

# FOCUS

NORTH  AMERICA

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



# FOCUS

NORTH ✚ AMERICA

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mr. Brian Gerich, Chairman  
Ms. Georgia Kazakis, Vice-Chair  
Mr. Joe Abdallah, Vice-Chair  
Dr. Julie Papatheofanis, Secretary  
Mrs. Lory Barsdate Easton  
Dr. Nick Pandelidis

Mr. Charles Ajalat  
Honorary Member (Founder)

## Advisory Board

Andrew Natsios  
Peter Marudas  
Maria Foscarinis  
Kh. Frederica & Fr. Gregory Mathewes-Green  
Joel Smith  
Theodora Polamalu



## FOUNDER'S LETTER

Twenty-two years ago, in 1991, my dream was to have for the Orthodox Church, in addition to an international social action ministry, an operational, “hands-on” domestic ministry in North American cities. The dream was to have a domestic ministry infused with an Orthodox ethos of transforming lives—both helping transition those in poverty to self-sustaining, fulfilled lives and helping the volunteers to love their neighbor in a God-pleasing way. God has blessed the fulfillment of that dream in FOCUS North America.

In four short years, solely through His blessings, across the continent, FOCUS North America has grown exponentially and in 2013 is now serving each year 120,000 fully prepared meals, and distributing over 125,000 items of clothing, 175,000 food pantry items, and \$500,000 of household items. Our feed-

ing activities for those in need, in part, include meat from our own cattle ranch located near Cleveland. These meals and distributions are in addition to the essential employment, healthcare and housing services that FOCUS provides each and every single day.

In 2013, we expect to launch two new important programs, both of which we have been working on for the past two years. The first is the opening of our Pittsburgh medical clinic for mid-income folks who don't qualify for Medicaid but can't afford health insurance. The second is particularly exciting to me: with our new shoe

*As I leave the active Board of this God-founded ministry,...I do so with great thankfulness for each of you who have made FOCUS North America the vibrant, effective, and efficient ministry that it is today.*

distribution program, FOCUS will be working in over 30 cities (including our Center and YES program cities) giving two pairs of new shoes to almost every homeless child. Revenues this year should exceed \$10 million, with over

95% of funds going directly toward helping people in need.

Equally important as the programming and revenue to support it,

FOCUS' volunteer base has grown to more than 6,000 committed people who actively and regularly volunteer with FOCUS to serve the needy in their own communities. Volunteers were a major factor in the success of our "Tackle Poverty" Gala in Los Angeles, featuring Theodora and Troy Polamalu. The gala was incredibly successful, with over 440 people in attendance, more than 25 area churches represented and hierarchs, or their representatives, from five Orthodox jurisdictions.

As I leave the active Board of this God-founded ministry, I happily continue to serve as an honorary member, to lend to this very important ministry whatever talents God



has given me. I do so with great thankfulness for each of you who have made FOCUS North America the vibrant, effective and ef-

ficient ministry that it is today. My sincerest thanks and gratitude go to all of the supporters and to the board members, volunteers, and staff. I have tremendous confidence that FOCUS will continue ever more successfully in the future towards the vision of operating in at least 100 cities across North America, each with a budget of at least \$1 million, and each with a base of 200-500 volunteers, aggregating to a national volunteer corps of over 20,000 people!

2012 has been a wonderful year for FOCUS North America. With unanimity of spirit from each of the local directors, our Executive Director, and the Board, FOCUS North America has reached the

second stage. We hope and pray that, with your support, this trajectory will continue so that FOCUS North America can serve even more people in need in 2013.

Last, but by far not least, FOCUS North America and I are grateful to have Brian Gerich, one of the most outstanding persons I have ever known, succeed me as Chairman of the Board. His expertise, love, dedication, and humility will surely guide FOCUS North America to even greater heights, all for God's glory and to serve those in need. ✝

Your brother in Christ,

*Charles R. Ajalat*

CHARLES R. AJALAT



## Gather a group from your parish to join FOCUS in Appalachia!

Participate in a week-long service trip with FOCUS in North Carolina, renovating the homes of disadvantaged senior citizens while learning about the Orthodox perspective on service and love for those in need. No construction experience necessary!

