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ATKEN

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
ATKEN ARMENIAN FOUNDATION



OVERVIEW: A DECADE OF DEVOTION

A Photo Journey:
Zartok! AAF'S International Summer Music Academy, p. 9



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TEN YEARS STRONG!

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ATKEN ARMENIAN FOUNDATION



As we complete our 10th year of service to Armenia with a growing number of partners and financial supporters, we look forward to another decade of accomplishments. Many organisations such as the Atken Armenian Foundation come and go and this year was a particularly difficult year financially as demand was greater than expected. At our annual fundraising concerts dedicated to our music programs (this year in Toronto and Montreal) we had the support of an international Armenian icon, the soprano Hasmik Papian. She joined our amazing Aline Kutan (soprano) in two unforgettable recitals where we raised a record amount of funds thanks to individual donors. This allowed us to launch "Zartonk!", an international summer music academy for Armenia.

We have always respected the sacrifice of our donors by: a) following the money to its intended goal, b) getting a top return for our investments in people, and c) reporting back to our donors with details on the results of their gift. From the God-given musical talents we have supported from the beginning, who are now winning competitions left and right, to the beekeepers we support in Vayots Dzor who have tripled their harvest and are able to provide for their families, the AAF has indeed become an empowering force in the regions of Armenia.

More wonderful concerts and collaborations are on the horizon in 2020:

- In March, we expect another set of fantastic fundraising concerts with special guest pianist Nareh Arghamanyan joining Aline Kutan in stunning works from the vocal and piano repertoire. First Prize laureate and youngest winner of the 2008 Montreal International Music Competition, Nareh Arghamanyan is recognized as one of the most talented pianists of her generation. Do not miss this concert; make your pledge of support today!
- In the summer of 2020, we hope to yet again hold our summer music academy "Zartonk!" culminating in stunning concerts given by the top young talents of Armenia. A special fundraising drive will be devoted to this essential project for Armenia.
- Our collaboration with the Syunik NGO will continue to bear fruit (literally) as we plant thousands of more fruit trees and continue building infrastructure needed to support local farmers. Join our agro-development movement by investing in the families we support; finance a fruit-tree orchard in the threatened border villages we serve.

Thus, we bring you this 3rd issue of ATKEN with a look at what we accomplished in 2019 as well as an overview of our first decade of service to Armenia, a country that today, more than ever, promises to become the beautiful homeland Armenians have always dreamed about.

VAN ARMENIAN, EDITOR





“All the flowers of
all the tomorrows
are in the seeds
of today”

- Indian proverb -

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ATKEN ARMENIAN FOUNDATION
FONDATION ATKEN ARMENIAN

photo by K. Stelmashov



OUR FELLOWS COLLECTING PRIZES

Our Foundation has a unique ability to detect great musical talent; example, the many prizes our Fellows win. This year has been particularly impressive with wins in Russia's top young talent competition, as well as raking in first prizes in competitions from Armenia and Georgia, to Italy. Here are two of our Fellows who won big this year!

Anahit, a young girl from the town of Akhalkalaki in Georgia (Javaghk region) is a student of Nino Katamadze, a student in Elisso Bolkvadze's prestigious "Lyra" Charity Foundation program and a participant in SOS Talents Michel Sogny taking her to Paris every year for masterclasses and concerts. She is also an Atken Armenian Foundation Fellow having received from us a grand piano to practice on in her home and a full fellowship this summer to study with Nareh Arghamanyan at Zartonk! She has performed for the President of Georgia and the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia.

Our Foundation covered the cost of her travel to Moscow to participate . . . AND WIN BIG . . . at the prestigious "Nutcracker" Televised International Competition in Moscow! With her usual gusto, courage, and musical conviction, she performed the stunning Shostakovitch concerto with orchestra in the finals on the famous stage of the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall. To reach this point she passed the pre-selection stage and two rounds of intense competition. Anahit won the Silver medal! We cannot be prouder of her accomplishments.





A student of Hermine Gevorgyan in our Professional Vocal Training Program in the Armavir region, as well as with Aline Kutan at Zartonk!, Haik has been impressing us again and again with his excellent work ethic, talent, and beautiful voice. This year was his year to shine. After passing regional rounds in Georgia, we sent him to the finals in Pesaro, Italy, the birthplace of the great Rossini, where, after stunning performances in Italian and Armenian, he was given the first prize by an international jury.

