

# ARMENIA FUND USA ACTION NEWS

Affiliate of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, US Eastern Region

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Armenia Fund USA



## MILESTONE IN MARTUNI

# COMPLETION OF THE NEW 2470 SQ. METER HOSPITAL IS CELEBRATED ON SITE

Seven years after the first western-style medical facility was completed in Karabakh's capital city of Stepanakert, it was the rural communities of Martuni with something big to celebrate: the completion of the new Martuni regional hospital building. The official opening to the public is slated for late fall of this year.

Along with officials, dignitaries and guests from various walks of Armenian life, the local residents, who are the beneficiaries of this most highly anticipated project, assembled to kick off a new era in health care delivery—and health care equality. For the 25,000 residents of this strategically vital region, the health care gap between urban and rural Karabakh has begun to close.

### Unity is the theme of the day.

What began in 2011 as an architectural model and blueprint now stands as a beacon of healing and symbol of unity. The construction of this model facility was co-sponsored by the government of Karabakh, the Armenia Fund USA eastern U.S. affiliate, the Armenian Medical Fund USA, and the late Giragos Vapurciyan, a project benefactor from the Detroit area who endowed the new maternity ward.

(continued on page 12)

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Dear Friends:

There is nothing more gratifying than witnessing firsthand the impact of our mission on everyday people. Fortunately, as the chairman of Armenia Fund USA, I had the privilege of doing just that back in May of this year.

As your representative to the Hayastan All Armenian Fund Board of Trustees meeting, held every year in Yerevan, I had the opportunity to assess our progress as well as that of the other 24 affiliates. Yet for all the reports, audit analyses, and presentations, there is just no substitute for going out into the field and observing the results in person.

During my recent visit, I listened to the stories of the people and gained a better understanding of their everyday challenges. I was also impressed by the quiet dignity that these families maintain in the face of financial hardship.

This year, there were many ribbon cutting ceremonies to attend. Most notable was the opening of the new regional hospital in Martuni, Karabakh. This 2,470 square meter building is the second major health care facility in Karabakh built with the support of the Armenian community of the eastern U.S.

When it comes to improving the quality of healthcare delivery in Armenia, our affiliate continues to lead the way. In fact, one of our board members recently won a presidential award for his special work in the health sector. And this summer in L.A., another member helped promote our HyeBridge Telehealth program at an international medical conference.

Another big checkmark on the completed column: the official unveiling of the potable water network for Karmir Shuka village. It is located in the eastern-most part of Karabakh, just a few miles from the border with Azerbaijan. Now residents can enjoy access to clean drinking water 24/7, reliably distributed via a new pipeline system and regulation reservoirs.

Beyond the speeches and celebrations, for me, the real measure of success was the number of smiling faces and heartfelt expressions of gratitude. It was clear—our work stands to impact thousands of people in the area, instilling hope for a better quality of life. Our presence in their midst made it official.

In the meantime, we will redouble our efforts to reverse the depopulation rates that put national security at risk. Our mission will not be completed until people choose to stay in their ancestral communities—not because there is no alternative, but because their communities are good places to live, work, and raise a family.

To this end, plans are under way to develop an unprecedented business development program that takes advantage of the diverse expertise that our Diaspora community has to offer. Plus, we will be participating in the upcoming Telethon campaign to raise funds for the new Vardenis-Mardakert highway construction project. Once completed, it will help boost local economies all across the northern region of Armenia and Karabakh, which is strategically vital for border security.

Our national destiny depends on a viable economy and strong security in the Armenian homeland. That's why we are depending on your continued support and generosity in the critical months ahead.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Khoren Bandazian".

Khoren Bandazian,  
Chairman, Armenia Fund USA



## PROJECT UPDATE

# COMPLETED WATER SYSTEM RAISES LIVING STANDARDS AND HOPES FOR KARMIR SHUKA VILLAGE

Farmers, cattle breeders, entrepreneurs, families and students have a new lease on life now that clean drinking water is flowing freely into homes, public facilities and businesses.

**T**he 270 households in this agricultural community translate into 1,042 residents now enjoying round-the-clock access to potable water. The water supply comes from the mountain streams which flow down several elevations. The new internal water distribution system will reach dwellings at each elevation, making the burdensome task of water collection a thing of the past. Those living on the higher levels, for example, are no longer subjected to long walks up and down the mountain carrying heavy buckets and containers. The entire village is also relieved from the chore of fetching water from outdoor wells that would often run dry due to weather, overuse or even hoarding.

The construction of the new 11-kilometer pipeline and two new regulation reservoirs that began in 2011 and was completed in 2012 had its official kickoff on May 23, 2013 in the village square, just 3.5 miles from the town of Martuni in Karabakh.

With a total price tag of \$700,000 USD, this ambitious waterworks project was made possible through the partnership between the government of Karabakh and Armenia Fund USA, the eastern region affiliate of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund. Representatives of each entity were present for the festivities.

### A free flow of fresh water and jubilation.

Water blessing rituals, dance performances, folk-style Armenian hospitality and the crowds assembled all attested to the magnitude of the project and its transformative possibilities.

Participating dignitaries and guests included Reverend Shahe Ananyan, Representative of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, Karen Shahramanyan, Minister of Urban Development of Karabakh, Ara Vardanyan, Executive Director of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, other local officials as well as Khoren Bandazian, Chairman of the Board of Armenia Fund USA and Irina Lazarian, Executive Director of Armenia Fund USA.

### Far-reaching benefits of a modern water system.

Economically speaking, a reliable internal water distribution system means more productive and efficient ways to irrigate farmlands, breed animals, and improve sanitation in public places.

As for indoor plumbing, it helps promote personal hygiene, and makes cooking and household chores far less time-consuming. There is also a security component underlying the project, which Ara Vardanyan pointed out in his remarks during the opening ceremonies.



