



THE ASIA MINOR AND PONTOS HELLENIC RESEARCH CENTER

AMPHRC

P.O. BOX 6127 • Bloomingdale, Illinois 60108-6127 • Phone (630) 303-4361

Students learn of their history at St. Demetrios Pythagoras School Greek Orthodox Church in Elmhurst

On Saturday, November 8th, High School Teacher Anastasia Scoupas-Spiridis, member of the Pontian Greek Society, and George Mavropoulos, Founder of the Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center (AMPHRC), were invited to St. Demetrios Elmhurst elementary school for a special lecture. The lecture was given to older students on the history and destruction of Hellenism in Asia Minor and Pontos (1914-1923).



The purpose of the lecture was also to introduce the Teaching Guide "Hellenism of Asia Minor and Pontos" especially written for elementary school students. The Teaching Guide was recently published by the Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center. It provides vital information on the Greeks of Asia Minor and Pontos who, 3,000 years ago, migrated from Greece to Asia Minor and the Black Sea (Pontos). During this period, they established a great civilization including the introduction of Christianity. It also describes life under the Ottoman rule and the final expulsion from their homeland of 3,000 years.

Anastasia Skoupas-Spiridis, a high school English teacher and a member of the Pontian Greek Society of Chicago, presented an overview of the history of the Greeks who settled in Asia Minor and Pontos in 9th and 8th Centuries B. C.. They built cities that became the birthplaces of literature, philosophy, architecture and science. She also described the tragic events, at the beginning of the 20th century that brought an end to the Greek presence in Asia Minor and Pontos, which is forever remembered as "The Great Catastrophe".

Students were riveted by the discussion. Several of them even recounting their own family's escape and experience during "The Great Catastrophe" of 1914-1923. The interest and excitement peaked when students watched a five-minute video of an upcoming documentary featuring survivor Sano Halo who, at the age of 10, was expelled with her family from her village in Pontos and became the only survivor of a nine month death march.

At the end, students thanked the two presenters and asked them to come back for another presentation for their parents. The director of Pythagoras school, Mrs. Christina Koutsakioti -Bralis congratulated the two presenters and praised them for, " loving their history and for their commitment to enlightening the younger people".

Commenting on the presentation, Mr. Mavropoulos said, " Our goal is to reach every Greek-American school in the area to inform teachers, students and parents about this important part of the Greek history that is largely unknown to our communities".

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"Preserving the Hellenic Heritage and History of Asia Minor and Pontos"