



VANADZOR SCHOOL STARTS NEW LIFE



First Day of School for the newly reconstructed Vanadzor School Number One, September 24, 2001.

With Ideas and Hope, the Reconstructed School Goes to Work.

At an impressive ceremony, Vanadzor School Number One was officially opened on September 24 after a \$600,000 reconstruction, bringing to a close a two-year effort that began with Armenia Fund USA adopting the earthquake-damaged school as its 1999 fund-raising project.

Located in the Lori Marz province of Armenia, the original school was built in 1931 and almost immediately became the leading school in the country, and produced among its graduates many of Armenia's leading artists, politicians, scientists, and writers.

The festive opening ceremony was well organized and featured a brass band and a children's dance group. Well attended, the ceremony was broadcast on TV and covered by all local media.

Armenia Fund USA was represented by Vice-Chairman Kevork Toroyan.

Donors' Support: Vehicle for Success

The Vanadzor project would not have had this timely success without the generous support of our extended family of donors.

see **SCHOOL OPENING** on page 5



Father Dajad Davidian giving welcoming address and blessing at Vanadzor school dedication.

Everyone at Armenia Fund USA shares in the enormous sense of grief and loss from the tragic events in New York, Pennsylvania and our nation's capital on September 11, 2001.

We deeply understand the meaning of the tragedy experienced by people whose lives were shattered on that day.

Our hearts go to those who lost their loved ones.

We take faith in the knowledge that we will emerge stronger and more united from this trying time.

ARMENIA FUND USA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the third
issue of Armenia Fund
USA in Action!



As you will see from this issue of Armenia Fund USA in Action, the past several months have been productive and crowded with events.

We reached our \$1-million Millennium Project target, in a record six months, and work is now being done on the design phase of the Health Care Center in Stepanakert. Our early discussions with the health-care experts in Karabagh indicate that the new center should be expanded into a larger complex which will reflect the anticipated needs of a growing community. You will be receiving more on this shortly.

Our proudest moment of 2001, however, is that, at long last, the landmark Vanadzor School has opened, has been dedicated, and is now on track to resuming its former position as the "model" school it became when it was built in 1931. We here at Armenia Fund USA cannot be thankful enough for the outstanding support that you have given this project.

One of the problems that comes with so much success is that people expect more and more of the same. We have never rested on our laurels, and we don't intend to now. Therefore, we are using this current period to emphasize the "more than bricks and mortar" philosophy that has become basic with Armenia Fund USA and which sets us apart from other organizations.

For the School, we are working with USAID and the World Bank to ensure that the local community will take an active part in running the School. We are introducing them to a concept well accepted in America but which is foreign to Armenia—a parent-teacher association that will support the school with advice and provide local-level governance. The same "more than bricks and mortar" philosophy has already been accepted to be an integral part of the operation of the Health Care Center when it opens.

We are proud to announce that we have brought onto our Board a new member, Alyssa Keleshian, who brings with her a background in marketing and will add another dimension to the effectiveness of the Board.

Finally, we come to that series of events that has affected us all—the attacks on America on September 11. You are all aware by now that—out of deference to the need to raise funds to support the families of those who died so tragically—it was decided to cancel the annual Thanksgiving Day Telethon in aid of the much-needed North-South Highway. The cancellation does not mean that the project has gone away. With work having begun, as we report in this issue, it is important that construction go ahead. Therefore, Armenia Fund USA has selected a vital element as its most immediate target—an important bridge over the Varanda River, near the village of Shekher, connecting a section of the Highway already built with a section on which work will start in Spring 2002. This has been costed to be \$500,000, and we ask that you use the donation envelope with this issue to indicate your support for this important link.

And, finally, permit me to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a New Year that is happy and prosperous.

Hagop Kouyoumdjian
Chairman of the Board

TRUSTEES, BOARD HEAR THAT 2000 WAS FINEST YEAR FOR ARMENIA FUND USA



Left to right: Joseph Basralian, Tro Piliguiian, Tony Berberian, Artemis Nazerian, Archbishop Barsamian, Archbishop Cholyan, Hirair Hovnanian, Kevork Toroyan, Hagop Kouyoumdjian. Missing from the picture are: Noubar Afeyan and Hilda Melconian.

With a record \$2.27-million received from a record number of donors, year 2000 was the finest in the eight-year history of Armenia Fund USA, Executive Director Mary Ann Kibarian reported to the joint meeting of the Trustees and the newly-expanded nine-member Board of Directors, which was hosted by Archbishop Barsamian at the Diocese of the Armenian Church, earlier this year.

Detailing the successful year, Kibarian noted that Armenia Fund USA was involved in completing the fund-raising for the Vanadzor School, continuing the fund-raising for the Orphans' Endowment Fund, contributing to the Telethon for the North-South Highway, and beginning the fund-raising for the

Millennium Project, the health-care center in Stepanakert. With regard to the campaign for the center, there were two major public events—the hugely successful Nuné Concert, at the Lincoln Center, and a fund-raising reception at the home of Armenia Fund USA chairman, Hagop Kouyoumdjian. Finally, Armenia Fund USA was the largest beneficiary of the Will of the late Jack Hekimian, of Detroit.