*Representatives from the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin perform a ritual blessing of water, the source of life on earth.*

"I thank you all for your devotion to your village," he said. "I am hopeful that your bond with your village will always remain strong, that the ranks of children standing here today will increase, and that this land will prosper well into the future."

Khoren Bandazian also assured the audience that Armenia Fund USA was looking forward to continuing its role in Karabakh through such critical infrastructure projects as this one now completed.

### A success story with more chapters to come.

Irina Lazarian summed it up by saying, "With a modern water system now in place, odds are that Karmir Shuka will experience substantive economic growth and greater prosperity in the coming months and years. Only time will be the true test, however. To this end, Armenia Fund USA will continue to monitor and report the progress made, in terms of human productivity, economic development and national security. ■

## TELETHON 2013

# A NEW ROUTE TO SECURITY AND PROSPERITY FOR NORTHERN ARMENIA AND KARABAKH

At its 22nd Annual Board of Trustees meeting this past May, the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund umbrella organization announced a groundbreaking infrastructure initiative designed to improve security and economic opportunity for the northern regions of the two republics. It's called the Vardenis-Mardakert Highway Construction Project.

The announcement was an immediate call to each of the Fund's 25 affiliates to launch fundraising efforts in support of this big-ticket project. Building an alternate route between Armenia and Karabakh is the designated campaign theme of the upcoming 2013 Armenia Fund Thanksgiving Day Telethon.

The goal of this massive public works effort is to turn the roads that currently link a string of strategically important towns in northern Armenia and northern Karabakh into a modern highway system. The new route is projected to promote trade, cooperation, and economic development among vulnerable border communities that are vital to national security.

### A reflection of the new geopolitical realities.

For some, this new initiative may beg the question: why another public road works project when there is the Goris-Stepanakert Highway? Since its completion back in 1999, that highway has proven to be the kingpin of the Fund's sustainable economic development and security strategy.

Prior to its construction, it would take several days to travel from Mardakert in Karabakh to Yerevan in Armenia. After completion of the Goris-Stepanakert Highway as well as the North-South Highway, within Karabakh alone, it now takes just nine hours.

With the addition of the the Vardenis-Mardakert Highway, there will be a shortcut through the north, which will take just a few hours to cross. Then trucks can reach

markets faster, so that businesses can function. Equally important, supplies can reach military bases and local government centers promptly.

In the map shown on the opposite page, the Goris-Stepanakert route connects southeastern Armenia with south-central Karabakh, ending in its capital city. That excludes access for both northern Armenia's border communities and those border towns in Karabakh, which, 22 years ago, were delineated as part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic. Today, these villages are neighbors with a hostile Azerbaijan, creating a very different security dynamic. An alternative route connecting the two Armenian republics can make all the difference.

The map also indicates the route of the Vardenis-Mardakert Highway that will link 16 village communities and the three towns: Vardenis in Armenia and Kharvachar and Mardakert in Karabakh. All told, that's over 76 thousand residents who stand to benefit from the new highway.

### The security, stability, sustainability connection.

Khoren Bandazian, the chairman of Armenia Fund USA, explained the rationale behind the project. "Security is a high priority for both Armenia and Karabakh," he said. "And the key to that security lies in demographics. The stable presence of an Armenian population is paramount. But keeping multiple generations on their ancestral lands is only possible with economic growth and sustainability. The Vardenis-Mardakert Highway project is at the intersection of these

## BENEFICIARY COMMUNITIES AND POPULATIONS SERVED

NORTHERN ARMENIA		NORTHERN KARABAKH	
VARDENIS	12,753	CHAREKTAR	159
VAGHASHEN	4,313	GETAVAN	409
ASTGHADZOR	4037	VERIN HORATAGH	449
ZOLAKAR	6,776	DRMBON	447
VARDENIK	10,702	KARAVACHAR	500
TSOVINAR	5,149	MARDAKERT	19,400
ARTSVANIST	3,238		
KARCHAGHBYUR	2,507		
TSOVAK	2,887		
TORFAVAN	526		
SHATJREK	588		
SHATVAN	736		
SOTK	1,135		
<b>TOTAL POPULATION SERVED</b>		<b>76,711</b>	



three goals. It will hasten the transport of goods and supplies so that local businesses can reliably serve customers and regional trade can increase.”

Mr. Bandazian also noted Armenia Fund USA’s generous support of and first-hand experience with building the Goris-Stepanakert Highway, and later, with the North-South Highway that connect Armenia’s communities with Karabakh. “Given our track record, our affiliate is uniquely equipped to help make this project a success,” he said.

**A projects-within-a-project approach.**

The road from Vardenis in Armenia to Mardakert in Karabakh, totals 96.7 kilometers. It covers such varied terrain that there are multiple construction, engineering, and public safety challenges involved.

For example, there is a significant stretch of unpaved, dirt-covered road that changes dramatically in width at different intervals and involves as many as 339 sharp turns, 17 of which are serpentine configurations.

Other sections have been partially blocked due to landslides or river swells, adding to the hazardous conditions. Finally, new road signage, protective barriers and other modern standards of road safety must be installed to meet current government regulations.

**Telethon 2013 to put northern regions in the spotlight.**

Armenia Fund USA has begun to reach out to some longtime donors to generate support for this worthy initiative.

“We believe that our past support of major highway projects has convinced our donors that their generosity will produce tangible, lasting benefits once again,” said Irina Lazarian, the executive director of the eastern U.S. affiliate.

“We have led the way through this type of ambitious undertaking twice before, under more trying circumstances. Sure, building roads is gritty and heavy work and doesn’t make for pretty photos,” she added. “Yet the promise for transformative change is golden.” ■



# ARMENIA FUND DONOR TRIP PUTS THE HOMELAND IN A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Just ask Vigen Kikeshian about last year's annual donor trip to the homeland, organized by Armenia Fund. "I never had this feeling before I arrived in Yerevan," he exclaimed. "I walked on that land and it was mine! It was ours! Home...It's so different from anything you've ever experienced. These people...this earth...this land. It's holy ground, this place."

