Press Release

“The Smile of the Child” opens a Home of Care for children at risk of abuse in Nea Iraklitsa, Kavala

The children’s protection organization, “The Smile of the Child”, has opened a Home of Care for all children, regardless of ethnicity, religion or any other criterion, at risk of abuse and in need of a safe living environment in Nea Iraklitsa, Kavala.

The operation of the Home is based on the long-standing experience of “The Smile of the Child” in mixed models of operation of Homes of Care nationwide. These Homes provide family care and warmth for unaccompanied refugee and migrant children in need of emergency humanitarian aid and at risk of exploitation, disappearance, trafficking or smuggling. The Homes also ensure the protection of Greek children whose lives have been traumatized as a result of abuse, serious neglect or maltreatment.

The new Home consists of two separate buildings encompassing 120 square meters and 150 square meters which have the capacity to host nineteen children, including girls up to seventeen years old, and boys up to ten years old. The buildings were donated by the late Ioannis Symeonidis and renovated through the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN
Migration Agency’s, “Multi-sectoral assistance to and protection of migrants and refugees stranded in Greece” project funded by the European Union’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations Office (ECHO).

The Home is staffed by sixteen professional staff including social workers, psychologists, pedagogues, and nursery staff.

The President of “The Smile of the Child” Mr. Costas Yannopoulos said: “We are pleased that we completed this very important project as an implementing partner of the International Organization for Migration and thanks to the funding of the European Commission. Children need not only food and shelter, but also substantial care, love and support, which needs to be provided through sustainable and qualitative actions. Through the mixed model for the welfare of children, “The Smile of the Child” has been addressing these needs over time through a model of alternative care and holistic support that will be used in the Home of Nea Iraklitsa, Kavala. “The Smile of the Child” is committed to the Home’s sustainable operation of this program, including the use of its own resources and beyond the end of the funding of this program.”

The operation of the Home will be supported by the Center for Direct Social Intervention of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace which was recently inaugurated thanks to the contributions of supporters of the “The Smile of the Child”. The Center provides services, including a call center interconnected across Greece (1056, 116000 and 116111 lines), vehicles of direct intervention, three mobile medical units of preventive medicine, a mobile operational unit for the identification of missing children and the Support Center for Children and Families.

More than 300 children in Greece are currently raised in an environment of family warmth in the ten existing Homes. “The Smile of the Child” also operates three (3) Daycare Homes and thirteen Centers of Support for Children and Families where holistic support is offered to children and families in crisis and in need. In addition, “The Smile of the Child”, in cooperation with competent authorities and agencies on the international level, has helped a significant number of children reunite with their families.

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