy active living an important priority in your life. For without health, true happiness can never be achieved.

PHSF: Any exciting plans for the future you would like to share with us?

Dean: Most exciting is my forthcoming book about Pheidippides and the *Battle of Marathon*. The story is told from a runner's perspective and will make every Greek proud of our Hellenic birthright.



Meet the Mistress of Ceremonies – Krystal White

Our annual Awards Ceremony and Gala would not have been as wonderfully entertaining if it were not for our Mistress of Ceremonies Krystal White, who graciously emceed the event. Krystal White is a Greek African-American actress, writer, and producer who appreciates the art of storytelling. She has been on the set of *Harry Potter* as well as *Mamma Mia!*, and she recently completed a short film called *A Desert Sonata*. Krystal was honored to be chosen as our Emcee and found our event to be exciting and fulfilling as she states, *"I loved the smiles on all the students faces, I loved the heartfelt words of Mr. Tomaras when he talked about the Foundation and the obstacles he's overcome in order to still be here doing the wonderful things that he's doing, and I loved hearing nearly 500 guests laugh at my little jokes."*

The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation chose Krystal for many reasons, one being that she was a good example for our youth as a determined, independent woman working toward her dreams. Likewise, for Krystal, meeting Mr. Tomaras, an outstanding example and community leader, was an eye-opening experience, as she exclaims, *"Mr. Tomaras wears his heart on his sleeve and that's a beautiful thing. You can feel the kindness and warmth of it when you shake his hand. Mr. Tomaras is an example to follow, in many ways."*

Endowment Fund Benefactor – George A. Paterakis Family

A Special Thank You



We would like to extend our utmost gratitude to the George A. Paterakis Family, along with Mrs. Georgia Mitchell. Mr. Paterakis was a Chicago native and an accomplished businessman of Cretan descent whose goal had been the promotion and support of Hellenism and its values. Through several organizations and civic pursuits, Mr. Paterakis has stood as an activist for his local community as well as his cultural one. Mr. Paterakis passed away on September 1, 2014.

Mrs. Georgia Mitchell, an advisor to Mr. & Mrs. Paterakis for many years, is the reason the Foundation was the recipient of this very generous contribution. As a member of the Foundation's Board of Advisors, Mrs. Mitchell's knowledge and passion of our work led her to stress its importance to Mr. Paterakis. Consequently, he left the Foundation a \$500,000 gift which acted as a catalyst in the creation of our Endowment Fund.

In recognition of Mrs. Mitchell's musical and artistic contributions to the Greek-American community, a bequest provision requires that the gift be named "The Georgia Sfondouris Mitchell Music & Arts Scholarship Fund." The bequest also provides that from this Fund, two \$10,000 scholarships will be offered to students majoring in Music or the Arts *in perpetuity*.



A Message from our Executive Director

Gratitude with Every Step

On behalf of the Foundation, I want to thank each of you for playing a vital role in achieving our goal of providing scholarships to deserving students and celebrating some of the "best and brightest" Greek-American youth in the nation. Your contributions have allowed young men and women overcome financial burden and transform their struggles into successes.

For a second consecutive year, Mr. Tomaras doubled the value of all donations over \$1,000 through the Chairman's Challenge. With the help of our supporters, we raised \$225,000—which became **\$450,000**. By matching these funds, Mr. Tomaras continues to send a deep and meaningful message that your donation makes a real difference and has a significant impact on Greek-American students.

We express our gratitude to Paradigm Award recipient, Dean Karnazes, who truly presented himself as an example to our scholarship award recipients. We also extend our thanks Krystal White for accepting our invitation and so graciously emceeding our event.

We thank all of you for supporting the mission of our Foundation and helping us take the necessary steps to succeed not only as a non-profit organization, but as a Greek-American community.

Thank you,
Yanni Valsamas

2015 AWARDS CEREMONY & GALA

All photos are available for download on our website or prints may be ordered at www.digiproofs.com. Use code PHSF2015.



Your Meaningful Support Continues to Provide Life-Changing Opportunities

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2015 PanHellenic Award Recipients

Nicholas Alexander - Millsaps College

George Anagnostopoulos - The University of Redlands

Savannah Barkley - Rhode Island School of Design

Amanda Burdick - Illinois State University

Stephenia Deloglos - Virginia Commonwealth University

Alexandra Drechsler - Hellenic College Holy Cross

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Athanasia Giannetos - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Kiriaki Grammenidis - The Ohio State University

Gillian Gray - Whitman College

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Eleni Kaldis - Valparaiso University

Christos Kapsalis - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Efrosini Karabelas - Elmhurst College

Konstantinos Karabetzos - University of Michigan

Antigone Karvounarakis Delton - Vassar College

Kristen Kitsch - Saint Xavier University

Konstantine Kosmidis - The George Washington University

Anastasia Kourtis - Boston University

Alexandra Lilly - University of Georgia

Thomas Louvaris - University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Maria McClatchey - University of Pittsburgh

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Theophania Van Sickle - Hellenic College Holy Cross

Despina Wilson - Samford University

Helena Xeros - Washington University in St. Louis

Visit our website to read more about our
2015 Scholarship Award Recipients.