**E**motional testimonies such as Vigen's aptly describe the deep connections between diaspora and homeland that the Armenia Fund Donor Trip instills and cultivates. It's not only a chance to take in the breathtaking vistas of the Ararat Valley, the lush forests of Lori, scenic Lake Sevan, and the alpine splendor of Karabakh, but also the humanity and living culture that reinforce Armenian pride and national identity.



## A journey to the past and the future.

"It's not just visiting the places; it's about becoming involved in shaping the future of the Armenian nation," explains Irina Lazarian, the executive director of Armenia Fund USA. She accompanied the group in 2012.

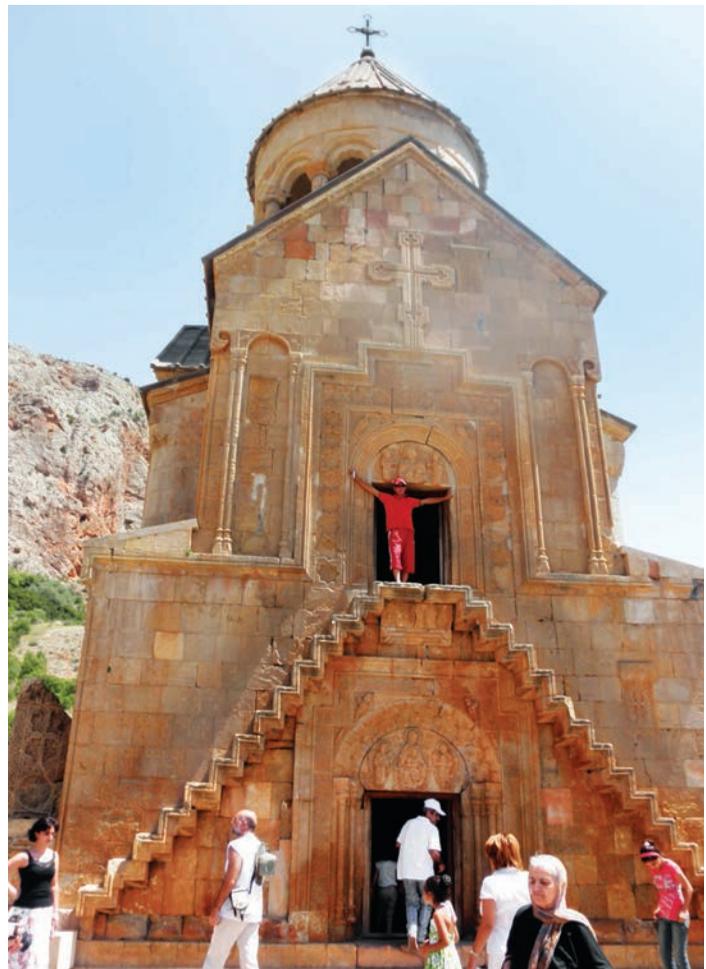
As in-country tour guide Ludwig Manoukian puts it, "The trip is open to donors or anybody interested in seeing the sites, food, landscape and see first hand what Armenia Fund is doing in this region."

## An inspiring experience for many first-timers.

Perhaps the most indelible moments are the heartwarming exchanges between donors and the local people, be they factory workers, soldiers, rural families, city officials, parents, students, educators, performers and the everyday Armenian on the street.

As Vigen's wife Mania described it, "I'm walking all over the street and I'm looking and everyone speaks Armenian...And I feel the friendliness and everything. I love it very much."

At each stop, the beneficiaries of donor support take the opportunity to express their gratitude, offer their hospitality,



and proudly show off their progress and achievements. "Both donor and recipient can share in the mutual pride that comes from the nation-building process," said Ms. Lazarian.

Mike Tatevosian of Chicago was visibly moved during the tour of Karabakh. According to Mike, "It was important to be a witness to how the young men sacrificed their lives..." He described it as a chance to, "honor them by putting flowers on their graves. Light candles in the churches. See the graves of heroes like Antranig Pasha...and Monte Melconian."

He went on to say how proud he was of his country and people, how they "endured during these 20 years of

independence, the heartaches, the refugees from Baku, and now from Syria..." He appealed to diasporans: "Come to Armenia and be a part of history."

### Connecting names and faces to projects and programs.

The Donor Trip itinerary is a welcome departure from typical tour packages. It interweaves visits to historical landmarks and national monuments with off-the-beaten path side trips to project and construction sites in communities all across the homeland.

Seeing the results of financial support is especially reassuring. According to Karine Mikaelian, who had visited a



new school in Karabakh, "I've seen so much accomplishment here...I knew it was there but when you see it with your own eyes, it makes a difference. You are sure that the money gets there. Don't say it doesn't go there; it goes there! Come and see with your own eyes," she urged.

Another tour member visiting a donor-sponsored school in Karabakh described her feelings this way: "I see how the Karabakh people are spending the money by Armenia Fund to grow and educate the children in this environment...I am proud to see that children are getting the best of education that in other American and European countries are freely available to children. But I don't see the result as I see it in Karabakh. And I'm very proud of this," she proclaimed.

One woman from LA commented that the school was impressive and was "almost at the quality of some of the public schools in Los Angeles. Just to see the look on the teachers' faces and the workers. It's obvious it meant a lot to them. And it brings about a sense of pride that you were able to accomplish this."

Ani Elmacoglu toured another school in Togh village. She remarked that if she were a student there, "I would want to come here and come to school with joy!"

Upon a visit to a newly renovated library, a fellow traveler made the following assessment. "They said that there are 3,000 people here and 1,000 are registered at the library—that's a third of the city. I can't imagine something better than this being built."

