
~SOAR~

Society for Orphaned
Armenian Relief

2014 Annual Report



Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR)

*Providing humanitarian relief
to orphaned Armenian
children and adults throughout
the world*



2014 Annual Report

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for the
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Message from the Executive Board Chairman

Dear SOAR Friends:

Thank you for making 2014 our most productive year to date!

SOAR continues to achieve significant growth in both distributions and geographic presence. In 2006, our first full year of operations, we made \$59,700 in distributions. In 2014, our distributions exceeded \$865,000, an increase of more than 20% from 2013.

SOAR continues to expand geographically, with 95 Chapters and 3 Junior groups perpetuating our mission around the world. In addition to the growth of our SOAR family, we have developed an array of Programs which involve direct interaction with the orphaned population we serve. These Programs, diverse and multi-faceted, provide direct and immediate enrichment to the lives of these children.

My heartfelt gratitude extends to our Executive Board, whose work continues to grow with each passing year; to Sr. Arousiag Sajonian, Executive Director Siranoush Hovhannisyan, and our in-country Partners; to our more than 400 Chapter volunteers who advance the SOAR mission worldwide; to our Board of Trustees, which oversees our fiscal operations; and, finally, to our financial and emotional supporters. Your steadfast enthusiasm and commitment are uplifting, and we thank you for allowing SOAR to flourish as the only organization whose singular mission is orphaned Armenian relief.

Respectfully,

*George S. Yacoubian, Jr., Ph.D., LL.M.
SOAR Founder and Executive Board Chairman*





Creation and Management

George S. Yacoubian, Jr. and his wife Erica began their adoption process in 2005. Throughout that spring and summer, they went through their home study process and the various levels of domestic governmental approval. While in Armenia visiting the Our Lady of Armenia Center's summer camp, they saw their future daughter for the first time. George and Erica submitted their dossier to the Armenian government that fall, received preliminary approval in December, and obtained final approval the following March. Liliana arrived on American soil on April 23, 2006!

In the fall of 2005, George and Erica founded the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to provide humanitarian relief to orphaned children living in Armenia. An experienced Board of Directors was assembled, a network of Partners in Armenia was recruited to assist with distributions, and the website (<http://soar-us.org/>) was launched. In 2009, a National Board of Trustees was created to annually review SOAR's fiscal operations and distributions.

SOAR assists orphaned children and adults by—

1. Working with for-profit corporations to provide donations of specific products. SOAR receives these goods in the United States and ships them through the United Armenia Fund (UAF).
2. Collecting donations from individuals, families, and groups across the United States and shipping them to Armenia via UAF.
3. Using cash donations to purchase goods and services. Some of these products and services are purchased outside of Armenia. Most, however, are purchased *in* Armenia. This serves the dual purpose of meeting the orphanages' needs while simultaneously supporting Armenia's economy. SOAR's Partners are responsible for either receiving the shipped goods or making the in-country purchases.

SOAR has grown tremendously during the past several years and has broadened its mission to include orphaned Armenian children and adults throughout the world. Its work supports 32 Armenian facilities worldwide: 22 in Armenia, two in Artsakh, four in Lebanon, three in Syria, and one in Javakh.

Today, SOAR is represented by 95 Chapters around the world. Some Chapter volunteers are parents of adopted Armenian children; others simply recognize the significance of SOAR's work and want to help perpetuate its mission. The common bond among them all is the recognition that orphaned Armenians represent the most vulnerable population of Armenian society.



Quality Control

SOAR has a strict quality control protocol to assure that all donations, in their entirety, reach the intended recipients. This protocol has five elements:

1. SOAR rarely makes cash distributions directly to the orphanages. Rather, goods and services that can be procured in Armenia are purchased by SOAR's Partners and distributed directly to the orphanages.
2. SOAR implements chain-of-custody procedures for any distributed goods or services, providing assurance that these items have been received by the orphanages in the exact quantity intended. These procedures have three steps:
 - a. Partners sign for the shipments and/or attest to the type and quantity of goods or services procured in Armenia. This invoice includes an exact description of the type and quantity of goods and services.
 - b. The recipient orphanage's director signs this same invoice, indicating that the exact type and quantity of goods and services received is the quantity indicated.
 - c. Both invoices are mailed to SOAR's Executive Board Chairman.
3. SOAR Partners, SOAR Chapters in Armenia, and other volunteers who visit Armenia make random inspections of the orphanages. Any distribution discrepancies are to be reported immediately to SOAR's Executive Board Chairman.
4. When possible, goods donated or services provided by SOAR are engraved and/or stamped with a corporate seal. Capital projects are acknowledged with a dedication ceremony and plaque.
5. A zero-tolerance policy for fraud, theft, and/or deception is imposed. Any malfeasance would result in the termination of assistance.



