



COMMUNITY

Odyssey Charter School Celebrates 10th Anniversary in Olympian Style

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Wilmington, DE – Wilmington Chapter #95, Order of AHEPA, executed a most impressive celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Odyssey Charter School, a school that was created under their watchful eye and guidance. The program included a recreation of the Olympic Opening Ceremony, wonderful artistic presentations, a moving video that segued into the delivery of a Flame from Ancient Olympia delivered by two members of the Greek National Track team.

By Michael Klezaras

The day culminated with the 10th annual 5k Run/Walk fundraiser to benefit the school. The celebration began with a Parade of Nations featuring the students of the school, followed by the American and Greek National Anthems performed by the students under the direction of Sevy Phalangas.

In a day that featured non-stop high points, the over 700 people in attendance were treated to a short documentary that related the fraternization of the school with the schools of Ancient Olympia, effectively creating sister schools. Under the initiative of Dimitri Dandalos, President of the Odyssey School Board, the schools signed that agreement in Ancient Olympia in June. The documentary detailed the lighting of a special Olympic Flame. The Flame then took a course past Greece's historic treasures under the care of Greek National Track Team Champions Despina Mourta and Dino Dendopoulos.

Upon its arrival to Delaware, the athletes carried the Flame past various local venues, even receiving the Native American blessing of a Lenni Lenape Chief, whose ancestors were among the first inhabitants of what is now Delaware. The documentary ended with the athletes carrying the Olympic Flame through the campus of the school. Then, dramatically, they arrived in person carrying the flame with a torch from the 2004 Athens Games to the thunderous standing ovation from the audience before lighting the special Cauldron that is now a permanent fixture under the flag poles at the school. It was truly a moving experience and many people were brought to tears of joy during this special moment.

The students of the school then performed a choreographic spectacular, featuring "An Ancient Memory," music created especially for this event by Ms. Phalangas. Dignitaries included, Delaware US Senator Chris Coons who proclaimed "sinhariteria," during his remarks, Congressman John Carney, AHEPA District #5 Governor George Petrakakis and AHEPA Supreme Governor, Region #3, Chris Diamantoukos. Delaware Governor Jack Markell sent a video salutation in which he honored the excellence and growth of the Odyssey Charter School. The formal ribbon cutting celebrating the expansion of the school included members of AHEPA, dignitaries, and administrators of the school.

The presentation concluded with Ms. Phalangas performing "Trumpet of Glory," a song that she had written and performed for the Marathon Race and during the Paralympics of the Sydney 2000 Games and the Athens 2004 Games. The day's festivities ended with the annual 5k Walk/Run, which drew nearly 400 runners. A complimentary luncheon, provided by the event sponsor, Real Greek Artisan, was enjoyed by everyone to wrap up this truly memorable and historic day.