Mike Tatevosian's wife Janet, who is not of Armenian descent, had many such experiences during last year's Donor Trip. "We were impressed that Armenia Fund works with factories that build the furniture for the schools and make



building materials for the buildings...So Armenia Fund is helping to provide jobs that enable these projects to be done."

Janet and Mike have decided to take the tour again this September, when the itinerary will vary from the year before, based on the project sites and their proximity to other sites and landmarks off the main tourist routes. This year, the couple will have the chance to stay over in Goris and Dilijan with more time to explore the renowned monasteries of the Lori region.

"That's the beauty of the Armenia Fund tours," explains Irina Lazarian. "There are always new places to discover and new people to meet with each successive trip. That's why our tour attracts repeat visitors. They have come to expect the elements of surprise and adventure when traveling with us." ■



### Reservations are now being taken for Donor Trip 2014.

Don't miss the next opportunity to see Armenia, Karabakh and the fruits of your support. The next Donor Trip is scheduled for September 2014.

To learn more about dates, itinerary and accommodations, contact Irina Lazarian at 212-689-5307 or visit us at [www.armeniamfundusa.org](http://www.armeniamfundusa.org)

## PROJECT UPDATE

# NORMAN MILLER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS TALK ABOUT CHOICES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

When Hermine Grigorian, a student at the State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic) in Gyumri, was asked why she chose to study Information Technology, she explained that it is a developing science and a profession in great demand. “In the beginning of my academic career,” she reflected, “I was not sure that I had made the right decision. But after starting my lessons and getting to know my professors and classmates, I started to love this field. I am very happy with the decision I have made and I hope that it is a choice that will benefit me in my future endeavors.”

**Y**et Hermine may have missed the opportunity to discover her professional calling if not for the financial support she receives as a recipient of the Norman Miller Scholarship Fund. It was established in 2009 as an endowment by the family of the late Norman Miller. A highly successful engineer, inventor, businessman, American citizen, Armenian patriot and philanthropist, Norman Miller understood that the driving force behind his success was his education.

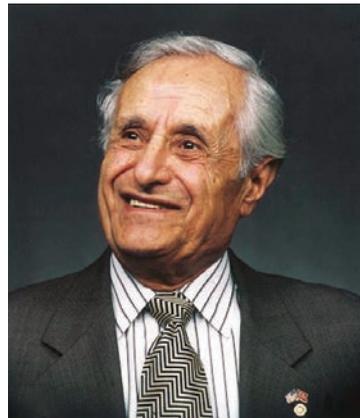
Born in Turkey on the cusp of the 1915 Armenian genocide, Norman Miller had the quintessential American success story. It was built on hard work and the opportunities that came his way to propel him to achievement. Near the time of his passing in 2009, at the age of 94, Mr. Miller was convinced that the best way to give back to his homeland was to create educational opportunities for young engineers with the talent, drive and ambition to make a productive difference.

Hermine, one of the 10 recipients of this year's scholarships, earned her place at one of Armenia's best engineering learning centers on the basis of academic excellence and financial need. Today, she can focus on her studies, without the worries of paying for tuition, books and other expenses. They are covered in full by her scholarship.

### **Engineering a better future for Armenia, one industry at a time.**

Five of the 10 recipients have chosen Information Technology as their specialty. According to Shoghik Tadevosyan, the city of Gyumri is poised to become a leading center for the IT industry. “Already, so many technological centers are being constructed,” she explained. “I believe that, after graduation, I will have an easier time finding a job within Gyumri and its outskirts. All this will aid Gyumri in its progression and development.”

Clearly, for a nation struggling for over two decades with high unemployment, those coming of age are keenly aware of the link between education and real-world success. The rising cost of education and a highly competitive labor pool



*The late Norman Miller, born Norair Deirmengian.*

are strong motivators for choosing a profession with commercial relevance. As one scholarship recipient put it, “It is important to think about what our strengths and weaknesses are when we choose a profession in life. But it is also very important to think about what kind of knowledge and professions are in demand.”

Yet, not all of these young scholars have chosen such an obvious path as IT. This bodes well

for the future of the nation, as a more well-rounded cadre of engineers is prepared to fuel the economic engine.

For example, Michael Nalbandyan is currently working toward a graduate degree in Textile Products Design and Development at the State Engineering University of Armenia (Polytechnic), Gyumri branch. He recalled how it started. “Prior to this, I received my bachelor's degree in Engineering. During that time, I had the honor to participate in a scientific conference; I presented my article about technology and the textile industry. This article was later published. Soon after my graduation, I was called to serve in the army. Upon my return, I received a lot of support and encouragement from my parents and professors to continue my studies. But having to work and attend classes, I realized that it was hard to keep my grades up.” Today, Michael no longer has to compromise, thanks to the financial support he receives as a Norman Miller scholar.

Seda Popova is also taking a road less traveled. “From a young age,” Seda recounts, “I was interested in food and how various foods come about. It was inevitable that I chose Food

Sciences as my major at the university. This major has answered so many of my questions, but as they say, knowledge is endless and every day I learn more. I still have so many questions that have not been answered. After graduation, I hope to become a good researcher or specialist based on the knowledge that I have acquired through this program.”

Hovsep Ananikyan described how he decided to make Energy his industry focus. “It was not a coincidence, but rather a choice based on my great understanding of this complex science,” Hovsep noted. “Armenia’s hydropower plants, thermal power plants and nuclear power plant are currently experiencing rapid development. There is a need to find applications of electricity from non-traditional methods. That’s why I decided to receive my graduate degree in Enterprise Economics and Management. I am sure that, once I am done with my studies, I can dedicate a lot of my knowledge to this field.”