*It was such a blessing to go to FOCUS Appalachia as a parish and work alongside people we worship with every Sunday. We all came home charged, wondering, 'what can we do next?'*

-CRAIG GODSHALL

**Call 1-866-267-3083 or email [info@focusna.org](mailto:info@focusna.org) for more information or to reserve your group's trip**

# FOCUS

NORTH + AMERICA



**A**s we reflect upon the work and success of FOCUS North America this past year, we begin by recognizing the dire need of the poor in America in 2012: A devastating 50 million people have fallen below the poverty line—the highest rate in almost 50 years. 16% of Americans—20% percent of children—are now living in poverty with nearly twice that

amount living scarcely above the official poverty line. Most of those living in poverty are employed but still struggle to make ends meet. These are men, women, and children from every walk of life, outside of any bias or stereotype.

Despite these staggering statistics, FOCUS has not despaired. We have served a record number of families, providing action-oriented and sustainable solutions to poverty in communities across America. FOCUS created more jobs, provided more housing, fed and counseled more families and stood as an Orthodox Christian witness to the healing love of Christ in more areas of the country than ever before.

Though unemployment and poverty continue to rise to almost unseen levels across America, FOCUS has never been stronger. We invite you to take some time and read through the following pages to discover the many stories, programs, and people that are serving the needy, healing the broken, and transforming lives. We encourage you to engage with FOCUS: join our volunteer corps, serve at a FOCUS Center, or sign your young people up for a life-changing YES trip.

Through your support, we continue to grow and expand. In 2013, we plan to open the first Orthodox Christian health center, staffed by Orthodox physicians and surgeons who will provide badly needed services to the uninsured. In the fall, we will launch a marquee initiative that will help 200,000 homeless children as they struggle to stay in school and get the education they need to break the generational cycle of poverty that afflicts too many American families.

Thank you for joining us in this crucial ministry to provide assistance here in our own neighborhoods, and on our own streets. We are FOCUS North America, a growing national movement to end poverty in America, and we are excited to have you with us! +

In Christ,

NICHOLAS CHAKOS

Executive Director



## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2012

### Assets

Cash	\$ 298,447
Receivables	60,981
Prepaid expenses	7,682
Investments	12,453
Property and equipment	7,880
Other assets	7,680
	<u>\$ 395,123</u>

### TOTAL ASSETS

### Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities	
Accounts payable	<u>\$ 11,087</u>

### TOTAL LIABILITIES

Net assets	
Unrestricted	267,443
Temporarily restricted	<u>116,593</u>

### TOTAL NET ASSETS

### TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS:

FOCUS North America  
600 N. Bell Avenue, Building 1, Suite 115  
Pittsburgh, PA 15106

Toll Free.1-866-267-3083

[www.focusnorthamerica.org](http://www.focusnorthamerica.org)

Email: [info@focusna.org](mailto:info@focusna.org)

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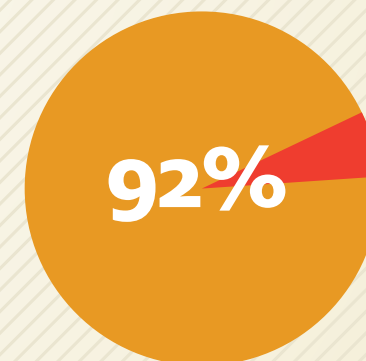
## CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND EXPENSES

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2012

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
<b>REVENUES</b>			
Contributions	\$ 725,983	\$ 49,962	\$ 775,945
In-kind contributions	1,160,263	-	1,160,263
Registration fees	52,985	-	52,985
Investment income	3,944	-	3,944
Event income	201,173	-	201,173
Other income	22,683	-	22,683
Net assets released from restrictions	100,997	(100,997)	-0-
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<u>\$ 2,268,028</u>	<u>(51,035)</u>	<u>\$2,216,993</u>
Expenses			
Program services	\$ 1,894,932	-	\$1,894,932
Management and general	187,634	-	187,634
Fundraising	121,853	-	121,853
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>2,204,419</u>	<u>\$ (51,035)</u>	<u>2,204,419</u>
<b>CHANGES IN NET ASSETS</b>	63,609	167,628	12,574
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	203,834	\$ 116,593	371,462
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 267,443</u>	<u></u>	<u>\$ 384,036</u>

