

**W**hile most people satisfy their charitable instincts by giving a simple donation or attending a gala, Eleni Bousis was raised to do more. “From [the time I was] a little girl, that’s all I knew, how to help people,” says the superphilanthropist, who has taken her family’s tradition of charity and turned it into a worldwide network of hope. Brought up with strong ties to her Hellenic roots—Bousis’ grandmother helped Greek immigrants arriving in Chicago find jobs and housing—Bousis credits her husband, Dimitrios, with inspiring her to dedicate her life to helping those less fortunate.

That vision first began to take shape 25 years ago, when Bousis learned of the poverty, disease and political strife in Kakamega, Kenya. She reacted by supporting an effort to bring Kenyan children books and medicine, which eventually

blossomed into an orphanage and church. But in 2007 Bousis was horrified to learn that the orphanage had been destroyed, and the orphans killed, in an act of tribal violence that wiped out part of the village. Undeterred, Bousis and her supporters have already begun to rebuild. Closer to home, Bousis was instrumental in the creation of the Greek American Rehabilitation and Care Centre in Wheeling, Virginia, serving the elderly and the ill, by offering short- and long-term rehab. The facility elected Bousis to be its president four years ago, just as it was entering a massive economic crisis. “I thought, Lord, I guess there was a calling for me to save these people,” recounts Bousis. And save them she did, raising more than \$5 million to keep the center open.

Chicago area homeless are a priority for Bousis as well. Each year during the holidays she enlists

the help of her husband’s grocery store chain, Cermak Produce, to provide free meals at the Annunciation Cathedral. As if that doesn’t build her enough karmic capital, Bousis also sits on the board of the Little City Foundation, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for intellectually and developmentally disabled children and adults. (She’s also a founding member, with Irene Dorkofigis, of Frontida, the first center in Greece for abused women and children and dysfunctional families.) For her efforts, Bousis will be honored with the Sidney L. Port Legacy of Distinction Award during Little City’s Golden Anniversary Awards Dinner on November 7 at the Fairmont Chicago. She’s also helming a fashion show at the Chicago Hilton & Towers October 2 (for tickets, go to [littlecity.org](http://littlecity.org)). “I am truly, truly humbled. That’s all I can say.”

*The*  
**GLOBAL  
GIVER**  
Eleni Bousis,  
*Little City  
Foundation*



SHOT ON LOCATION AT LITTLE CITY, PALATINE