### Life lesson 101: The virtue of giving back.

In a meeting with Irina Lazarian, the executive director of Armenia Fund USA, the scholars had the rare opportunity to communicate directly with members of the Miller family via Skype videoconference. Norman Miller’s daughter Florence Miller-Mohler and granddaughter Julia Miller spoke to them from the U.S.

Mrs. Miller-Mohler began by explaining why the scholarship was conceived. “My father was born in Armenia in 1914. He was fortunate to survive the genocide. As a boy, he was offered the opportunity to attend Morat Rafael College in Venice, Italy. The college was run by the Mekhitarist Armenian monks. His tuition was paid but he never knew by whom. Because of the education he received, he was able to not only survive but also thrive. One of the important life lessons my father taught his children was that education is extremely important. He always said, ‘The only thing that can never be taken away from you is your brain. With knowledge you can survive and succeed.’”

In turn, the scholars took the opportunity to express their genuine appreciation to the Miller family. Mikael Nalbandyan told them that he was pleased to know that “there are people spreading kindness and happiness throughout the world. I would like to let the Miller Family know that they have a new friend



Scholarship recipients, along with Irina Lazarian (far right), express thanks directly to the Miller Family representatives via Skype. Left to right: Mikael Nalbandyan; Hovsep Ananikyan; Hermine Grigoryan; Shoghik Tatevosyan; Seda Popova; Armine Tonoyan; Hambartsum Sanosyan; Mariam Petrosyan; Araksya Harutyunyan.

in Vanadzor awaiting them,” Mikael said. Then Seda Popova thanked the Miller family “for its warm and humane attitude.”

Such sincere sentiments of gratitude were seconded by the rest of the group in attendance, including scholarship recipients Mariam Petrosyan, Vardan Bagaryan, Araksya Harutyunyan, and Armine Tonoyan.

“This is why I am so proud to be here today,” Mrs. Miller-Mohler continued. “There is a phrase used here in America, ‘pay it forward.’ Whoever the stranger was that paid for my father’s education, allowed him to be able to pay for your education.

Learn all you can, use your knowledge to help others and to help fellow Armenians succeed.”

Irina Lazarian, who also holds an advanced engineering degree in Computer Sciences from Yerevan State Engineering University and an Industrial Engineering master’s degree from American University of Armenia, concurred with the sentiment. “It is important to live up to Norman Miller’s own dream: that, one day, you too will be in a position to help those following in your footsteps. Like you, they can also rise higher. That is how we build a nation built to last,” she concluded. ■

### Gyumri: the new Silicon Valley of Armenia.

Last January, Taiwan’s D-Link Corporation chose Gyumri as the site of its new consolidated research and testing center. This, in combination with the Gyumri Technopark, positions Armenia’s second largest city to become a magnet for global companies looking for the right combination of infrastructure, land leasing and professional talent for high-tech research and development.

The high concentration of engineering brainpower that Gyumri offers via its technology schools and universities will surely fuel the economic growth that Gyumri is poised to achieve over the next decade. In turn, it will provide graduates with the real-world professional and business experience they need to compete globally.

## LEADERSHIP NEWS

# BOARD MEMBER DR. ARTHUR GRIGORIAN RECEIVES ARMENIA'S PRESIDENTIAL AWARD

Armenia Fund USA proudly congratulates its very own board member Arthur Grigorian, MD as a 2012 recipient of Armenia's Presidential Award. This honor is bestowed upon a select group of candidates each year in fields ranging from the arts and Armenian studies to physics, computer/information sciences, literature and medicine. Each candidate is nominated and selected by expert panels in their respective fields, making this both a prestigious national honor as well as a salute from one's peers.

**D**r. Grigorian is more than a neurosurgeon. He is at the forefront of managing complex intracranial and spine pathology, with over 22 years of experience and a thriving surgical practice in Macon, GA. He is also a visionary in service to his native country of Armenia.

As the mastermind of the Neurosciences Physicians' Training initiative, a program supported by Armenia Fund USA, Dr. Grigorian is enabling talented young neurosurgeons in Armenia to receive best practices training and Western Medicine experience in a critical specialty.

In 2001, Dr. Grigorian noted the high rate of stroke victims in Armenia, second only to cardiovascular disease. As an Associate Professor of Surgery at Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM) in Georgia, USA, Dr. Grigorian initiated the program in cooperation with the National Institute of Health of the Republic of Armenia and later with Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU).

The purpose was to establish a channel of cooperation that would facilitate the exchange of students and/or faculty members between Armenia and the U.S. Such exposure would help provide talented neuroscience specialists with the skills and experience to serve the needs of Armenia's patient populations.

### President's call to future achievements

The Presidential Awards 2012 ceremony was held in Yerevan on May 29, 2013. The estimable prize was presented to Dr. Grigorian and other recipients by Armenia's president, along with Albert Boghossian, founder of the Boghossian Foundation—a family charitable trust that helps make this distinguished award possible.

In the field of medicine, Dr. Arthur Grigorian, Prof. Ruben Fanarjyan and Dr. Tigran Khachatryan were recognized for introducing and developing endovascular neurosurgery in the Republic of Armenia. In his congratulatory speech, President Sargsyan referred to the honorees as the "best of the best" in their respective fields. The president also noted that the award aims to inspire recipients to new achievements. "Not only do we appreciate your services," he stated, "but we also urge you to do more for the glory of the Armenian people."



*Left to right: Mr. Albert Boghossian; Dr. Arthur Grigorian and President Serzh Sargsyan of the Republic of Armenia.*

To that end, Dr. Grigorian has set the bar ever higher to make Armenia a center of medical excellence in neurosciences and other specialties. Recently, Dr. Grigorian recounted a story that attests to the significant strides already made in stroke management.

"While visiting Yerevan," he said, "a prominent Italian religious figure suffered acute intracranial bleeding from a ruptured brain aneurysm. He was rushed to the new stroke center that we established in 2009. His aneurysm was obliterated."