**92% of public donations go directly to helping those in need**

*The FOCUS Board of Directors generously contribute to cover the majority of the organization's administrative and fundraising costs.*



# STRENGTH IN COMMUNITY

Each year, thousands of people come together through FOCUS North America, giving their time and talents to serve the hungry, heal the broken, and minister to the afflicted. Their efforts and giving help transform the lives of those in need. In return, they receive more than they could have imagined. By gathering together, our volunteers heal others while strengthening themselves and witnessing the love of Christ.



**“Give, and  
it will be  
given to you.”**

**LUKE 6:38**



*“Coming to FOCUS has given me a whole new way of seeing people. It warms me and inspires me to continue to give. I’ve learned that Orthodoxy goes beyond liturgy—it’s a way of life.”*

**Albert Salsich, St. Louis**



*"FOCUS is unique in that I have been able to develop strong relationships with those who come in for help. They then begin to see Christ in us [the volunteers] and they recognize that we're not just objects of their service. Barriers are broken and we begin to really listen and share together."*

**Michael Hanna, Orange County**



*Anne volunteered together with her daughter, Katherine, who has since joined FOCUS as an intern and has been inspired to pursue a course of study in college that will allow her to give back to the community. "As a mother, it's been wonderful to see her grow through this experience."*

**Anne Ketz, Minneapolis**



*"The FOCUS women's support group was created to connect Orthodox women mentors with disadvantaged mothers in their communities. "Women need to know that they are loved and accepted no matter where they've been. We empower each other. We lead by example and offer unconditional love. We all come in to FOCUS and we don't want to leave – it's such a joy."*

**Najet Field, Pittsburgh**



# STRENGTH IN SERVICE

*Thanks to your continued support, FOCUS has made a significant difference in the lives of so many! And each year as we grow, we are able to serve even more people in need.*

## ACCOMPLISHED IN 2012

## WHAT WE DO

## PROJECTED FOR 2013

**51,024  
hot meals  
served**

**FOOD** FOCUS provides fully prepared meals to the homeless and supplemental food pantry items to families.

**120,000  
hot meals  
served**

**562  
people  
trained/employed**

**OCCUPATION** FOCUS' job training and creation program works with unemployed and underemployed people to give them skills and sustainable professions.

**1,100  
people  
trained/employed**

**128,030  
articles of  
clothing distributed**

**CLOTHING** FOCUS collects & distributes gently used clothing, furniture and household items.

**513,000  
articles of  
clothing distributed**

**6,000  
volunteers**


**UNDERSTANDING** FOCUS brings Orthodox Christians together to offer hands-on volunteer opportunities, combining our individual strengths for the greater good of our underserved communities.

**10,000  
volunteers**

**408  
people given  
shelter and housing  
support**

**SHELTER** FOCUS operates homeless shelters, renovates and repairs homes, and provides assistance with securing permanent housing for homeless families.

**1,050  
people given  
shelter and housing  
support**



*“Let your light so shine before men,  
that they might see your good works,  
and GLORIFY YOUR FATHER  
who is in heaven.”*

MATTHEW 5:16

## It Takes A Village

by Father Paisius Altschul

In 2005, with the blessing of His Grace Bishop LONGIN, St Mary of Egypt Orthodox Church began a ministry to serve the poor at the corner of 31st and Troost in Kansas City. Our earliest Vision and Mission stated, “The time is now to discover the amazing person in front of us as the image or icon of God. *Our vision is to experience life together as a community, as a village, where every human being is treated as if he or she were Christ Himself.*”

In our first few years most of our emphasis was on the individual – meals for the needy, food pantry, individual therapy and case management, helping people with obtaining identity documents for jobs and health care. We sought (and continue) to treat each person that came in the door as the icon of Christ, knowing that each of us is made in the image (ikon in Greek) of God.

