



"THE SMILE OF THE CHILD"

FOUNDATION AND MISSION OF THE ASSOCIATION

"We all know and talk about children in the streets who can't smile. They can't smile because they don't have money, or toys, or food and some of them don't even have parents. Just think and leave all the talking behind: let's unite and give whatever we can to poor children, Albanians, white and black. They are all children and deserve a smile. This association will be called: "The Smile of the Child". Let's help, if we unite we can accomplish it." (From Andreas's diary, November 1995)

A 10-year-old boy created the Association "The Smile of the Child" back in 1995. Its objective is to support all children in Greece and Cyprus that may be in danger or whose needs cannot be met by their parent(s) or guardian.

Andreas, our young founder who suffered from terminal cancer, had expressed his strong wish to establish an Association that would help all children, regardless of race or nationality.

"The Smile of the Child" is a registered non-profit, non-governmental organisation. The Association protects children's rights and provides them with emotional and psychological support. Children, who suffer from health problems or any type of abuse, neglect or abandonment, are within the organization's mandate.

OUR MANDATE INCLUDES

- ❖ Immediate Interventions by trained and experienced social workers, psychologists and other personnel to rescue children in danger of physical harm and/or sexual exploitation or abuse.
- ❖ The Greek National Helpline for Children: Its toll free, 24 hour Help Line "**SOS 1056**"
- ❖ Vice Presidency of Missing Children Europe
- ❖ Member of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), Washington D.C., U.S.A.
- ❖ **Recognized Greek National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children:** Work with the police, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice and international agencies to locate and assist missing & exploited children.
- ❖ **National & International Advocacy of Children's Rights and Child Protection**
- ❖ We provide safety to 200 children, at the moment, in our 8 community homes. The children's ages range from infancy to adolescence and custody is granted to the Association when a court deems the home environment inappropriate. Children who reach the age of majority are not turned away. Like a family, we continue to support and care for them until they can be independent, productive members of our community. Life in our community homes resembles a traditional home environment. The children are tended by trained childcare workers and attend the local public schools. They are offered unconditional support, attention and love.
- ❖ Ambulances equipped with the latest technology in Athens and in rural areas. The ambulances are used to transport high-rise newborns and children and operate under the umbrella of EKAB (Hellenic Centre for Emergency Services).

- ❖ Our offices in Athens, Thessalonica, Patra, Pyrgo, Halkida and Corinth are accessible to the public and offer psychological counseling to families and children in their respective areas. Counseling is offered for a range of issues from physical and sexual abuse to assisting families that are socially and/or economically marginalized.
- ❖ Assistance in utilising social services offered by both public and private organizations
- ❖ Material Support to families and children living in poverty through our Bank of Goods programme
- ❖ Coverage of medical costs for children facing life-threatening health problems.
- ❖ Organizing volunteer drives for blood, platelets and bone marrow donations
- ❖ Psychological support and creative programmes in Children's Hospitals in Athens, Thessalonica and Patra
- ❖ Pediatric and Dental Prevention Programme, carried out in schools across Greece.
- ❖ Presentations at public schools throughout Greece on prevention and detection of child abuse.
- ❖ Creative Entertainment Centres in the Athens and Thessalonica International Airports, in the departures' level.

"The Smile of the Child" has been a member of the "Missing Kids Europe" since 2001. Being part of the Federation and holding its Vice Presidency has increased our effectiveness in combating the worldwide phenomenon of missing and sexually exploited children.

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