Atken Armenian Foundation supporters and those newly introduced to our work, we ask you to donate to our cause, to discover and help top talents like our Anahit and Haik. Now is a time for giving; make it your meaningful Christmas gift to our talented Fellows from throughout the Armenian homeland.



A FUNDRAISER LIKE NO OTHER

In the past our fundraisers have been for our Montreal supporters. This year a devoted group of AAF supporters in Toronto led by our friend Martin Bazarian, decided to join our efforts and host our selected artists. The artists were none other than sopranos Hasmik Papian and Aline Kutan. As you can imagine the results were two artistically unmatched concerts and, happily, more funds for our beneficiary youth in Armenia. In fact, Zartok! was made possible by the superhuman efforts of our concert committees in Montreal and Toronto and our main sponsors the Palvetsian sisters of Cambridge, Ontario. Thank you a thousand times over on behalf of our Fellows.

A FUNDRAISER . . .





PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

Statement from the Prime Minister of Canada

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Atken Armenian Foundation benefit concert, held at the Oscar Peterson Hall.

Since its establishment, the Atken Armenian Foundation has supported exceptional musical talent in Armenia, while changing and inspiring Canadian and Armenian communities alike.

As we gather for tonight's concert, I wish to commend all of you here today for your generosity and support of the Atken Armenian Foundation. I believe that it is this type of kindness that truly embodies what it means to be Canadian.

Thank you to all the organizers of this amazing event, and everyone in attendance supporting this worthwhile cause. Please accept my warmest welcome and best wishes for a memorable concert!



Ottawa
2019



A FUNDRAISER . . .

ZARTONK! A HUGE STEP FOR ARMENIA

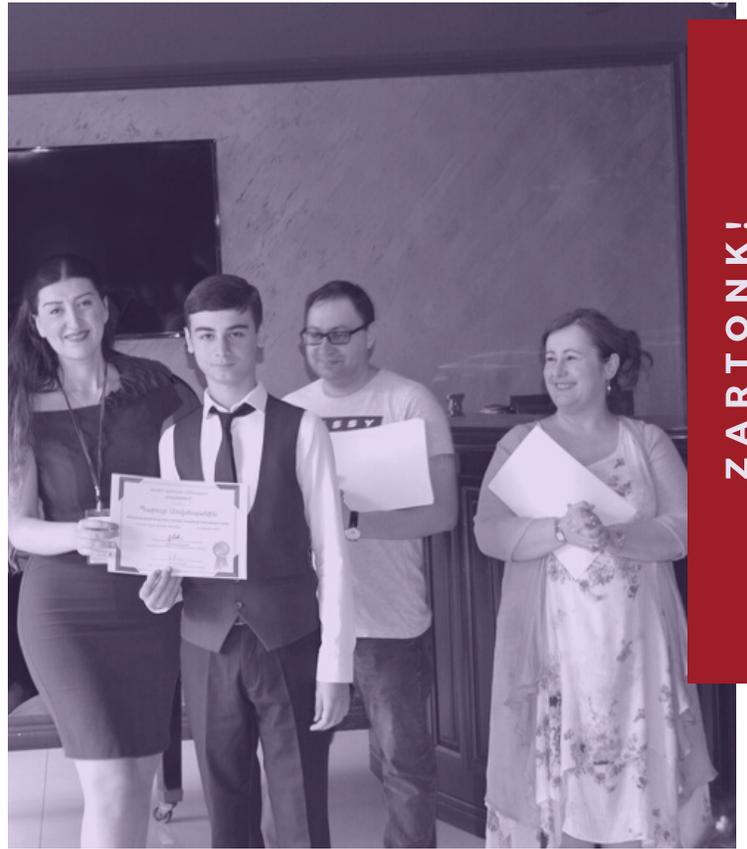
At our official closing concert of the Zartonk! International Summer Music Academy, the Vanadzor audience was presented with many beautiful and memorable moments. Listening to the concert, we realized that we had indeed found a very fitting way to celebrate 10 years of devotion to the young musical talents of Armenia. These talents are our future ambassadors on international stages, and now they finally have a summer home at their doorstep where they can study with the best pedagogues. Let us take you there with this photo journey!

