



**THALIA, the Dodecanesean Association of
Arthritis-related Autoimmune Disease Sufferers**

Dear Friends,

THALIA, the Dodecanesean Association of Arthritis-related Autoimmune Disease Sufferers, was established in June 2002 upon an initiative by **Mrs. Thalia GEORGA**, seconded by a group of volunteers sharing the same cause.

From the date of its establishment and through to 2008, the activities of our Association **were hosted** on the premises of the *Best Western Plaza Hotel*, with the compliments of Mr. Georgios Georgas whereas since **July 2008, we have benefited from our own Home!**

As a matter of fact, after several years of copious efforts of our members, capitalizing on a Ministerial Order by the then Minister for Health and Social Solidarity Mr. Dimitrios Avramopoulos and his Deputy Minister **Mr. Georgios Konstantopoulos** and thanks to the decisive assistance of the Director, at the time, of the II Health Services Administration Unit for the Region of Southern Aegean, Pediatrician **Mr. Michail Noussias**, our Association **was granted the right** to use an old, abandoned building within the courtyard area of the Old Hospital of the City of Rhodes, the reconstruction of which was done by special reconstruction units and a group of volunteers of our Association.

Thus, on the **17th of July 2008**, we were finally, after a series of thorough refurbishment works on the premises, in a position to officially inaugurate the use of our own premises, as of an official ceremony celebrated in the presence of Mr. **Georgios Konstantopoulos**, Minister for Health and Social Solidarity at the time. It was the outcome of a joint, concerted effort waged by volunteers and friends of the Association, so we righteously took pride in hearing the Minister refer to our Association as **“A Model for the area of the Dodecanese”!**

Its name – **“THALIA”** – was chosen upon a proposal by several MDs, scientists and friends of the Association in order to honour its founder. Besides this is a name carrying a **message of optimism**, since **Thalia** has, already since the ancient times, been evocative of the resurgence of the vegetation after the cold months of winter, along with prosperity, brightness, vividness and a sense of wellbeing. Etymologically «**ευ θάλλω**» means wellbeing, prosperity and happiness.

Once we had the name, we knew it was time we endowed our Association with a logo. We therefore opted for the **effigy of Thalia**, Muse of the Comedy, holding a smiling masque in her right hand, the representation of which we owe to the artful design of one of our friends, namely **Mr. Dimitris Pezouvanis**, who chose to be inspired for his work by a depiction of the Muse on an **ancient mosaic** found on the **island of Kos** and currently on show at the Archeological Museum of the City of Rhodes. Such model, though, we thought we should enhance by another feature: that of a pensive masque, held by the Muse in her left hand, reminiscent of the fact that life has two facets, a positive but also a negative one.

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Official accreditation by the Hellenic Ministry for Health and Social Solidarity / General Secretariat for Civil Protection
6, Erythrou Stavrou St., 85100 Rhodes
Telephone & Fax: 22410 31290 Days and hours of operation: Monday to Friday 13:30-16:30

More information on our actions ...

✉ info@thalia.gr 🌐 <http://www.thalia.gr> 🇬🇷 Δωδεκανησιακός Σύλλογος Θάλεια

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Laurels are known to symbolize the trophy in acknowledgement of perseverance, endurance, combativeness, hope, kindness and the spirit of participation (an inspiration of our **friend Frangiskos Vasileiou**) whereas the Circle enclosing all such features, symbolize the Cycle of Life and the objectives our Association is meant to pursue.

In September 2003 having completed one year from its foundation , our Association organized the 'Walking for Life and Hope' due to a proposal of our President and a group of specialized volunteers . Since then it is held every year close to the date , the ' Holy Cross' is celebrated in Greece, because each one of us has a story , a road and a hopeWith the participation of trekkers and the aid of many sponsors in order to tighten the human relationships through a simple but daily activity such as walking- and the awareness of the citizens in health issues and precautions.

