



## Our corner

December 2017

### Program Participants Said

We have now been managing activities at the Agioi Anargyroi Oncology Hospital for three months, and the number of participants in our programs has reached 300! We asked what they most appreciate in participating in our programs, and here are some highlights from the written participant feedback: *“They take my mind away and help me to stop thinking,” “it helps me to keep fighting,” “I receive information and positive energy,” “it reduces the stress of waiting,” “I learn more ways that I can help my husband,” “I am excited by what you are doing, I have a good time, and I enjoy my time in the hospital even after surgery,” “please do what you can to continue your work,” “PAMEMMAZI has made my difficult hospital stay so much more enjoyable,” “I meet people,” “action, creativity, communication and improvisation,” “the activities you offer are the most appropriate ones.”*

Our participants’ gratitude inspires us!

### Voices of Volunteers

Our volunteers are the heart of PAMEMMAZI, and their contributions are invaluable for program implementation, communication with hospital staff, welcoming patients and families in the PAMEMMAZI space to help them feel at home, and enjoy their time in a welcoming community.



In this section, we present an interview with Eugenia Eleutheriadou, a volunteer whose daily presence in our room, her welcoming smile, her polite and kind manner represent the message of PAMEMMAZI. Eugenia’s smile says: we are all welcome here, with no taboos and stigma, we wish to give to anyone in need, and together, we create a community of oncology patients and other patients with chronic conditions. We asked Eugenia: **What fulfills you most in your volunteer work?** She said, *“People go through a troubling phase in their lives when they are in the hospital, and I am there to remind them of the happier side of life.”* **What do you consider the most important contribution of PAMEMMAZI?** *“I feel that participants who stay in the hospital for a long time relax here, become less stressed, get away and are transported to the more optimistic space of PAMEMMAZI through all our activities.”* Read the whole interview here.

## Christmas Cheer at the Agioi Anargyroi Hospital

On December 20, 2017, PAMEMMAZI held its first Christmas celebration at Agioi Anargyroi Hospital, the first hospital where it began its work. Patients, nurses, doctors, hospital staff, administrators, volunteers and friends of PAMEMMAZI gathered in the central entrance hall of the hospital. We distributed party favors, and sweets and savory treats. We enjoyed the wonderful Christmas carols brought to us by the amazing 40-member Choir of the City of Athens led by conductor Stavros Beris. The Choir's participation was organized by our volunteer music and voice psychotherapy instructor Kandas Bouzioti who leads our Music Expression activity. Hospital Director Ms. Maria Haritou offered a warm greeting and thanked PAMEMMAZI for the successful programs it offers to patients, families and care givers, that are managed with responsibility and respect in the hospital space. Ms. Haritou shared the many compliments she hears from everyone about our work, and underscored the importance of attention to patients' quality of life that PAMEMMAZI is trying to cultivate for patients and their families.



## Christmas Tea for a Good Cause

On December 13, 2017, PAMEMMAZI friend Mary Baras hosted in her beautiful home in Potomac, Maryland, a Christmas Tea to encourage donations to PAMEMMAZI. Good friends of Mary and PAMEMMAZI co-founder Tessie Catsambas gathered at Mary's home to learn about the latest developments of PAMEMMAZI, the results of our Forum, and most importantly, the activities in the Agioi Anargyroi Hospital. Many who attended knew and loved Emma Vernikou who inspired the creation of PAMEMMAZI. Touched by our efforts, participants gave generously to support our work. We thank them and invite them to visit us in Greece, so they can see our programs up close.

In this photo, left to right, Mss. Maria Koutrouvellis, Evangeline Pedas, Tessie Catsambas, and our hostess Mary Baras.



## Medical and Hospital Staff said

*"I am the Director of the Neurological Clinic at the General Oncology Hospital Agioi Anargyroi. One morning, like many others, I discovered a small paradise in the hospital. A welcoming space, inside the hospital, beautifully arranged by the nonprofit organization*

*PAMEMMAZI, that aims to engage patients who have cancer and their families. Painting, music, theater, dance, yoga, nutrition, and programs offered daily, give a chance to relax, and promote positive thought about life. A constructive opportunity for patients who suffer from cancer or multiple sclerosis. One visit is sufficient to convince you.”* **Maria Malteizou**



*“A necessity and not a luxury. This is how we health professionals should think of PAMEMMAZI. Because it is necessary for every person who is living with cancer to*

*express what he or she is experiencing through drawing, music, dance, and all of the activities of PAMEMMAZI. It is a deep-felt need for us to connect with others, to share and openly offer love, hope, happiness, support.”*

**Theodora Pappa**, Chief Nurse in B University Surgical Clinic of the Oncology Hospital Agioi Anargyroi

*“PAMEMMAZI is both a memorial of love, and also an innovation in the context of Greek hospitals that aims to cover a longstanding gap in the area of hospital care of chronic disease patients. A type of initiative that is widely known and practiced overseas, finds an opportunity here at the General Oncology Hospital Agioi Anargyroi to unfold and bloom, offering to patients and others relaxation, a chance for creation and personal expression in a space that is typically a place of psychosomatic suffering, boredom and silent anticipation for whatever is to come. A provider of psychosocial support through especially selected activities and, why not, carefree spirit in a suffocating, confining environment as is the hospital. It is not accidental that patients, their companions and hospital staff embraced it. An initiative that needs to be supported and most definitely strengthened within our hospital, but also in other venues. We thank you for all you give us with your enthusiasm and persistence.”* **Anna Papadouri**, Nurse, P.E., MSc., B University Surgical Clinic

## Youth in Action: the ERASMUS Social decorates our space

Mozambique, Turkey, Poland – these are some of the home countries of Erasmus students, and they added to the magic of Christmas in our celebration at the hospital. Cascades of tulle, clouds of gold dust, sparkling lights, ribbons, Christmas music, and a big dose of energy, festive spirit and thirst to serve were enough for these students to create a vision, and then transform a section of ceiling into a bright, Christmas sky! We thank wholeheartedly the team of the Erasmus Student Network that took the initiative to decorate our space, and we also thank the 20 students who participated in our celebration.