Zartonk! was indeed an unprecedented cultural event in the regions. The Vanadzor public heard from young 11-year-old prodigies, to young professional singers who will soon conquer the stages of the world, to Nareh Arghamanyan performing a stunning solo piece and a first, Nareh in performance with our voice faculty Aline Kutan. Finally, to top it off, we were blessed with the presence of our friend and passionate supporter the great



soprano Hasmik Papian who gave a rousing speech at our closing concert. Her call to action was met with thunderous applause: a call to support the work of the Atken Armenian Foundation and the devoted international and national artists at Zartok! such as Nareh Arghamanyan, Aline Kutan, Emmanuel Hovhannisyan (folk music) and Narek Avagyan (flutist) who are determined to bring concrete positive results in the cultural realm in Armenia.

Long life to Zartok!



Zartonk! is a platform that:

- Gives **amazing results fast** in a creative and friendly atmosphere
- Brings **global optimal education** to Armenia
- Ensures that **no talent goes unnoticed**
- Helps **revitalize Armenia's cultural well-being**
- Is **tailored training** for exceptional talent giving them **confidence and empowerment** to one day take over the Zartonk! torch
- Is about **cultural re-awakening** (*Zartonk* in Armenian) in the regions of Armenia



Zartok! partners included: the Eduard Kzartmyan Music School in Vanadzor where we held all the masterclasses; the Kirovakan Hotel that became the home away from home for students and faculty; the Lori Tourism R&D Center that took us on a tour of Vanadzor and provided volunteers throughout the two weeks; the Hayordats House in Gyumri that hosted our Gyumri concert; the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) that hosted a concert for our Folk Ensemble students at their fabulous Smart Center in Debed; and the Armenia Tree Project (ATP) that hosted our students for a day of nature discovery at their Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies in Margahovit village. Thank you all for believing in and supporting our work.



Message from Zartonk! Artistic Director, Nareh Arghamanyan:

"Our Zartonk! International Summer Music Academy came to a triumphal ending. My deep appreciation goes to Van Armenian and Liana Khoshbekyan for organizing such a wonderful 2-week summer academy in Vanadzor and for making the dreams of many children come true. Also my sincere gratitude goes to the wonderful teachers Aline Kutan, Narek Avagyan, Emmanuel Hovhannisyan as well as Elen Kirakosyan and Tigran Berkelyan, our piano accompanists. Special thanks to Hasmik Papian for sharing the honor of being with us during the final concert and for sharing our visions.

I can't emphasize enough how many talented children Armenia has; our mission is to nourish their talent into helping them to conquer bigger stages.

Thank you all! Bravi Tutti! Viva Armenia! Viva Zartonk!

Nareh +



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True love is
inexhaustible;
the more you give,
the more you have.

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery -



photo by K. Stelmashou

AAF: THE FIRST DECADE



A summary
of what we have accomplished in Armenia
with over half-a-million dollars raised
in Canada and abroad

AAAF: THE FIRST DECADE

Under the leadership of Van Armenian, a Montreal-based professional violinist and teacher, the Atken Armenian Foundation (AAF) has accomplished much since its creation as a Registered Canadian Charity 10 years ago. Our fundraising events are run and monitored by committees of respected Armenian-Canadians and we provide a detailed account of all our income and spending on a yearly basis to the Canadian Government (Revenue Canada). Our board includes distinguished individuals such as Levon Chilingirian (OBE), Raffi Armenian (OC) and Agnes Grossmann (Vienna Golden Cross; Austria Silver Cross), all outstanding musicians who wholeheartedly support our work.

Our agro-development projects in Vayots Dzor are led and monitored closely by Canadian businessman and good friend of the AAF, Mr. Tony Halepli. These projects are achieved in

close cooperation with the Syunik NGO, an organisation that is changing the landscape in the region with partners in the USA, Holland and Switzerland and of course Canada. Our over 100 micro-projects in Vayots Dzor in the health, education, poverty relief, tourism, and infrastructure, are led by Canadian development specialist Antoine Terjanian. Antoine is our eye in the region as he and his wife Sheila live there for almost 6 months in the year. For the past 10 years, all AAF management activities are achieved by unpaid volunteers, including our representative in Armenia, American University of Armenia Registrar, Chaghig Arzrouni.