"It is an incredible privilege to be recognized by such an amazing organization that celebrates excellence in the Greek American community that I hold so dear to my heart, and that plays such a vital role in my life."

– Antigone Karvounarakis Delton, Vassar College



"It was an honor to be a 2015 recipient of the PanHellenic Scholarship. It is a privilege to be recognized by such a distinguished foundation. I am truly grateful."

– Christos Kapsalis, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.



"Thank you so much for your generous fiscal gift and allowing me to join the PanHellenic Honors Society. You create amazing opportunity and I am so blessed to have received your kindness."

– Despina Wilson, Samford University



"Thank you for selecting me as a PanHellenic Scholarship Academic recipient. I am grateful for the financial assistance but even more for the distinguished recognition of being a member of the PanHellenic Honors Society. This is a very special honor that I appreciate and I will do my best to uphold the characteristics of what this distinguished society emanates."

– Theofanis Rauch, Hellenic College Holy Cross



"Being a recipient of the PanHellenic Scholarship is much more than a signifier of one's own personal academic merit or commitment to one's education; it is also a respected honor within the Greek-American community and one that each year distinguishes the next generation of exceptional Greek American thinkers."

– Athanasia Giannetos, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign



"Socrates traveled for 22 hours (round trip) from his job at the Metropolitan Diocese Summer Camp to be in Chicago for the Awards Ceremony and Gala. He got up the next morning and went right back to northern Michigan where he is the waterfront director for all the kids at camp. He said it was so worth the effort and fully enjoyed the experience and being a part of the event. Thank you PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation."

– Athena Papageorgiou, Mother of Award recipient Socrates Papageorgiou, University of Michigan

Hellenic Birthright™

Hellenic Birthright Donors

The best charitable investment you can make is in the life of a young person. Thank you for giving Greek-American students their birth-given right and making it possible for them to visit Greece for the very first time.

PREMIER FOUNDING SPONSORS: \$25,000+

Stavros Niarchos Foundation (2012)

Mr. Chris P. Tomaras (2012, 2013, 2015)

FOUNDING SPONSORS: \$5,000+

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A Life-Changing Opportunity for Greek-American Youth

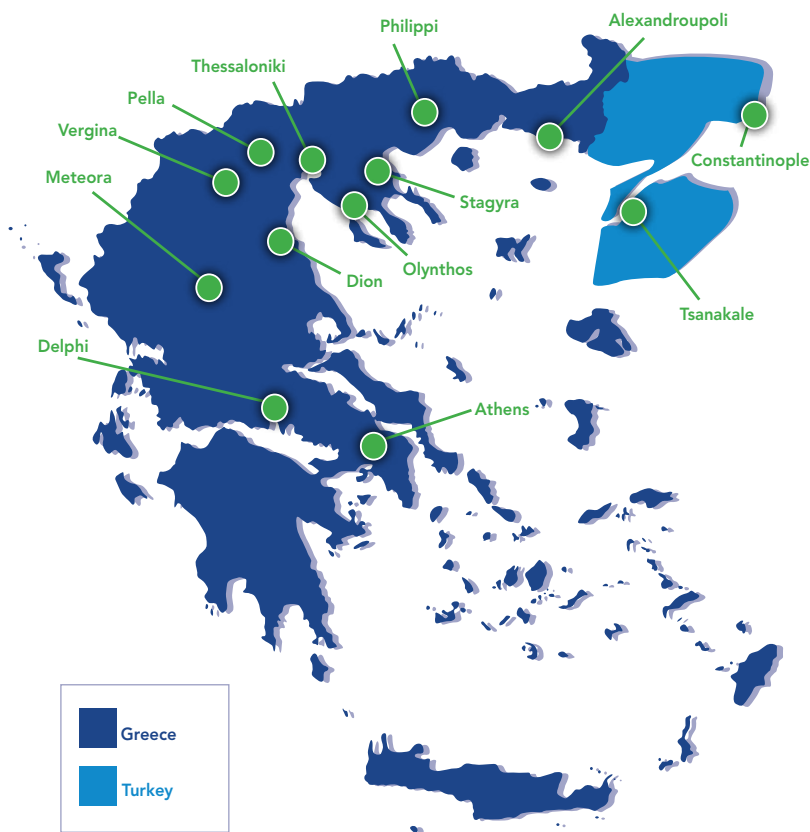
Greece: a vacation location for some and an ancestral home for others. It is a country that is rich in history with people who believe in *filoxenia*. The PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation is proud to have introduced Hellenic Birthright in 2012—a cultural enrichment and study abroad program specifically dedicated to exposing Greek-American students to their ancestral home *for the very first time*.

Hellenic Birthright was launched in collaboration with Anatolia College and their School of Higher Studies, the American College of Thessaloniki (ACT). A member of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, ACT offers courses and degrees that are transferable to and acceptable by any accredited educational institution in the U.S. This allows our Hellenic Birthright participants to earn college credit while being exposed to the glorious landmarks and cultural beauties of Greece firsthand.