Dr. Arthur Ulm from Louisiana State University, who has teamed up with Dr. Grigorian to develop the stroke center, remarked that, "the patient was lucky it happened in Armenia, not Italy."

### A distinguished career as healer and educator

Born and raised in Armenia, Dr. Arthur Grigorian received his early medical training at leading institutes in Moscow. After coming to the United States, he completed a fellowship in cerebrovascular surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine/ Beth Israel Hospital in New York, followed by another fellowship in endovascular neurosurgery. He completed his residency in neurological surgery at the UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School.

He is board certified by the American and European Boards of Neurological Surgery. Currently, through his practice at the Georgia Neurological Institute, Dr. Grigorian is the only neurosurgeon managing complex vascular/endovascular lesions in the middle-Georgia area.

Dr. Grigorian focuses on the management of complex vascular lesions of the brain and spinal cord including aneurysms, arteriovenous malformations and hemorrhagic/ ischemic strokes. His areas of interest also include vascular/ endovascular and general neurosurgery together with management of complex spine disorders and intracranial neoplasms.

He is a member of numerous medical organizations, including the American Association of Neurosurgeons, CNS, European NS Associations, American Stroke Association and the MCCG stroke team. He has authored more than 40 articles related to intracranial pathology and two monographs on subarachnoid hemorrhages and ischemic strokes, also written in Armenian and Russian. He is an honorary member of multiple international neurosurgical societies.

Upon learning of Dr. Grigorian's award, Armenia Fund USA Chairman Khoren Bandazian remarked that, "this is a well deserved honor for Arthur. We have come to know him as one of the most relentless and passionate individuals in pursuit of excellence in medicine. He has not turned his back on where he started in life. Instead, he has used his great success as a respected neurosurgeon in America to serve his people and colleagues back home. We are proud to support the work he is doing and pleased to have such a humanitarian and visionary on our board. Well done, Arthur." ■



*A rare opportunity for Armenian physicians to come to Macon, Georgia to observe Dr. Grigorian and his team perform complex surgeries.*



*Dr. Ulm and Dr. Grigorian (2nd and 3rd from left) with Observation Training fellows from Armenia.*

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ARMENIAN PHYSICIAN TRAINING PROGRAM

Thanks to Dr. Arthur Grigorian's hands-on leadership, the Armenian Physicians Training Program has become a crown jewel in the Armenia Fund USA portfolio of health care delivery projects.

**2002:** An official cooperation agreement was signed between the National Institute of Health of Armenia and MUSM, MCCG and the Georgia Neurological Institute (GNI).

**2004:** Armenian neurology specialists were trained by a technical support team from the U.S., when the first sleep laboratory in the region, donated by local physicians, was established in Yerevan. The MCCG also transported valuable surgical equipment and surgical instrumentarium to Yerevan.

**2004:** Special fellowships were created for outstanding candidates to participate in observational fellowships at MCCG and GNI.

**2005:** Additional cooperation agreements were forged between YSMU and the above-mentioned entities.

**2009:** Through a collaboration between Dr. Grigorian and Dr. Gohar Kalyan, former dean of YSMU, a new vascular stroke center was opened in Yerevan within the structures of YSMU.

**ONGOING:** Approximately 35 medical students, residents and physicians have already received training in the U.S. for various specialties, including pediatrics, OB-GYN, general and plastic surgery, neurology and radiology.

In 2013, another four candidates were selected to receive training. Additionally, more than 100 patients have undergone emergency or elective treatment through the stroke center.



## LEADERSHIP NEWS

# HYEBRIDGE TELEHEALTH TAKES THE STAGE AT ARMENIAN MEDICAL WORLD CONGRESS

When the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress convened in Los Angeles this past July, one item on the agenda generated audience attention as never before: HyeBridge Telehealth, an ongoing program of Armenia Fund USA.

**D**r. Gevorg Yaghjian, a board member of Armenia Fund USA and the in-country project manager for the program, delivered a compelling presentation on the opportunities that telemedicine offers for Armenia and Karabakh. He mentioned the specialties most likely to benefit from this satellite-driven technology, including preventive care, neonatal and maternity care, as well as pathology, cardiology and cardio-vascular treatment.

### The advent of “mobile health.”

He also referred to the new smart technologies as the second wave in telemedicine. This includes smart phones, tablets and notebooks for professionals and consumers. It will open up ever more flexible and cost-efficient ways for physicians to consult on clinical cases when timeliness is key.

As such, Dr. Yaghjian stressed the importance of staying up to date with industry standards and announced that Armenia Fund USA is planning on adding “mobile health” to its existing Telehealth services.

When asked what impact telemedicine will have in the field of Continuous Medical Education (CME), Dr. Yaghjian answered that, “It would have its best application for doctors training at regional hospitals, whereas mobile health technologies can better serve treating clinical cases in cardiology, diabetes and pathology.”

### A new source of knowledge to be tapped.

Present at the international conference were members of a newly formed group called the Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) Alumni Association. Given the growing number of graduates from YSMU who are now practicing western medicine as permanent residents of the U.S. or other western countries, HyeBridge Telehealth has particular appeal for them.

It will give them a chance to share their practical medical know-how, developed in clinical settings in the West, with YSMU students and other alumni working in Armenia and Karabakh.

“This makes for a most unique relationship”, commented Irina Lazarian, the executive director of Armenia Fund USA. “The alumni from YSMU understand better than most how medicine is taught at YSMU and how it is practiced in Armenia and Karabakh. They are also fluent in Eastern Armenian. This, no doubt, facilitates education and consultations within the

Armenian reality. We look forward to involving this group as active participants in the HyeBridge Telehealth network.

### The right manager for the program.

Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian is ideally suited to oversee HyeBridge Telehealth as its in-country project manager. He was born and raised in Yerevan and is still a resident there. He is a physician, plastic surgeon, and associate professor. He received gold medal teaching awards from YSMU as well as the Drastamat Kanaian gold medal from the Ministry of Defense of Armenia.