We hope that acquainting yourselves with our work today will encourage you to choose the AAF as your preferred destination for your charity goals.



1) MUSIC EDUCATION AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT

a) Summer Music Academy

The 2019 Zartonk International Summer Music Academy in Vanadzor. Artistic Director: Nareh Arghamanyan. Director: Van Armenian.

Some results:

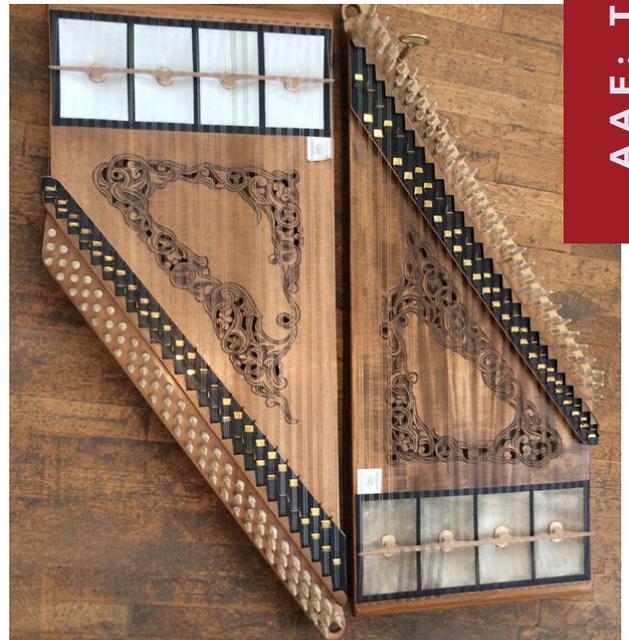
- 45 outstanding talents from Armenia, Javaghk and Russia, on full fellowships, for two weeks, received daily masterclasses with internationally renowned faculty.
- 4 concerts were given for the local population, as well as two run-out concerts, one in Gyumri and the other, with funding from COAF, at Debed's COAF Smart Center.

b) Musical Instrument Bank

An impressive music instrument bank including a baby grand piano, 6 pianos, 10 violins, violin bows, 3 flutes, a bass guitar with amplifier, 2 Qanons, and an oboe. These instruments are on loan to exceptional individual talents we support and to music schools in Yegheknadzor, Vayk, Yerevan, Kotayk, and Gyumri.

Some results:

- We purchased the baby grand piano for a 13-year-old wunderkind child in Javaghk. After her participation at Zartonk! we sent her to Moscow to participate in the prestigious Nutcracker "Щелкунчик" Televised International Music Competition; she won the silver medal.
- We provide two excellent Qanons to the top Qanon studio in Armenia at the Spendiaryan Music School.



c) Professional Vocal Training in the Regions

Professional vocal training programs in Kotayk, Armavir, and Vayots Dzor regions (training two-dozen vocal talents).

Some results:

- o We recently sent a 13-year-old student to a competition in Italy; he won 1st prize.
- o 6 of our graduates are in music colleges in Yerevan on scholarships.

d) Masterclasses

Providing masterclasses in piano, strings, and folk music for the Dilijan Music College as well as in Javaghk and Vayots Dzor for piano and voice students.

e) Exceptional Musical Talent Development in the Regions

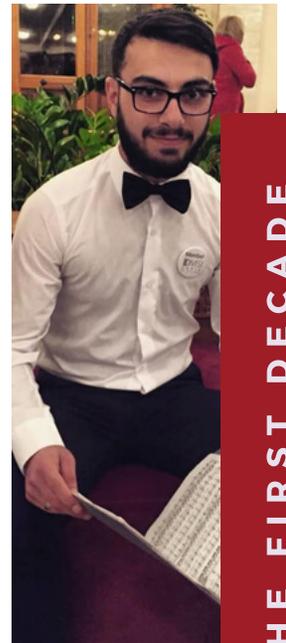
Providing weekly private lessons and professional instruments with the best teachers in Yerevan for:
1) two top talents from Gyumri, a flutist and an oboist; 2) a talented Qanon player from Dilijan; 3) a talented soprano and two flutists from Vayots Dzor.

