



Hellenic Centre awarded at the Athens Academy:
From left: Stamos Falaios, chairman of the executive board, Agathia Kalisperas, director Hellenic Centre, Costas Kleanthous, chairman of the Hellenic Community Trust, and Mrs Koula Lemos, vice-chair of the executive board

The Hellenic Community Trust, and has received donations from some of the more prominent London Greek and Cypriot foundations, families and companies, a list of which reads like a Who's Who of the community: initially from the A G Leventis Foundation, Mr and Mrs Stelios Ioannou, Fafalios Shipping, the Bank of Cyprus London, the Hellenic Cultural Centre, the Lykion ton Hellenidon (Lyceum of Greek Women), and subsequently from the governments of Cyprus and Greece, the Popular Bank of Cyprus, Ergobank, and the families and foundations of Kedros, Laskarides, Latsis, Lemos, Mouskas, Paraskevaides Papakokkinos and Yemelos, the Michael Marks Charitable Trust, and scores of individual donors and members.

Charities the Hellenic Centre donates proceeds to from the Christmas Family Lunch

- 2007- Donation to the Heart Doctors in aid of the fire victims in the Peloponnese. Proceeds also helped to build a nursery school in one of the villages.
- 2008 - Kaleidoskopion: A Greek non-profit organisation working for the rehabilitation of people with mental problems and other disabilities.
- 2009 - Doctors of the World, Cyprus: a group of volunteer doctors who have been monitoring the most vulnerable populations worldwide and are committed to providing them care.
- 2010-21 & Co - A charity based in the UK, for children with Down's syndrome.

"However the sponsorships in the last few years have decreased to a great extent due to the financial difficulties of the country which affect, of course, banks, companies and organisations - the very people who used to sponsor our events," says Kalisperas, adding, "This puts a bigger strain on us as we have to self-raise more money to cover our costs and a building like ours has huge costs. We are a non-governmental organisation. We need to raise money to be able to have a cultural programme and also to maintain the 5-storey building."

To this end, the Centre has also welcomed private conference and functions, renting out their space - an activity that has now become the largest source of its income.

"Part of our proceeds are from donations, but the biggest part is income we raise through the conference facilities we hire to organisations when we do not need the rooms for our cultural events. In the last few years, we organise a yearly Christmas Family Lunch and the income from this is given to other charities." (see BOX)

Many well-established old Greek families have left London in the last few years "as they decided that life in Greece is better," notes Kalisperas. "We have, however, seen a large number of young Greek professionals who come from Greece to London for jobs as doctors, bankers, and other professionals.

Apart from the old societies/institutions, i.e. the Cypriot Estia, London Hellenic Society, and Lykion ton Hellenidon, which still exist, in recent years we have seen the formation of societies by young professionals like the Hellenic Bankers Association and the Hellenic Medical Society."

The London Greek and Cypriot communities' strong affinity for the Centre is evident

in both the Council of the Hellenic Community Trust and the Executive Board of the Hellenic Centre, which is comprised of volunteers from both communities.

The Council has 18 members and its current Chairman is Costas Kleanthous. They

Upcoming Events at the Hellenic Centre, London

- 7 June - Illustrated lecture by Aliko Samara-Kauffmann on Thalassa - Sea and ancient Greek pottery.
- 13 June - Pottery and Potters of Greece - the last 300 years: Illustrated lecture by Yorgos Kyriacopoulos.
- 22 June - An evening with Victoria Hislop (author of the Island which was made into a TV series in Greece)
- 7 July - Cyprus and the Sinai Icons - Illustrated lecture by Professor Robin Cormack.

meet half a dozen times a year and oversee the work of the director and her staff. The executive board with Chairman Stamos Falaios has nine members and their role is to help the Director's office with the planning of the Centre's cultural programme.

Kalisperas hopes that in the future the Centre will "exist and expand for the benefit of future generations...become more well known, be able to afford bigger names for our events and to attract more donations so as to be able to encourage and help young artists with their first steps in showing their talents, paintings, music, theatre, dance, and other work at the Hellenic Centre." ☐