Hagop Kouyoumdjian reviewed the transition from the Pan Armenian Fund which began in 1992 to Armenia Fund USA in 1995, noting such accomplishments as more public activities; more participation from other communities; more communication with donors; greater participation and contributions to HAAF; greater support over-all for our fund-

raising efforts from the community.

Kevork Toroyan reviewed the Armenia Fund USA policies implemented to ensure greater accountability and transparency in project development.

The meeting also set in train the campaign for a non-specific annual \$100 donation from the donor family to enable Armenia Fund USA to meet the ever-growing agenda of needs in Armenia and Karabagh.

In addition, it confirmed the details of the fund-raising dinner, at which Baroness Caroline Cox, a Deputy Speaker of the British House of Lords, was the featured speaker [and at which, the center's fund-raising drive was to get a huge boost toward its goal. See page 3 for a fuller report.]

In a free-ranging discussion, the meeting confirmed that the Armenia Fund USA philosophy of ever-greater accountability and transparency had inspired confidence in donors which, in turn, led to the organization's growing success.

This philosophy, together with the concept of "beyond bricks and mortar," means that Armenia Fund USA ensures that the local community receives the support it needs to become involved in the finished project.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Board was complimented by Trustee Hirair Hovnanian for its organization, its leadership, and its outstanding performance.

ARMENIA FUND USA HONORED

Armenia Fund USA was honored with a certificate "in recognition of its consistent work on large development projects in Armenia and Karabagh as well as its contribution to the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's activities," at the 10th annual meeting of HAAF's Board of Trustees, in Yerevan, in May.

The award was presented by Armenia's president, Robert Kocharian. Accepting the award on behalf of Hagop Kouyoumdjian, Board Chairman, Mary Ann Kibarian, Executive Director, thanked the President for the appreciation of Armenia Fund USA's efforts and went on to say, "We are proud to be a partner with HAAF. We are united in our vision and hope that our combined goodwill, imagination and efforts will make the Homeland a greater source of pride and joy for all."

She noted that the joint work of HAAF and Armenia Fund USA has earned respect and confidence of the Diaspora community and succeeded "in mobilizing the divergent and disparate Diaspora, one of the most important resources Armenia and Karabagh have today."

Mrs. Kibarian linked recent successes that Armenia Fund USA has achieved with its fundraising efforts on the East Coast, in particular with the construction of a Health Care Center in Karabagh, to HAAF's adherence to the highest standards in its work, and the ability to craft the most efficient methods of operation.

One of the major current projects of Armenia Fund USA, reviewed at

the meeting, was the successful reconstruction of the famed Vanadzor School, destroyed in the 1988 earthquake.

Also honored were the branches in Argentina, Canada, and The Netherlands. In his report to the Trustees, President Kocharian listed some of HAAF's achievements for the year 2000. Heading the list was the Armenia Fund USA reconstruction of the Vanadzor School. Among other projects singled out by the president were:



On behalf of the Board of Directors, Mary Ann Kibarian received special recognition from President Kocharian.

- Construction of the North-South Highway
- Reconstruction of destroyed villages in Karabagh and the repair of water-supply systems
- Building, or reconstruction, of 49 houses in Haterk and Vaghuha villages for families of deceased soldiers
- Construction of water pipelines in Guishi, Khanatzakh, Shosh, Nerkin Seznek, and Verin Sezneck, as well as reconstruction of a water-receiving station

- Construction and reconstruction of seven educational institutions in the earthquake zone
- Construction of a Children's Art Center in Gyumri
- Construction of a music school, reconstruction and internal decoration of the Cultural Center in Spitak
- Construction of two schools and a kindergarten in Lori Marz
- Construction of a polyclinic in Vanadzor
- Reconstruction of the dormitory building of the Gavar orphanage
- Reconstruction of the St. Gevork Church in Ghoursali village.

MILLENNIUM PROJECT

CURRENT STAGE

After extensive consultation with an international team of health-care specialists, Armenia Fund USA has decided to expand its plans for the Health-Care Center in Stepanakert and include a diagnostic center and a hospital. The current Stepanakert Clinic is the only national multi-specialty outpatient and preventive care facility in Karabagh. Originally, the intent was to build a replacement for the existing facility, which was built early in the last century and was never updated, thus becoming impossible to modernise. Designated Armenia Fund USA's Millennium Project and costed at \$1-million, the target was met early last year, in a record six months after the announcement of the fund-raising drive.



Clinic Planning Committee l-r: Jeff Kerbekyan, Louis Sgroe, Kevork Toroyan, Annette Choolfaian, Armen Janountz.