Some results:

- o A particularly extraordinary voice talent from Javaghk in our program for the past 4 years has won prizes in Italy, Georgia, and Armenia.
- o Our flutist from Gyumri has won national prizes and a full scholarship to an important summer music academy in Russia.

f) Vayots Dzor Youth Theater

Funding a youth theater program in Vayots Dzor, winners at the Pomegranate Seed (Նռան Հատիկ) Festival.



g) Career Development

In October 2019, we brought a promising young mezzo-soprano to Montreal, Canada to perform with a local professional chamber music society. In order to prepare for competitions and auditions for the great opera houses, she is set to return to Canada in fall of 2020 to study full-time with Aline Kutan. Mrs. Kutan is an AAF board member and on the faculty of McGill University, the Montreal Conservatory, and Zartonk!

h) Music Training Studio and Choir in Vayots Dzor

Providing vocal, piano, solfeggio, music history courses and creating a children's choir.

Some results:

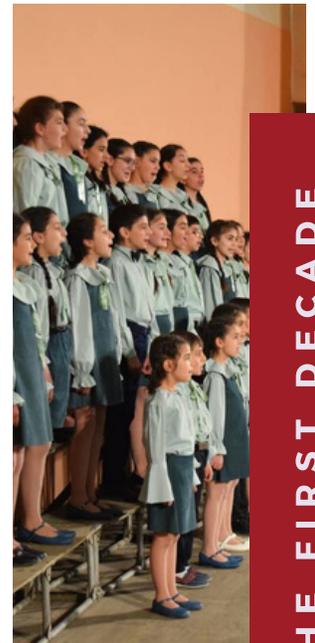
- Two of our voice students are now scholarship students at the Komitas Conservatory.
- The choir has won several competitions in Georgia and Armenia.

i) Travel to Competitions

Funding transportation to competitions for our choir (winning a Gold medal in Georgia in 2012, and second and third prizes in the Singing Armenia Competition (Երգող Հայաստան)).

j) Online!

Providing a computer for music history lessons and distance teaching and monitoring in Vayots Dzor.



2) AGRO-DEVELOPMENT IN ARMENIA

a) Joint Projects : Armenia Tree Project and Atken Armenian Foundation

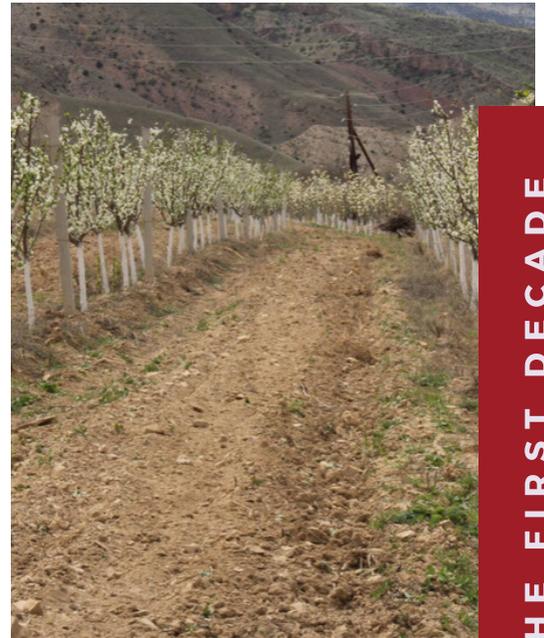
We raised 60,000 USD in 2018 for tree-planting projects in Gyumri. We are the ATP representatives for Canada.

b) Joint Projects : Syunik NGO and Atken Armenian Foundation

Modern agricultural and beekeeping projects being realized jointly by the AAF & Syunik NGO.

Some results:

- Establishing demonstration as well as production orchards with dwarf trees based on intensive rootstocks.
- Planting 6,000 high-quality dwarf trees (apples, pears, plums, apricots, etc.) in the above-mentioned orchards.
- Helping Syunik NGO buy additional 9 hectares of agricultural land hence employing more villagers.
- Establishing a nursery with an initial lot of 8,000 Dutch-origin intensive rootstocks (rootstocks multiply yearly by 3 to 4 each).
- Multiplying the above rootstocks yearly, grafting and providing high-quality fruit-tree saplings to 1,200 Vayots Dzor farmer families. Hence, over 30,000 high-quality fruit trees have been planted in the Vayots Dzor region. These dwarf trees yield in large proportion #1 and #2 quality fruits vs traditional trees with low quality yields. With the coming fruit harvests in about 2-3 years, the incomes of many families will be improved substantially.