Back in 1997, a group of plastic surgeons trained at the Mikaelyan Surgical Institute moved to YSMU. Dr. Yaghjian and his colleagues were able to organize the plastic surgery residency program with other colleagues. Thanks to this team, Armenia was the first post-soviet republic to have registered plastic surgery as a separate specialty.

His leadership in teaching is also a highlight of his career. From 2007-11, Dr. Yaghjian served as the vice rector in graduate medical education with an emphasis on Continuous Medical Education (CME). During this time, he established connections with all the chief doctors in the regional hospitals, including the military hospital in Shushi.

At the same time, Dr. Yaghjian has impressive credentials in Western Medicine. In the winter and spring of this year, he taught courses at Harvard Medical School, the Cleveland Clinic, Brandeis University and Yale Medical School. This past January, he became a Fulbright Scholar at the Boston University School of Medicine in medical education administration. ■



## SPECIAL REPORT

# ARMENIA FUND CONTINUES GLOBAL EFFORT TO ASSIST SYRIAN-ARMENIANS

The plight of Armenians seeking refuge from the conflict within Syria is generating worldwide support from both the diaspora and the homeland.

A significant part of the relief is made possible by the Fund's international affiliates, generated through grassroots contributions, individual benefactors, charitable entities, and groups.

The Fund affiliates of France, Germany, eastern and western U.S. regions, Argentina, Brazil, Lebanon and Sweden raised support for Syrian-Armenian relief during the 2012 Telethon. The portion of donations allocated for this purpose was transferred to a special emergency bank account established by the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund umbrella organization in Hayastan.

Well-known industrialist Hirair Hovnanian of the eastern U.S. region and Armenia-based business leader Ara Abrahamyan both donated generously to cover multiple refugee flights from Aleppo to Yerevan. Other contributing entities include: Petak LLC; HayRusGasArd CJSC; the Galustanian Raffi Charitable Center; Judges of the Republic of Armenia; RA NAS Institute of

History; Banants Football Club; Kara-Murza State Musical College of Gyumri; Turvand LLC; and others.

### Addressing the crisis on two fronts.

The All-Armenian Fund is currently supporting a range of healthcare, education, and social-services projects, not only for refugees but also those still living in Syria. For example, it has been keeping the doors open for Armenian day schools in Aleppo by paying teacher salaries. Collections of \$200K were distributed by the Catholicosate of Cilicia, the only channel able to directly reach Armenians in Syria.

In Armenia, working with the Diaspora Ministry, the Fund has helped over 110 students receive scholarships to various institutions of higher education. It has also helped two Syrian-Armenians receive life-saving emergency surgeries and six refugees receive cardiovascular surgeries. Regrettably, it also covered the funeral expenses of three other refugees. ■



## CHANNELS FOR GIVING

**Donate Online:** If you prefer the convenience that the Internet affords, you can donate to Armenia Fund USA through our secure online server at [www.armenianfundusa.org](http://www.armenianfundusa.org).

**Corporate Matching Gifts:** Would you like to see your donation doubled or even tripled? Over 9,000 companies and their subsidiaries have "Matching Gift Programs." Before you plan your next gift, check to see if your employer can help to increase the power of your donation.

**Installment Gifts:** Armenia Fund USA is making it easy for you to make your gift in periodic credit card installments that are manageable for you. You can support the projects that are dear to you without feeling the strain of large, up-front donations.

**Planned Giving:** Consider a planned gift and its many financial benefits. Planned gifts can be in the form of a willed estate or asset, a bequest or the beneficiary status of a pension plan or insurance policy. Speak with your financial planner to learn more or contact us directly.

**Stock Transfers:** By transferring appreciated securities (owned for a year or more) to Armenia Fund USA, you will

receive a charitable deduction for the fair market value of your gift AND avoid capital gains taxes that may be otherwise due.

NOTE: To ensure that your stock transfer is properly recorded as a contribution, please inform Armenia Fund USA before making the transfer via your brokerage account. Call 212-689-5307 or email [irina@armenianfundusa.org](mailto:irina@armenianfundusa.org) and provide the name of the stock and the number of shares you plan to donate.

**Pay Tribute to a Loved One:** Remember or honor your loved ones with a gift in their name or consider a gesture such as "In Lieu of Flowers" to help others commemorate a passing.

**Text Donation:** Text "Armenia" to 80088 to donate \$10 to the Armenia Fund USA. Charges will appear on your wireless bill, or be deducted from your prepaid balance. All purchases must be authorized by account holder. Must be 18 years of age or have parental permission to participate. Message and Data Rates May Apply. Text STOP to 80088 to STOP. Text HELP to 80088 for HELP. Full Terms: [mGive.org/T](http://mGive.org/T). Privacy Policy: [mGive.org/P](http://mGive.org/P)

## MILESTONE IN MARTUNI *(continued from cover)*

It is the second major medical facility in Karabakh to be built through the support of the Armenian-American community of the eastern region. The first was the Armineh Pagoumian Polyclinic and Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Diagnostic Center.

Khoren Bandazian, the chairman of Armenia Fund USA expressed his pride and satisfaction. "We are extremely happy that this ongoing collaboration between the Diaspora and the government of Artsakh has resulted in the establishment of yet another modern medical center in the republic. The new hospital, which was made possible by the support of the Armenian Medical Fund, our partner, will provide local communities with quality healthcare. It remains our hope that this major initiative will be followed by many others toward the continued development of the strategically significant Martuni region."

Others participating in the opening ceremony included Rev. Shahe Ananyan, the representative of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, Zoya Lazaryan, the minister of Health of Karabakh, Karen Shahramanyan, the minister of Urban Development of Karabakh, Mher Khachatryan, the mayor of Martuni, and other local officials, Ara Vardanyan, the executive director of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, and Irina Lazarian, the executive director of Armenia Fund USA.

