



The American College of Greece



**The National Hellenic Society Partners With
The American College of Greece to Offer
First-time Visits to Greece for Greek American
Youth**

In a little over a year, the National Hellenic Society has emerged as an important Greek American organization whose mission is to preserve Greek American heritage in the United States through the support and development of programs targeting the next generation.

The National Hellenic Society has demonstrated this commitment to the next generation through the support of existing programs and the development of new programs such as a state-of-art, social networking website for young Greek American professionals--underway and set to launch this spring.

One of the most important programs sponsored by the National Hellenic Society is the inauguration of its Heritage Greece Program which supports programs in Greece for the young generation. Theophanis Economidis, National Hellenic Society Program Committee Chairman, states, "the National Hellenic Society's approach is two-fold: to actively support existing programs such as the AHEPA Journey to Greece Program, and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese's, Ionian Village Program in Greece; and, develop new programs such as the Heritage Greece Program designed to be a grant--a gift from the National Hellenic Society to promising young Greek Americans that want to experience Greece for the first time."

According to Timothy Maniatis, National Hellenic Society Executive Director, "what every Greek American organization shares is a desire for the next generation to have a strong sense of Greek identity, to cherish and pass on our heritage, our culture, the values and spirit of Hellenism. This is an investment we must make individually and collectively, and one the National Hellenic Society is now undertaking with great pride."

The Heritage Greece program is made possible in cooperation with DEREΕ - The American College of Greece, Europe's largest and most historic American institution of higher education, which will host the visiting students.

The American immigrant experience is characterized by a long and successful tradition of preserving ethnic identity. Greek schools and community centers, churches, community media, museums and university programs all serve as valuable conduits in the committed and continual efforts to attain an ideal: the preservation of cultural identity between future generations and their ancestral homeland and heritage.

Experience demonstrates that by visiting Greece and providing an immersion in its contemporary and historic legacy young Greek Americans will develop a more meaningful connection with the land, its people and their own respective identity.

The new Heritage Greece Program will provide talented young Greek Americans their first opportunity to study and travel in Greece. The NHS and ACG are committed to transforming Heritage Greece into a comprehensive and large-scale program that in the future will enable thousands of young Greek Americans to visit Greece for the first time, strengthening their ties to their ancestral land as well as relations between Greece and the United States. According to National Hellenic Society Chairman, George Marcus, "our heritage, the values and ideals we were given served us so well and helped transform the Greek American community into what it is today—cherishing our heritage is saying thank you to our parents and forbearers—it is incumbent on us to pass this heritage on to our children and we are at a danger point of no return if we fail to act."

Eligibility for the program is open to undergraduate college or university students of Hellenic ancestry. Student participant candidates must be between the ages of 18-26 and have a grade point average (GPA) of 3.5. Student participant candidates preferably, but not necessarily, will be visiting Greece for the first time. The students will be paired with a peer group of young participants in Greece. The selected student participant candidates will attend the entire program for free, the only cost they bear is travel to and from New York where the participants will meet and leave together as a group.

The National Hellenic Society is fully funding the entire trip as a grant and gift to these qualified young Greek American participants. The participants will visit Greece for two weeks leaving on June 10, 2010 for an immersion program designed to fortify their respective knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Greek language, culture, and history.

Participating students will be hosted at residences provided by DERE-ACG which are close to the College's main 60-acre, ultra-modern campus and facilities in Aghia Paraskevi (just six miles from the Acropolis and major archaeological sites and museums in Athens). DERE-ACG was home to the U.S. Olympics team during the 2004 Athens Olympics Games. The students will attend specially designed for-credit courses at DERE and have access to a host of sporting and leisure facilities on campus.

This year's course is "The Greek Cultural Experience," and will offer three academic credits, readily transferable to the student's home institution. ACG is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, through its Commission on

Institutions of Higher Education. NEASC is the oldest and most prestigious accrediting organization in the U.S.

As part of the program, participants will visit important archaeological and religious sites, tour the Greek countryside and visit a Greek island. They will also meet with members of the Greek government and parliament, officials of the US embassy in Greece, and various media, business and cultural leaders. Visiting students will be paired with peer students from DERE who will serve as their hosts and cultural ambassadors.

This year, the Heritage Greece program lasts from June 11-25, and applications will be accepted until April 15. For information, contact the appropriate office at The American College of Greece at heritagegreece@acg.edu or visit www.acg.edu

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