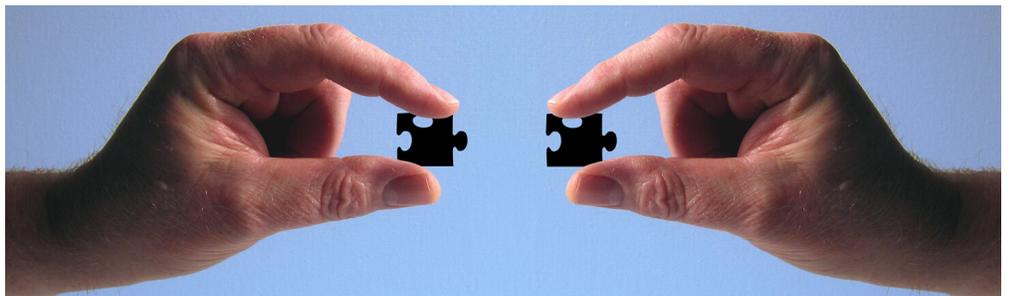
- Holding seminars in our demonstration orchards and providing modern orchard management techniques to about 3000 villagers.
- Building a Dry Fruit Facility with modern fruit processing equipment (including a large solar fruit dryer (10 ft x 110 ft) employing women with large families or no husband & persons with disabilities. The dry Fruit Facility will serve hundreds of independent fruit growers. Villagers will earn more money using this value-added service. Fruit spoilage will be reduced. Export contracts are being negotiated.
- Building a water pump station in the Khndzorout border village (thus recovering 25 hectares of land for apple and walnut tree planting). Once the land irrigated, we will provide the villagers saplings from our nursery.
- Hiring a Project Manager to coordinate and teach modern beekeeping techniques to Vayots Dzor villagers.
- Distributing 167 hives (including 3 Nakhichevan border villages) servicing 21 beekeeper families.
- Providing 3 Honey extracting machines (servicing about 60-70 beekeepers).
- Establishing a brand name for our regions honey 'Mountain Miracle Honey'. Logo designed; glass jars bought. Contact with boutiques, shops, hotels established. 2020 will be year of the start of marketing of our region's honey.
- Financing marketing booths at ARM PROD EXPO in Yerevan (2018 & 2019) so that Vayots Dzor farmers can market their produce and break their financial isolation. Money already allocated for the year 2020 ARM PROD EXPO.
- Yearly donations of honey and fruits are made to the local Army post near the border village of Khatchik.



AAF: THE FIRST DECADE

3) OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN VAYOTS DZOR

- Complete renovation of 6 halls in the decrepit “Cultural Center” in Yegheknadzor.
- Training and support for a network of owner-operated B&B’s to help rural regions participate in tourism development and to support themselves.
- Purchase of 100 mattresses for Camp Siranoush (Syunik NGO peace-building initiatives for Ukrainian, Georgian & Armenian participants).
- Donation of various hospital equipment from Canada such as: a) 5 mobile blood transfusion units (including two that were immediately sent to the war zone during the Four-Day War in April of 2016), b) an Echo-cardiograph, c) a V Scan ultrasound machine, and d) several diabetes and blood-pressure measurement machines.
- 100’s of eyeglasses (from donations of used eyeglasses in Canada).
- Support to entrepreneurs working on environmental-protection-related projects (plastic recycling).
- Scholarships for AUA's Certificate program in Tourism and Hospitality Management in Yegheknadzor.
- Scholarships at Gitelik University in Yegheknadzor for achieving students and single-parent family students.
- English language courses at AUA Yegheknadzor branch for 12 tourism-related individuals (taxi drivers, B & B owners, restaurant owners, etc.).
- English language courses for youths in our music program.
- Rebuilding of a playground in Yegheknadzor.





CONTRIBUTORS:

**NAREH ARGHAMANYAN
TONY HALEPLI
ANTOINE TERJANIAN
LIANA KHOSHBEKYAN
VAN ARMENIAN**

PHOTOS ON COVER, P.4, AND P.15
BY KAREN STELMASHOV

OTHER PHOTO CREDITS:
VAHE AGHAMYAN
SYUNIK NGO
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MAIL YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO:

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2110 HARBOUR
LAVAL, QUEBEC, CANADA
H7T 2M5



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