Dion Zachariou, himself an accomplished Rhodian artist, conceptualized and further created a work of art which he so lovingly offered our Association. His work of Art 'Life flying and Soul hovering ' illustrate the leaflets and decorate the T-shirts of our Walking Activity all those years. His inspiration came from a phrase by Mrs. Thalia Georga, President of the Association who at one said ***"I wish I were a bird so that I could fly over Rhodes; to me, every person suffering from an autoimmune disease is like a bird – we are like a swarm of birds so yearning to fly away, free!"***.

In 2013 we presented our new limited T-shirts decorated by Vangelis Pavlides an accomplished Rhodian cartoonist

- On 27th September 2003 the Greek Company of study and confrontation of AIDS awarded our president an Honorary Certificate for her participation in the 15th Greek Congress.
- **Our Association, honoured by the Hellenic Ministry for Health, Welfare & Social Solidarity Matters and the Hellenic National Radiotelevision Corporation (ERT) on the 5th of December 2003, by way of an award in acknowledgment of its services and social contribution as the "best volunteer-based, non-governmental association in the Department of the Dodecanese" on occasion of the "World Volunteerism" Day, is already by virtue of relevant provisions in its statutes meant to serve benevolent, charitable and non-profit purposes.**
- On 8th of December 2009 our Association was awarded a Certificate of Distinction for its voluntary work by the Prefecture of the Dodecanese Islands.
- On 21st of March 2012 the Association of the Blood Donors of Rhodes 'Blood Brotherhood' awarded our President a Honorary Certificate for the co-organization of 'Walking for Life' and the continuation of voluntary work of our Association.
- On 27st of March 2013 the Vice Mayor of Ialysos, awarded our president a plaque of Distinction Price for the voluntary work of our Association and the awareness of the Rhodian people on Autoimmune Diseases.
- On 26th of January 2014 the Medical Association of Rhodes awarded our president and our Association a Honorary Certificate in recognition of the work and contribution to the society.
- On 1st February the athletic Association 'Diagoras" awarded our Association a Honorary Certificate for its social offer.
- On 14th December our Association was awarded as a sponsor to the Social Grocery by the South Aegean Region.

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- On 10th of May 2015, on Mother's Day, our Association was awarded by the Association of Women of Kremastis.
- On 7th of August 2015 our Association was awarded by the Municipality of Rhodes for its voluntary work.

Moreover, our Association received an **official accreditation** by the **Hellenic Ministry for Health and Social Solidarity/General Secretariat for Civil Protection**, by virtue of **Ministerial Order No.Γ/OIK 30008 published in Issue 1053/V.(b)./ Issue No. 04-04-2012 of the Official Journal of the Hellenic State.**

Our Association's purposes being:

A. Informing and creating awareness on the nature as well as on the ways to treat Autoimmune Diseases. In that context, we have, by June 2012, been able to host as many as **30 Socio-Medical Events, featuring several illustrious Greek as well as American specialists who volunteered to participate.**

B. Providing Support,

i) In **2004** alone, our Association carried out numerous **weekly support programs, featuring volunteers, physiotherapists and a social worker.**

ii) **To provide financial support to children faced with living difficulties and suffering from chronic conditions, in consistent cooperation, at all times, with a social worker.**

C. Sensitizing public opinion, since its establishment and until January 2012, our Association hosted **40 Social Events**, some of which have since become regular milestones on the yearly agenda, namely:

✓ Celebration of the coming of every New Year in the Hellenic traditional way (i.e. by having the **Saint-Basil Cake** of our Association cut as of a formal ceremony, as of which we **officially commend** all those who, by way of their contribution, assist our Association in the fulfillment of its objectives.

✓ Hosting of the **"WALKING FOR LIFE AND HOPE"** Event, with the participation of trekkers. This particular event, made possible thanks to the generous support of sponsors, aims at **reinforcing ties among people** through an otherwise trivial, daily activity as well as creating awareness among the citizens on health issues and on the possibilities of prevention of various diseases. A financial aid has come to be a standard feature of this particular initiative.

✓ Celebration of the **WORLD ARTHRITIS DAY**, with the participation of volunteers. **Part of the revenue generated as of that specific venue is then channelled through a social worker as a form of financial aid to children in living difficulty and suffering from chronic conditions.**

✓ Publication, over the period from **May 2009** through too **September 2011** of a quarterly, four-page bulletin titled **"THE NEWS OF THALIA - THE DODECANESEAN ASSOCIATION OF ARTHRITIS-RELATED AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES AND LUPUS"**, featuring MD-authored medical content articles, news on our Association's activities, recipes and other practical "tips".