Experts Team Up to Plan Comprehensive Strategy

However, according to Kevork Toroyan, Vice-Chairman of Armenia Fund USA and head of its construction projects, while the planning discussions were going on, it became apparent that the clinic ought to become part of a new proposed health complex in Stepanakert, to benefit from some common facilities. The technical team recommended the enlargement of the scope of the diagnostic center of the clinic project, to serve the clinic as well as the future hospital. The clinic, though in a separate building, would become the first phase of the future health complex. The complex will better serve the people of Stepanakert and its environs. "In this way," he said, "we will ensure that the people of Karabagh will receive the most efficient and modern healthcare possible."

The Project has three inter-related goals: construction of the facility, provision of medical equipment and supplies, and training medical and administrative personnel.

In working to meet these goals, the Millennium Project Team is designing the best plans for the construction, providing expertise on patient care, optimizing its material and human resources, and overseeing the project's development.

see **MILLENNIUM** on page 6

COX FUNDRAISING DINNER

What began as a fund-raising dinner, last March, on behalf of the Millennium Project,



Left-right: Baroness Cox, Dr. Z Lazaryan, Babken Kadehjian, Dr. K Andreyan, Peter Ghugasian, George Pagoumian, Robert Morgenthau, Mary Ann Kibarian.

featuring Baroness Caroline Cox, became an extraordinary evening when a single benefactor emerged and in one magnificent gesture enabled the fund-raising target to be reached.

At first, George K. Pagoumian—founder, president, and CEO of Napco LLC—had pledged \$500,000 toward the \$1-million target. But when the audience was shown a video that graphically described the dire conditions at the present clinic in Stepanakert, he asked his family—three children and their spouses—who were present, whether the pledge should be raised. They unanimously agreed and he then raised his donation to \$750,000. The additional sum, Mr. Pagoumian specified, was to be used for the proper maintenance of the Center when it is completed, in keeping with the Armenia Fund USA policy of continuing interest in its projects.

Together with the more than \$250,000 that already had been raised, largely as a result of a reception at the home of Hagop and Ica

see **COX FUNDRAISING DINNER** on page 6

NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY:

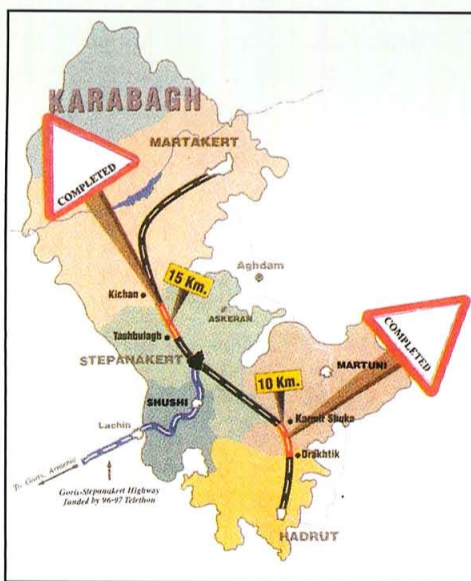
STRENGTHENING ECONOMY, SECURITY AND STATE OF KARABAGH

Two Sections Successfully Built, Three Sections Prepared for Construction

Designated as a priority project of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund and Armenia Fund USA, the North-South Highway, "The Backbone of Karabagh," is under construction, with two sections completed. The results are going to have a major impact on the lives of the people of Karabagh.

The two completed sections are the 20km Dashbulagh-Kichan link in the north, and the 10km Karmir Shuka-Drakhtik link in the south, with an additional 5km segment leading to the famous monastery of Gandzasar. They are already being used by the communities they connect.

The grand opening of these sections took place on September 28. President of Karabagh Arkady Ghoukassian, Prime Minister Anushavan Danielian, Speaker of the National Assembly Oleg Yesayan, and Armenia Fund USA Trustees Gagik Harutiunian and Hirair Hovnanian, and Armenia Fund USA Vice Chairman Kevork Toroyan took part in the ceremony.



Ultimately, the 169km highway will connect more than a score of towns and villages, many of which have never been connected and some of which had been accessible only by roads through Azerbaijan.

The road will be responsible for linking the Republic's territory from North to South, from Mardakert to Hadrout, and providing more efficient contact with Armenia, via the Goris-Stepanakert Highway.

Boost for Commerce and Employment

The economic and the social benefits that will come to Karabagh as a result of the highway are obvious, when one considers that in some parts of the country the only roads are dirt tracks and the only means of transport possible are by horse or donkey.

The highway is needed to bring more resources and speed into day-to-day transportation; it is critical for Karabagh's security and economy.

According to the recent report of Karabagh Department for Statistics, the economy expanded by more than 10 percent in the first quarter of this year, with double-digit growth registered in construction and manufacturing.