While touring Greece, exploring the art, history, architecture, and people, students create a bond with their ancestral homeland that is memorable beyond words. As Zoe Gardner states, *"After only a few days here, I've experienced incredible hospitality and friendliness from not only the other 20 Greek-Americans on this journey, but also from the people of Thessaloniki. Every time we speak to a local they get excited that we are Greek-Americans visiting Greece and it reminds me how lucky I am to be here."*

Hellenic Birthright 2015 was a tremendous success, with participants visiting such historic sites as Thessaloniki, Vergina, Athens, Meteora, Edessa, Pella, Delphi, and Constantinople—culminating with a spiritually uplifting visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to Hagia Sophia.





2015 Hellenic Birthright Participants

William Anagnos – Indiana University - Bloomington
 Nikephoros Argeroplos – University of Wisconsin-Madison
 Demetra Arianas – University of Illinois at Chicago
 Maria Arianas – University of Illinois at Chicago
 Alexander Bageris – Oakland University
 Pauline Barry – The American International College
 Irene Christoforou – SUNY Binghamton University
 Kaitlyn Collins-Theodore – Eastern Michigan University
 Marina Deligiannis – Augustina College
 Nicole Diamantas – University of Miami
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 Jacob Gaetanos – LaGrange College
 Zoe Gardner – University of California - Berkeley
 Katerina Jordan – Ohio Northern Univ. School of Pharmacy
 Hannah Malevitis – Western Michigan University
 Blake Mitchell – University of Miami
 Stephanie Plakas – University of Tennessee - Knoxville
 Evan Platis – California State University - San Marcos
 Ioanna Psychogios – Loyola University Chicago
 Anastasia Tryfiates – Christopher Newport University
 Christina Zikos – Rutgers University



"Three nights into this trip of a lifetime, and I've already experienced so much in this unique country. Even while staring at the landscape, looking at its distinct topography and shoreline as I flew into Greece's airspace, it was hard to believe I was finally here: the place my parents once called home."

– Christina Zikos, Rutgers University



"I know before I came on this trip I would do a Google search of Thessaloniki a numerous amount of times. I just wanted to know what to expect, but once I stepped off that plane all the assumptions I created in my mind for this place went completely out the window. It's the scent of fresh fish, the richness of the Greek coffee, and the beyond gorgeous scenery that will put your Google searches to shame."

– Hannah Malevitis, Western Michigan University



"Everyone in the program is just as I had thought they'd be. Having so much in common with everyone has made us so close so fast, and being from all over the country is what makes it amazing. This town has been so kind to all of us, especially the ones who cannot speak Greek well or at all. The town is amazing with its signs, architecture and its markets. The restaurants are breath taking and everyday is a new experience."

– William Anagnos, Indiana University, Bloomington



Stephanie Plakas μαζί με Nicole Diamantas και 19 ακόμη
11 ώρες · Instagram · 📷

"As soon as I saw you, I knew an adventure was going to happen" I'm so thankful that this study abroad adventure to the homeland gave us many new friends and memories that we will never forget! ❤️
#HellenicBirthrightassemble #LAVyouall



👍 Μου αρέσει! 🗨 Σχολιάστε ➦ Κοινοποιήστε

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Scholar Spotlight – The Sky is the Limit!



Andreas Diamantis

Andreas is a 2005 Scholarship Award recipient who graduated from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University with a degree in Professional Aeronautics and a minor in Safety and Management. He was on the Dean's List every semester and subsequently received his pilot's license from the Phoenix East Flight School. Andreas returned to Greece and passed the Civil Aviation Authority exams, eventually being hired for Olympic Air. Today, Andreas serves as Captain and we could not be prouder! "Receiving an award from the Foundation allowed me to pursue my dreams of becoming a pilot.

I was able to attend school in the United States which awarded me some amazing opportunities. I am happy to be in Greece now, contributing to this wonderful country and doing something that I love. Thank you Mr. Tomaras and everyone at the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation."

Nicholas Lalos

Nick is a 2007 Scholarship Award recipient who received his degree in Agricultural and Consumer Economics from the University of Illinois, graduating with highest honors. Additionally, he completed the professional pilot program at the university.

Following graduation Nick took a job in Phoenix, Arizona working as a flight instructor. For the next two years he accumulated flight hours in the hopes of making the transition to the airlines. In July 2013 he was hired by Skywest Airlines as First Officer on the Embraer EMB-120 turboprop. He spent his first year at the company based out of San Francisco International Airport, before transferring to Chicago O'Hare in July 2014. Nick now flies the Bombardier Canadair Regional Jet (CRJ) and will be upgrading to captain in the coming year! "I have the opportunity to live my dream every time I go to work, and I look forward to what the future holds. I owe so much of my success to the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation. The generous scholarship I received allowed me to more easily focus on pursuing my goals.

My family and I are forever grateful and appreciative of the PanHellenic Scholarship Foundation's noble cause. Thank you to everyone that supports and contributes to this great foundation."



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