### **Martuni marks the spot for 21st century health care in Karabakh.**

With a total area of 2,470 square meters, this fully equipped multi-disciplinary health care facility is the new standard for what quality health care delivery looks, feels, and acts like.

The two-story complex will house a state-of-the-art outpatient polyclinic, a fully equipped emergency room, a maternity ward, an intensive care unit and specialty departments including Gynecology, Diagnostics, Surgery and Physical Therapy.

The structure will also feature an advanced Infectious Diseases department with a separate entrance. The spacious interior can serve as many as 1,400 ambulatory and 1,000 non-ambulatory patients each year. Up to 23 inpatients at a time can be treated. In addition, new ambulance vehicles fitted with pre-hospital equipment are available to reach even the most remote areas promptly.

### **Phase Two: Rebuilding patient trust and staff confidence.**

"For too long this very outdated and neglected soviet-style hospital was known to be a public safety risk," said Irina Lazarian. "So patients found it necessary to travel long distances, at their own expense, to receive treatment elsewhere. Some who couldn't manage it would go without any treatment, causing further medical complications. Only time and positive patient experiences will prove that the new hospital is safe and compliant



*Khoren Bandazian and Gregori Gasparyan, the director of the new hospital, begin the ribbon-cutting ceremony.*

with world-class sanitation standards. It's also why maintenance and management are key to the overall success of this grand-scale project."

That process will start with such modern hospital amenities as a large elevator, central heating and air-conditioning, provided by a state-of-the-art boiler room and power substation, and features such as landscaped grounds for convalescing patients and visitors, a paved driveway, an outdoor parking garage, and a visitors canteen.

A highly proficient and well-equipped staff is also a priority. Armenia Fund USA, with participation of doctors from the diaspora and specialists from leading healthcare institutions in Armenia, will

work to ensure that continuing physician and nursing education remain within the project's scope. To this end, funds are being raised to install a telemedicine hub. This will allow physicians at Martuni to consult with counterparts anywhere in the world, be it for difficult diagnoses or learning new skills and intricate equipment.

Some physicians at the Martuni hospital may be eligible for the Physicians Education Program, a healthcare initiative supported by Armenia Fund USA. It arranges for observerships at major teaching hospitals in the U.S. ■

### **Introducing the Doctors' Wish List Campaign.**

Khoren Bandazian also pointed out the need to procure advanced diagnostic equipment and new medical appliances that will enable doctors, nurses and technicians to provide the highest quality of service. These items may include the latest digitally based ultrasound and other diagnostic equipment that are compatible with telemedicine technology. This will enable staff to communicate with professional peers located anywhere in the world in real time via the HyeBridge Telehealth hub.

"We are actively reaching out to our communities to step up in support of this new initiative, called the Doctors' Wish List campaign," Ms. Lazarian added. "We will also consider these items for our Project Benefactor program.

"In just one year, we have attracted a new stream of support from our Eastern Region donors interested in the health sector," Ms. Lazarian reported. "For example, new ambulances and pre-hospital ambulance equipment are very popular options for our Project Benefactors. Many of our constituents live in major metropolitan areas in which medical centers of excellence abound. So, they know what's out there. And they believe that the people of Karabakh deserve no less."



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## LEADERSHIP NEWS

# ARMENIA FUND USA WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Armenia Fund USA Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Alex L. Karapetian and Aline Markarian as its newest members. Both have impressive backgrounds in organizational leadership and philanthropy and are active members of the eastern U.S. Armenian-American community.



Alex Karapetian



PHOTO CREDIT: TINA TCHOLAKIAN

Aline Markarian

Their fresh perspectives, diverse experiences and professional skill sets will help the Board meet the challenges and opportunities of an ever-changing landscape in Armenia and Karabakh. Moreover, with both having served on the Armenia Fund USA 20th Anniversary Gala Committee, a new generation of donors and supporters were brought into the Armenia Fund fold.

**Alex Karapetian** is the Director of Sales and Marketing at Acopian Power Supplies, a family-run business. He is also a long-time supporter of Armenia Fund USA, adding to his demonstrated history of philanthropic leadership in and out of the Armenian community.

As a volunteer and supporter of his family's nonprofit organization, the Acopian Center for the Environment at the American University of Armenia, Alex helps pursue its mission to raise concern for Armenia's natural environment through

research, education and public involvement. Alex has also served the Armenian Assembly of America as its ARAMAC State Chair for Pennsylvania as well as a Trustee.

As a third-generation alumnus of Lafayette College, Alex is the current President-Elect of the Alumni Association. Prior to that, he was Chair of the Young Alumni Committee, as well as Class President and Board Member of the Lafayette Leadership Council.

Alex holds an MBA and M.S. from the Stern School at New York University. He resides in Manhattan with his wife, Leslie.

**Aline Markarian** is currently a project manager at New York Landmark Construction Management, a firm specializing in high-end interior renovations.

Following in her family's footsteps, she is a key player in multiple organizations in the Armenian community. She became involved with the AGBU Young Professionals of Greater NY almost immediately after receiving her Masters degree in International Marketing from St Joseph's University in Philadelphia. This led to her serving as its chairperson between 2008-2011.

During that time, Aline also became involved with AGBU FOCUS, helping to raise awareness and funds for the AGBU Hye Geen Pregnant Women's Centers in Armenia. She served as co-chair of FOCUS Chicago in 2009.

Aline currently plays an advisory role for AGBU Young Professionals, which also involves fundraising for the AGBU Children's Centers in Yerevan. Plus, after working on the 50th Anniversary commemoration of AGBU Camp Nubar, Aline became the newest member of the Camp Committee.

In addition to her role on the Armenia Fund USA board, Aline is a member of the Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration Committee. ■