The building of the North-South Highway is rapidly becoming a part of this new growth, and the road is already an impetus for new commerce and employment. The construction of the first planned business on the road, ATA Company, is completed and in operation manufacturing wooden doors and windows. Such a success emphasizes once again the urgency to complete the "Backbone of Karabagh" without delay.

see **NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY** on page 6

PLAN NOW TO GIVE LATER

As you count your blessings this year-end, act today to make your blessings count in the lives of others by taking maximum advantage of all the incentives designed to help you do so.

Contact Armenia Fund USA any time if you have questions about the best ways to achieve charitable goals this year, or consult with your tax advisor for more information specific to your needs.

Here, we relate how Armenia Fund USA has benefited by two people who thought ahead.

ARA ODABACHIAN'S STORY

**IN LIFE AND IN DEATH, HIS
THOUGHTS WERE OF OTHERS**



In our last issue, we reported on the bequest from a much-decorated soldier in World War II, Jack Hekimian.

Now we share with you the moving story of another decorated soldier and how his family honored his memory.

Ara Odabachian, who was born in Sepastia in 1921, came to the United States at the age of 17, after his family had moved to France when he was 20-months old.

He worked as an apprentice engraver and chemical machinist before he was inducted into the U.S. Army. He served more than three years in the Infantry in the Pacific region during World War II, received numerous military awards, including the Bronze Star, and was featured in the *Triumph and Glory: Armenian World War II Heroes* by Richard Demirjian.

Upon his return, he entered college with hopes of becoming an architect, but family circumstances conspired to interrupt his plans, and he went to work to support his family. In time, he founded the Detroit Metal Decorating Company.

He had to close his business in 1988, after losing both legs during unsuccessful surgery, and thereafter he was confined to a wheelchair. Despite his disability, in 1995, accompanied by his family, Ara Odabachian made a trip to Armenia and Karabagh: his goal was to personally hand over money to the families of the soldiers who were killed in the war to liberate Karabagh. His commitment to the Homeland was extraordinary, and helping the Armenians always gave him the strongest sense of purpose and mission in life.

Mr. Odabachian passed away on March 31, 2001. Following his wishes, his family established the Ara Odabachian Memorial Fund in support of the construction of the Karabagh Health Care Center.

Since April 2001, Armenia Fund USA has received donations of more than \$10,000 in memory of Ara Odabachian.

Lillian Terchoonian Bequest to Armenia Fund USA

Like father like daughter may well be the best way to describe the generous donation of \$100,000 to the Orphans Endowment Fund from the estate of the late Lillian Terchoonian, of Watertown.

During his lifetime and through his Will, father Vahan Terchoonian was generous to Armenian causes—and institutions, and churches, hospitals, and orphanages were the beneficiaries of his largess—a philosophy passed down to daughter Lillian.

In her Will, likewise, the same institutions were remembered. But, in addition, Armenia Fund USA was selected as one of the beneficiaries because Lillian Terchoonian wanted “to do something for the people in Armenia” and that Armenia Fund USA “was the best way to benefit Armenia.”

Vahan Terchoonian was born in Aykestan in the Van province, in 1889, and adopted July 4 as his birthday upon emigrating to the United States and becoming a citizen.

With his two brothers and two other family members who survived the Genocide, Terchoonian settled in Alexandropol, before coming to America, settling in Chelsea, MA, where he became a factory worker. In time, he married a schoolteacher, and they had two daughters, Lillian and Grace.



Another legacy that Vahan passed on to his daughter Lillian was to live frugally and to be generous to Armenian institutions—both in their lifetimes and in their Wills.

As a result, more than \$1-million was distributed from the latter's estate. Among those which were remembered are the Seminary and Catholicate of Cilicia; the Hospital for the Disabled, in Armenia; the Armenian Day School of the St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston; and the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center of Watertown.

Lillian is survived by her sister, Grace Ham, and the latter's daughter and five children.

Those who are inspired by the generosity and *hayaseroutoun* of the Terchoonians and would like to help Armenians and Armenian institutions in the homeland should contact Armenia Fund USA for advice and information.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT ARMENIA FUND USA

"I returned from a recent trip to Armenia filled with pride. I saw that our homeland has prospered beyond my wildest dreams during the short time of its independence—in spite of a scarcity of resources. All of this has been accomplished with courage and grass-roots conviction in the strength of basic human values. We all need to share in the tremendous responsibility for ensuring that Armenia continues to move ahead with a spirit of optimism and tenacity. Armenia Fund USA has set in motion the process for enabling this progress to continue, thereby making Armenia and the world a better place for everyone."

Garo Armen, PhD
Major Donor

"Over the last decade, Armenia Fund USA has played a major role in our homeland's rebirth by financing major infrastructure projects (roads, irrigation, and power generation) and humanitarian programs (refugee housing, schools, hospitals, and child sponsorship). In so doing, Armenia Fund USA has provided hope and a better life for tens of thousands of our people. Your organization has demonstrated, time and again, that it deserves the full support of our

entire Diaspora. It has been most gratifying for my family to play its small part in funding these critical programs. You have our continuing thanks and admiration."