However, through deepening of the relationships with those we serve, it became

increasingly clear that more was needed (Isaiah 58:6-12). Many were without a sense of connection in the larger society. Through visits to Ethiopia, Albania and Kosovo, and then Serbia to Siberia, I became convinced that a key part of our work was to facilitate restoration of a sense of village in the urban core. The old African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child” is true of children, but to it could be added “and to sustain the adults!”

As Orthodox Christians, we have an

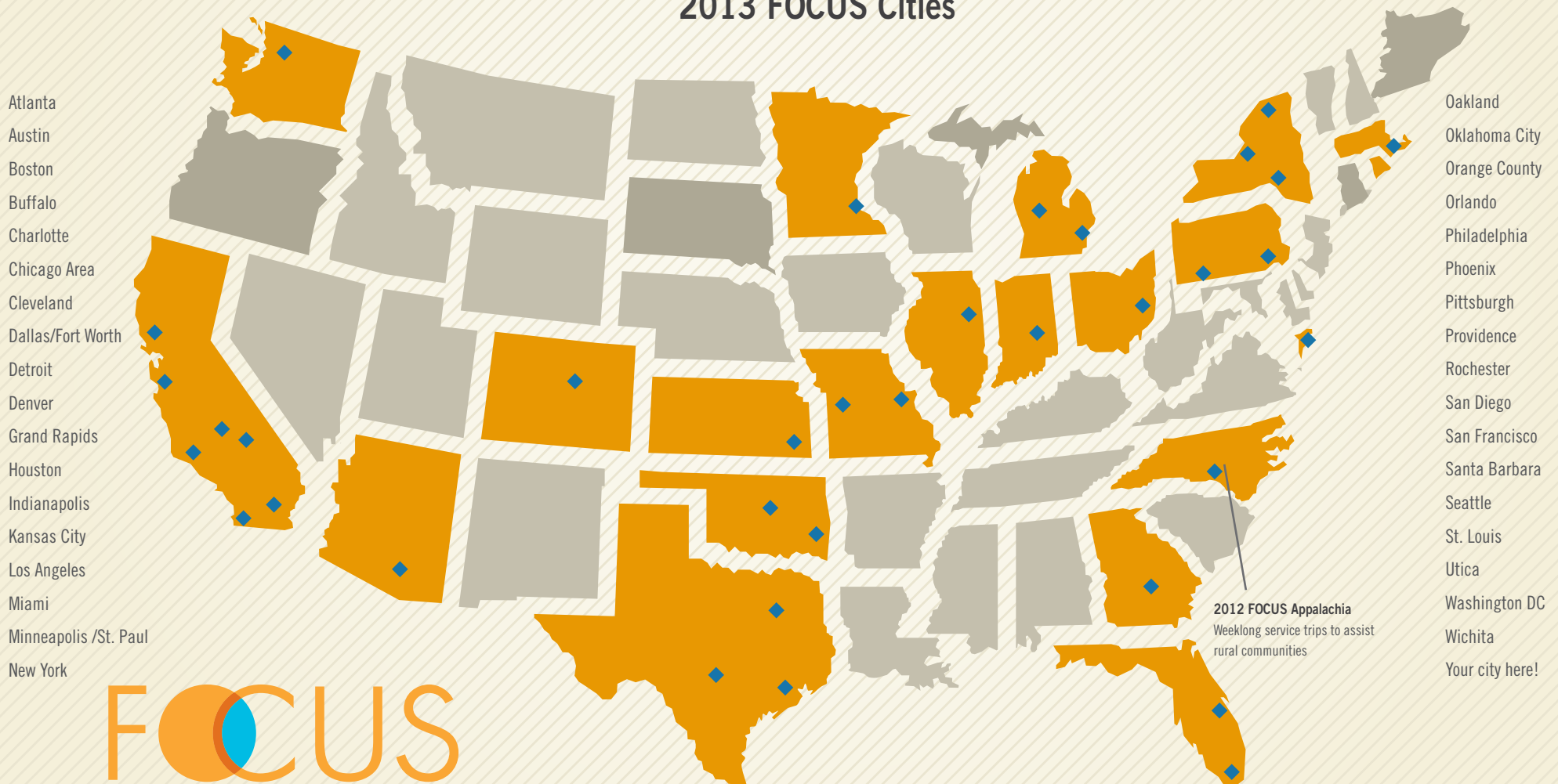
*continued on page 18*

# Faith in Action. Strength in Numbers. This is the FOCUS Nation:

**What is the FOCUS Nation?** From California to New York, Minnesota to Texas, the FOCUS Nation is a national movement of Orthodox Christians, united in faith and joined by a desire to provide action-oriented and sustainable solutions to poverty in communities across America. FOCUS has operations and life-changing youth development opportunities in more than 30 cities.

**Call or email to join the FOCUS Nation today!**

## 2013 FOCUS Cities



**FOCUS**  
NORTH + AMERICA

integrated world view. We affirm that the Holy Spirit is “everywhere present and fills all things.” Whenever Orthodoxy has taken root in other cultures, a natural, holistic transformation has taken place. Monasteries became villages. The people, animals, plants and land all benefited by the presence of those who were being transformed. As Orthodox Christians we have more than a quick prayer to offer those in need. We have a Way of Life filled with love, healing, and the power of restoration for man and creation. Thus, our life together is to become an icon, so that those around us, by our way of life, will see the works and glorify, not us, but our Father in Heaven.

In 2009, a group of Orthodox Christians from across the country gathered in Kansas City. Entrepreneurs, business people and visionaries alike came together to discuss the multiplication of our ministry throughout the continent—and in such a way, FOCUS North America was formed.