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Given the adverse financial circumstances affecting practically everyone in this country, our Journal will for the moment come out only once a year, namely every August, assorted with an Invitation to participate in the Walking Venue and enriched with references to both past and future activities of our Association.

Between any two editions, however, we will be sending out quarterly newsletters to our members and sponsors, updating them on those of our activities already materialized and providing them with insight on our projected initiatives.

As a matter of fact, our activities go well beyond the strictly perceived “internal scope of actions” of an Association such as ours:

- Responding to a summons, echoing a conscientious choice by the then Minister for Health, Welfare and Social Solidarity Matters Mrs. Mariliza Xenogiannakopoulou, back in March 2010, our Association’s Vice-President Mrs. Sofia Kariofyllaki and one of our members, namely Mrs. Aikaterini Giannakaki, were appointed to the Board of Trustees of the “Old Age Home of the Dodecanese” as members of a certified volunteering association.
- Mrs. Thalia GEORGA, President of our Association and our Secretary, Mrs. Eleni Alexandri, have already since March 2011 been full-fledged members on the Consultation Committee established upon an initiative by the Municipality of Rhodes.
- Our Association responded to an invitation by the Municipality of Rhodes to come up with actions conformant to the statutory purposes of our Association and meant to serve as a context for a comprehensive scope of targeted activities throughout 2012, the common denominator of which shall be the aim to improve life quality for dwellers in the quarter of Aghii Apostoli.
- Last but not least, President Mrs. Thalia Georga, together with Mmes Eleni Alexandri, Secretary and Georgia Rigopoulou, Social Worker and Head of the Administrative Services of the Association, had the pleasure of participating in the **1st Convention of Associations of Persons suffering from Rheumatic Conditions**, hosted by the **Hellenic Society of Antirheumatic Struggle** (Greek acronym: ΕΑ.Ε.ΑΝ.Α.) on **Friday the 05th and Saturday the 06th of October 2012**.

An account of the experiences of a person suffering from an autoimmune disease can be found in the book “My “friend” and I”, authored by the Founder of our Association, Mrs. Thalia Georga.

The main purpose of our Association has been and will remain to stand by and efficiently assist everyone, irrespective of whether one suffers from an autoimmune or any other kind of disease, whilst scrupulously maintaining the utmost medical confidentiality of everyone’s condition.

A decisive support – both morally and materially – comes from volunteer MDs from various fields of specialty as well as from physical condition tutors, physiotherapists, social worker as well as from innumerable friends, sponsors and Mass Media representatives – be it from the conventional Press or from the realm of Electronic Information – all of who valiantly second us in our endeavors and to who we are infinitely and eternally grateful.

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Those interested in becoming active members of our Association are kindly requested to visit our Offices at 6, Erythrou Stavrou street, in the City of Rhodes (in the courtyard of the premises having once housed the Hospital of this city) to fill out a form with one's personal details. Alternatively, one may reach us over the phone at +30 22410 31290 and ask to be granted membership status or simply file a membership status electronic request at our Association's official site www.thalia.gr. We are also on Facebook «Δωδεκανησιακός Σύλλογος Θάλεια».

For our Association to be in a position to pursue its activities and ascertain its presence in the field, we need to be able to count on the subscription fees of our members along with any financial contributions and even donations people often make in lieu of wraths as of burial services. To join, each member is requested to pay a lump-sum admission fee of €5, whereas the yearly subscription fee amounts to €10.

Our Association holds accounts with the
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ALPHA BANK account number IBAN: GR 2701104610000046129621523

We are living through difficult times and uncertainty has for some time now been the predominant feeling! We value the presence of volunteers by our side!

Our Association remains open to every member of the community in the Dodecanese not just to those suffering from autoimmune diseases but to each and every man and woman dwelling in our region!

Sincerely yours
 In the name of the Board of Directors
 The President of the Board


 Thalia Georga

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