Jean-Marie Atamian, Esq.
Annual Donor

"Of all the fund-raising entities geared towards assisting our homeland, Armenia Fund USA has consistently caught my eye as the organization with the youth-oriented and infrastructure projects I feel most inspired and excited about supporting. Congratulations on a job well done!"

Peter Hamptian
Major Donor

I think that Armenia Fund USA is doing a great job building projects all over Armenia and Karabagh. The North-South Highway is a shining example of the kind of work this organization delivers to the people of our homeland. Bravo!"

Hratch Kaprielian
Major Donor

GRASSROOTS SUPPORT GROWS FOR ARMENIA FUND USA IN SOUTH FLORIDA



L-R: Tony Berberian, Armenia Fund USA Board Member; Mary Ann Kibarian, Executive Director; Hosts of the Event, Marta and Jim Batmasian.

Batmasians Host Reception

One-hundred guests attended a reception hosted by Jim and Marta Batmasian in their elegant home in Boca Raton in the end of March, generating gifts and enthusiastic support for the work of Armenia Fund USA.

In his remarks, Tony Berberian, member of Armenia Fund USA Board of Directors, explained the organization's method of operation in Armenia and Karabagh and its policy of full transparency and accountability.

He went on to discuss the current plans for the new multi-specialty Karabagh Health Care Center and the successful reconstruction of the Vanadzor School in the earthquake zone.

He emphasized the importance of these projects as vital efforts to improve the quality of life for our compatriots on many planes—economically, socially, and spiritually.

The evening culminated in an improvised performance with Marta Batmasian singing, accompanied on piano by her husband, and other guests joining them in an array of Armenian songs.

On behalf of Armenia Fund USA and in recognition of their support in organizing this event, Mary Ann Kibarian, Armenia Fund USA Executive Director, presented Mr. and Mrs. Batmasian with an original painting by an Armenian artist.

curriculum—emphasis on studying and using computer technology—and a meticulous focus on advanced learning, teaching and management practices. The curriculum includes physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, informatics, computer skills, history, literature, geography, Armenian, English, Russian and sports. The school also offers a range of study groups for students with diverse interests, as well as a chance to participate in drama, choir, or orchestra. The spectrum of available sport activities includes soccer, volleyball, handball, resistance training, boxing, tennis, and oriental martial arts. As the reconstructed school begins its first year, becoming a laboratory of educational innovation, it promises to enrich the life of the Vanadzor community at large.

SCHOOL OPENING

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More than 1,500 people donated more than \$650,000 for the reconstruction project, which took 11 months for completion. "In addition to being completed on time," Kevork Toroyan said, "it was completed under budget. Thus, we have funds available for fine-tuning and the initial phase of maintenance."



Vanadzor #1 school

Parts of the school have been named for the major donors, including: the central building after Grikor Solakian, a 97-year-old Genocide survivor; one wing, named "The Greater Boston Wing," after the Boston donor community; "The New York Community Wing"; the Gerard Cafesjian Family Foundation Library; the Lucy Parsek Performing Arts Center; the Karekin and Rose Nanian and Sarkis and Rose Zartarian Computer Laboratory; the Avedis Apkarian

Family Infirmary; and the Viken K. Babayan Science Laboratory. Ten classrooms bear the names of: Badrig and Anais Afeyan family, Noubar and Anna Afeyan, Antranig Berberian, Nazareth Festekjian, Raffi Festekjian, Ardashes Garneghian, John and Rose Manoogian, Louise Simone, James F. Tufenkian, and the Zartarian Foundation.

Yet to be named are the Sports Complex, the Playground, and several classrooms. Those who would like to honor a family member or a friend by donating money for these should contact Armenia Fund USA for details. Money received for this purpose will mean that other funds will be available for the future maintenance of the school.

Gayane Hovivian, principal of the school, expressed her thanks to Armenia Fund USA and its generous donor-family for their concern for the children of Vanadzor in undertaking the reconstruction which, she said, will ensure that the school becomes the center of the community's cultural and social activities as well as satisfying its education needs.

Getting Back to Normal

Entering the school, after its long closure following the 1988 earthquake, were 530 students from grades 1 through 10 and 75 teachers. There will be 20-30 students in each class. At its peak, prior to the earthquake, the school had a student population of 1800, and it is anticipated that, in time, the same number will again be reached as children from nearby communities are enrolled. The school will make its mark with a new

PROVIDING MEASURE OF SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

Building Orphans Endowment Fund should not lose its momentum

A potential annual shortfall of \$150,000 is being created in the Orphans Endowment Fund, because the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund has begun distributing money to the children of those killed or severely wounded in the Karabagh war, even though slightly more than half the \$1.5million target has been reached.