My prayer is that local FOCUS Centers can truly become living Icons; that in coming together Centers will become the hands, feet, eyes, and mouth of Christ—His body to the surrounding communities where people will pass by and through, encountering the Living Holy Trinity in Whom we dwell. ✝



## Sign up today for a YES trip near you!

The YES Program works with FOCUS Centers and Orthodox parishes nationwide to provide opportunities for youth and young adults to engage in formative service activities over a weekend. Through their experience, participants come to see that they are valued, capable, and equipped to respond to poverty by being God’s servants in their own communities.

**16 trips last year and over 400 participants**

Upcoming trips in:

Los Angeles, CA  
St. Louis, MO  
Denver, CO  
Oklahoma City, OK

Grand Rapids, MI  
Washington, DC  
Kansas City, MO  
Pittsburgh, PA

Santa Barbara, CA  
Phoenix, AZ  
Detroit, MI  
Providence, RI

Utica, NY  
San Diego, CA  
Your city here!



“The YES trip is not a promotion, but a real, true experience of serving and being the person that God calls us to be every day. This trip inspired me to start working within my own community and to organize different ways of serving people in my hometown. The view on life and of those less fortunate that YES helped me develop a relationship with will forever influence my life. Thank you YES and FOCUS North America!”

- ELIZABETH WATERS



Sign up at: [www.yesnorthamerica.org](http://www.yesnorthamerica.org)



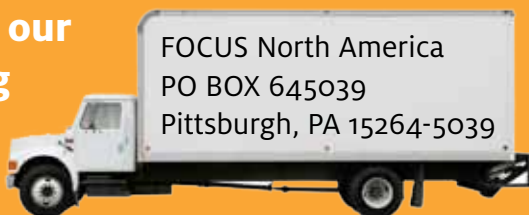
NORTH AMERICA

PO BOX 645039  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-5039

# WE'VE MOVED!

After four years of sharing space with Reconciliation Services in Kansas City, FOCUS North America's national office has moved into our own facility in Pittsburgh. FOCUS would like to thank Fr. Paisius Altschul and everyone at Reconciliation Services for their tremendous support during the early years of FOCUS.

**Please note our  
new mailing  
address for  
donations:**



**Toll Free Tel: 1-866-267-3083**

**Email: [info@focusna.org](mailto:info@focusna.org)**

**Text "FOCUS" to 52000 to give \$10!**