Orphans in front of a memorial wall of their fathers' photos at Stepanakert Number One School.

The full target must be met as soon as possible to prevent the further bleeding of the Endowment Fund.

With a generous donation of \$500,000 from Hirair and Anna Hovnanian, of New Jersey, the fund-raising campaign got off to a good start. Since then, the Fund has received \$200,000 from Armenians in France and \$100,000 from the estate of the late Lillian

Terchoonian, of Watertown, in addition to a pledge of an annual donation of \$50,000 from the Dikran Izmirlian Fund of Switzerland. HAAF has committed itself to care for more than 8000 orphans until they are 18 years old. Though seemingly not much by American terms, and though it cannot take care of all their needs, the regular monthly payment of 2000 drams (about \$5) will prove to be useful in providing some of the basic needs of the children. HAAF has worked out a mechanism of regular payments to the children: the monthly stipends are distributed from the Armenian Central Bank to the orphans' local post office, and the money is paid to the remaining parent or legal guardian of the children.

The intent is that all donations to the Fund will be invested and the payments to the children will be out of the accrued interest; therefore it is imperative that the entire target be received as soon as possible so that the principal not be eroded. Commenting on the news that money is now being distributed among the needy orphans, His Eminence Abp. Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Diocese of the

Armenian Church in America, said: "Armenia Fund USA's Orphans Endowment Fund is a very important charitable endeavor supporting our orphans in Armenia and Artsakh during their early childhood years helping them to grow into mature and responsible adults. "It is a Christian obligation to help the needy. Moreover, it is our sacred duty as Armenians to help our orphans so that they will be able to help themselves one day. Let us be very clear: this is not a matter of charity. It is a matter of our duty to help our brothers and sisters of our greater family."

NORTH-SOUTH HIGHWAY

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Completed Section of North-South Highway.

Cost of Project	\$1,500,000
Funds Raised to Date	\$850,000

Bidding for New Sections Started

The bidding process for the construction of three sections of the Highway: Dasboulagh-Baloudjia (10 km), Saroushen-Karmir-Shouka (11 km) and Tzakouri-Hadrut (12 km) was begun in October.

Mary Ann Kibarian, Armenia Fund USA Executive Director, notes that if Karabagh is going to have any realistic expectations for normal lifestyle, commerce, and security, the construction of the highway must not lose its momentum.

"The task of this magnitude," she said "requires everyone's support and commitment. The goal is to raise the money by involving as many people in the giving as possible and assuring that the road is finished quickly.

Soon, the strength of Karabagh and its economy will be measured by the number of trucks carrying goods on the road and people traveling to earn their living and to conduct business."

Cost of Project	\$25,000,000
Funds Raised to Date	\$9,000,000

Millennium

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Based on the latest schedule, detailed design work for the architectural and structural plans and the bidding documents will commence shortly, and it is anticipated to break ground with actual construction on site, in the spring of 2002. Among the top concerns are efficiency and accountability—Armenia Fund USA wants to be sure it is spending donor dollars responsibly and with maximum effect.

Meet The Millennium Project Team

The project team of experts includes Karabagh medical professionals Dr. Zoya Lazaryan, Karabagh Health Minister, who has been actively involved in every phase of the project, and Dr. Karine Andreyan, Chief of Staff of the current Stepanakert Clinic, an internist and specialist in the provision of ambulatory-care services.

Armen Janountz, an architect and in-country construction coordinator who works with Hayastan All-Armenian Fund in Yerevan, brings on-site architectural and construction expertise.

The US side is represented by: Kevork Toroyan, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Armenia Fund USA (Chair of the Project Development Committee), who spearheads the development of large infrastructure projects; Dr. Alina Dorian, an international public-health specialist who pioneered health-care-sector reform in Karabagh (Project Manager); Annette Choolfaian, Professor of Practice and Director of Health Services Management and Policy Program at the Graduate School of Health Sciences of New York Medical College, who brings an expertise in public-health care and the planning of patient-care facilities in Armenia (Technical Advisor); Jeff Kerbekyan, specialist in the planning, design, and construction of hospitals, medical offices and public facilities (Architectural Planning Advisor); and Robert Djerejian, who contributes significant experience in the design and development of hospital projects in Armenia and the Middle East (Architectural Planning Advisor).

COX FUNDRAISING DINNER

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Kouyoumdjian and the successful Nuné Concert, the Pagoumian pledge enabled the Millennium Project's target to be reached in a record six months from the time that it was announced.

The new facility will be named for Armine Pagoumian, George Pagoumian's father's ten-month-old sister who died in the Genocide.

In an emotional speech, Baroness Cox of Queensbury, a deputy speaker of the British House of Lords and an indefatigable supporter of Armenian causes, who had just returned from her 50th humanitarian visit to Armenia and Karabagh, spoke lovingly about the people of Karabagh, which reflected her deep understanding of their culture and national identity.

She noted the creative potential of the Karabagh people who possess an ability "not only to rise from ashes but to create something beautiful out of ashes." Labeling the

people of Karabagh as "truly heroic," she praised Armenia Fund USA for building "projects fit for heroes."

Among the distinguished guests introduced to the audience at the Hilton Hotel dinner, by Mary Ann Kibarian, Armenia Fund USA executive director, were Dr. Zoya Lazaryan, Health Minister of Karabagh, and Dr. Karine Andreyan, chief of staff of the current Stepanakert Clinic.

Earlier in the week they had attended a series of meetings at various health-care facilities to learn more about the latest Western practices.

In his welcoming remarks, Board Chairman Hagop Kouyoumdjian emphasized Armenia Fund USA's basic precepts of accountability, openness, and transparency as fundamental to its operations.

Other special guests present included: Abp. Oshagan Choloyan; Armenia's Ambassador to

the United States, Arman Kirakossian; Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Movses Abelian; Permanent Representative of Karabagh in the United States, Vardan Barseghian; Abp. Anania Arabajian; The Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji; and Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau.

More than 180 guests represented a true cross-section of the Armenian community: people of different political and religious persuasions, seasoned donors, young benefactors and grassroots supporters of Armenia Fund USA.

The successful evening was organized and chaired by Armenia Fund USA Board member, Hilda Melconian, who rightly stressed the significance of the Millennium Project as "a life-saving project" which will be instrumental in "ensuring good health for all the people of Karabagh."

MEET...GRIKOR SOLAKIAN



Grikor Solakian holds the Special Recognition plaque after it was presented to him at his Lansdowne, PA home, by Vahan Ter-Ghevondian, Executive Director of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, in which the 97-year-old genocide survivor is cited as the largest single donor to the Vanadzor School restoration. The plaque carries Mr. Solakian's portrait and a photo of the school, noting that the main building is named for Mr. Solakian. A "Thank you" message from the School's children appears above the school's photo. Also at the presentation was Mary Ann Kibarian, Executive Director of Armenia Fund USA.

One of Grikor Solakian's fondest memories is how he helped his father "fight" the Turks during the defense of Van, in 1915. Not being a soldier, the elder Solakian—a master furniture maker—decided to fight the Turks in his own way. With his 10-year old son trailing behind him, Hovhanness Solakian took up his axe and went off to chop down telegraph poles and, thus, disrupting communications. The remainder of the story of that period resembles that of many survivors. Ultimately having to flee Van toward Russia, the family had

to walk for 12 days, "with blistered feet." His older sister is separated from the group and is feared lost.

They are picked up by a Russian driving a cart and they set off for Russian Armenia. They find the sister. When they reach Etchmiadzin, they find conditions very bad—there is a cholera epidemic. They move on to Yerevan, where conditions aren't much better.

They are put up in a school whose "playground" is, by now, a cemetery. They are housed in a room with four other families. Eventually, they find a small house. His father settles in to make furniture, at an orphanage of the Near East Society.

His father died in 1918, and then his younger brother. With the collapse of the Armenian Republic, his family made its way to Tiflis and, finally, to Constantinople where they waited till 1922 for a visa to America.

In time, Grikor, his mother and sister reached Grand Rapids, Michigan. Having learned enough of the furniture trade from his father, the young Grikor worked in a furniture factory. In 1924, he went to Detroit to marry Martha Melikian, whom he had met on the ship from Constantinople.

They had a son and daughter. In 1930, the Solakians moved to Philadelphia, and Grikor found employment in a dry-cleaning business. He worked as a driver for 33 years. Having his fill of driving, he "retired" and ran a laundromat for 14 years, then he was asked to be an advisor to a dry-cleaning firm. He retired from this job in 1988—he was now 83 years old.

Mrs. Solakian had died in 1984, after 59 years of marriage, and, today, Solakian lives with his son Chris in Lansdowne, in suburban Philadelphia. He has four grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren. Solakian has made three trips to Armenia—1960, 1982, 1986—but the first one was the most memorable not only because it was the first visit since he left the ravaged country, but also because he met about 100 relatives, prominent among whom was poet Silva Gaboudikian, a cousin.

Realizing that he would never be able to visit his beloved Van and, more important, to help that city, Solakian decided, with the encouragement of his son, that he would do the next best thing and help the children of Vanadzor by donating \$200,000 to the rebuilding of the famed Vanadzor Number One School, the 1999 fundraising campaign of Armenia Fund USA, thus becoming the largest donor for the project.

When future generations of Vanadzor children ask about the Grikor Solakian, for whom the main building of the School is named, they will learn that he was not a famous general or a famous politician or a famous scientist.

They will learn that he was a Genocide survivor, a modest man who earned a modest living doing modest jobs who, though living more than 5200 miles away in America, never forgot that 10-year old boy, trailing after an axe-wielding father and undertook in his own way the most noble role a person can undertake—to help save the future of his nation.

USAID AND WORLD BANK BACK VANADZOR SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY WILL GAIN

The involvement of two major funding agencies, USAID and the World Bank, in the future of the Vanadzor School will help introduce innovative educational and management practices and virtually ensure that the school will resume its former status as the model institution for Armenia.

Under the USAID "Project Harmony" connectivity program, the school's computer and internet-training efforts will be supported for two years.

The aim is to create a school network for the Armenian education system (with Internet Computer Centers in about 35 schools), with Vanadzor at the center, as well as promoting the internet as an educational tool.

The school also has received a World Bank Institution Building Grant to set up practices of day-to-day management and of standards of accountability, as well as establish principles of public governance.

The grant will be used to for management training for the principal, the accountant, and the administrative staff of the school, and form a local governance committee—in effect, a parent-teacher association, a novel concept for Armenia. These are seen as matters of the school's growth and sustainability.

Armenia Fund USA has experience working with the World Bank.



Children working in computer lab.

Last year, it was awarded a \$371,000 grant to preserve and promote Armenia's cultural heritage, it was the first time that an Armenian non-governmental organization had received World Bank funding.

Significant emphasis placed on community involvement is inherent in Armenia Fund USA policy and it is reflected in our efforts in Armenia and Karabagh.

Armenia Fund USA's policy is for the local community to take a leading part in supporting the institutions that they inherit in an effort to maximize local resources and ensure that they serve the local community as it continues to grow and develop.

Impressed not only with that experience but also with Armenia Fund USA "beyond bricks and mortar" policy that stresses community involvement in the school, the World

Bank and the USAID agency have, in effect, expressed confidence in Armenia Fund USA's ability to deliver sustainable, efficient, and useful projects.

"This is the first time that such a training program is to be instituted in Armenia," said Hagop Kouyoumdjian, AFUSA Board Chairman, adding that "collaboration with the World Bank gives us benefits of the vast experience and resources of this major international funding agency.

"The dual support by such leaders as USAID and World Bank shows, once again, the confidence in Armenia Fund USA and its role on the non-governmental organization scene."

"Our goal," noted Artemis Nazerian, AFUSA Board member responsible for the Education Subcommittee, "is to help structure the school's governing body—administration, teachers, parents—to function and co-ordinate effectively with each other.

The transparent and well-managed school will be crucial in improving the educational environment."

Helping the school start its new life, the World Bank and USAID have encouraged the Vanadzor community while simultaneously continuing its support of Armenia Fund USA as a credible partner to achieve its development goals and reforms for the social sector in Armenia.

ARMENIA FUND USA NEW BOARD MEMBER

ALYSSA KELESHIAN



Alyssa Dawn Keleshian is the Marketing Director at American Express Publishing Corporation's *Travel + Leisure*.

During the last four years, she has held various positions at the magazine, including Director of Merchandising and Events, and Senior Sales Development Manager. Prior to that, she was

the Director of Marketing for "Working Woman" magazine, Marketing Services Manager at Virgin Atlantic Airways and Merchandising/Events Manager at "Inc." magazine. Alyssa is an active member in the Armenian community, and worked on behalf of such groups as the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian Network of America, Armenia Fund USA, the Young Armenian Professionals of the Diocese, and the ACYOA.

She was instrumental in the development and

execution of several leadership conferences in association with the Armenian Network of America, as well as the launch of the Young Armenian Professional Events at the Diocese. She is an alumna of the Armenian Assembly intern program in Washington, D.C. Alyssa received her B.S. in Marketing and Entrepreneurial Studies from Babson College. She now handles all matters related to the activities of the Armenia Fund USA Young Benefactors Committee.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP ARMENIA AND KARABAGH

Make a project-specific donation: During the year, you will receive opportunities by mail to contribute to special projects Armenia Fund USA is supporting. This issue, a letter from our Chairman asks your support for the construction of the Shekher Bridge in Karabagh along the North-South Highway.

Annual Giving: You may choose to pledge a certain amount to contribute to Armenia Fund each year, to special projects or to help Armenia Fund USA's general operational fund. We can even automatically charge your credit card if you wish.

Make a Bequest: There are many different ways you can remember Armenia and Karabagh in your Will. This method should involve consultation with a lawyer or a financial advisor. The result—whether your gift is in cash, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, or property—is always a tax benefit, either now or in the future.

Establish a Memorial Fund or "In Lieu of Flowers": Remember your loved ones with a donation to an Armenia Fund USA project close to your hearts.

All donations to Armenia Fund USA are tax-deductible.

Please contact us at Armenia Fund USA, 152 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016
Telephone (212) 689-5307,
Fax (212) 689-5317, E-mail AFUSA@aol.com.

What do you think of our newsletter? Visit www.armenianfundusa.org to fill out a quick survey.



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Wishes you and your family

A Year

Filled With

PEACE, JOY AND

HARMONY