Institutions SOAR Supports

SOAR's work benefits orphaned Armenians cared for in the following institutions:

Armenia

- ♦ **Children's Home of Gyumri** is a state orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 100 children with special needs, under the age of 6.
- ♦ **Gavar Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Gavar housing approximately 65 children between the ages of 3 and 18
- ♦ **Gyumri Social Childcare Center** is a day center in Gyumri. Since July 2006, approximately 200 children from around the province have been served at the Center.
- ♦ **Kharberd Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Kharberd housing approximately 280 children with special needs, ages 6 to 18.
- ♦ **Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Yerevan housing approximately 100 children with special needs between the ages of 6 and 18.
- ♦ **Mer Doon ("Our Home")** offers a home in Etchmiadzin for orphaned Armenian adults (18 and over) who have outgrown the traditional orphanage. Mer Doon offers education and a loving and compassionate family environment, thus easing the transition from orphanage life to outside society.
- ♦ **Mer Hooys ("Our Hope")** houses approximately 20 teenage girls in the Arapkir district of Yerevan. The girls receive language and job skills training, computer instruction, college preparation and education, religious foundational teaching, life skills training, psychological support, and hope, confidence and love.
- ♦ **Nork Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Yerevan housing approximately 60 children (both healthy and with special needs) under the age of 6.
- ♦ **Nubarashen** is a state boarding school in Yerevan housing approximately 83 children with special needs, ages 7 to 18.
- ♦ **Orphanage of Fridtjof Nansen** is a state orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 83 children between the ages of 4 and 18.
- ♦ **Our Lady of Armenia Center** is a private orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 45 girls between the ages of 6 and 18. The Center is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order of nuns established in 1847.
- ♦ **Our Lady of Armenia Educational Center in Tashir** is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and provides meals and after-school activities to approximately 30 orphaned and otherwise needy children. The Director of the Center is Sister Haguinte Mouradian.
- ♦ **Our Lady of Armenia Center Summer Camp** hosts approximately 800 children ages 8 to 15 in sixteen-day sessions. The camp provides nutritious food, physical rest, recreational activities, and religious-educational experiences both to institutionalized children and to other needy boys and girls.
- ♦ **Shengavit Kindergarten** boards 250 children (at least Monday through Friday, and in most cases on the weekend as well) whose families are living in extreme poverty or have histories of child abuse, domestic violence, or drug addiction. The first of its kind, Shengavit is a standard-setting institution.
- ♦ **SOS Children's Villages' Armenian Charity Foundation - Idjevan** provides for children without parental care or in difficult life circumstances, operating a wide range of child care and family strengthening community and educational activities.
- ♦ **SOS Children's Villages' Armenian Charity Foundation - Kotayk** provides for children without parental care or in difficult life circumstances, operating a wide range of child care and family strengthening community and educational activities.
- ♦ **Terchoonian Home** is a private orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 75 intellectually gifted children between the ages of 3 and 12.
- ♦ **Vanadzor Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Vanadzor housing 90 children, ages 20 and under.

Institutions SOAR Supports

- ♦ **Vardashen** is a state boarding school in Yerevan housing approximately 82 children who “exhibit socially dangerous behavior.” They range between the ages of 6 and 18.
- ♦ **The Voice of the Armenian Church Orphan Summer Camp**, operated by the Eastern Prelacy, is held in Tsaghgadzor every July and hosts roughly 50 orphaned boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16. The camp offers the children love and care and seeks to instill in them the love of Christ and the history of the Armenian Church.
- ♦ **Warm Hearth/*Jermik Ankyun*** is a private group home, located just outside of Yerevan, which cares for approximately 13 grown orphans with disabilities and mental illnesses. Warm Hearth’s personal, family-like atmosphere offers residents a wonderful alternative to psychiatric institutions.
- ♦ **Zadik Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Yerevan housing approximately 20 children between the ages of 6 and 18.

Artsakh/Kharabagh

- ♦ **Boarding School #1 (formerly Zangak Orphanage)** is a state orphanage in Stepanagert housing approximately 22 social and natural orphaned children (both healthy and with special needs) between the ages of 8 and 15.
- ♦ **Boarding School #2** is a state orphanage in Kashatagh housing approximately 22 children between the ages of 8 and 15.

Javakh, Georgia

- ♦ **The Holy Cross Armenian Church of Javakh Summer Day Camp** in Akhakalak serves roughly 250 social orphans living at or below poverty level. The camp gets these village children off the streets during the summer and provide them with a safe, clean, fun, and spiritual environment.

Lebanon

- ♦ **The Armenian Evangelical Boarding School** in Ainjar is home to approximately 75 social orphans.
- ♦ **Birds' Nest Orphanage** provides boarding, education, spiritual guidance, and encouragement to children who come from broken families and are in need of care and compassion. There are currently 37 children housed at Birds' Nest, ranging in age from 6 months to 17 years old.
- ♦ **Bzommar Orphanage** is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, who carry out catechetical, cultural and social work with both natural and social orphans. Approximately 25 girls are housed at Bzommar.
- ♦ **Cardinal Aghajanian Orphanage** in Ainjar is home to about 24 boys who are social orphans.

Syria

- ♦ **St. Theresa's Little Flower Orphanage-Azizie**, run by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, cared for up to 35 girls till civil unrest made it necessary to relocate many of the orphans.
- ♦ **St. Theresa's Little Flower Orphanage-Meydan**, run by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, cared for up to 35 girls till civil unrest made it necessary to relocate many of the orphans.
- ♦ **S.O. Khach Orphanage** has raised several generations of youth who have become important citizens. Due to civil unrest, in 2012 the children had to be moved to a community center where they are still being cared. There are 14 boys and girls there now, ranging from 8 to 19 years of age.

Distributions

April

- ◇ Bedroom renovations at the Our Lady of Armenia Center

May

- ◇ Freezer and refrigerator for Nork Orphanage
- ◇ TV, furniture, art supplies and hot water heaters for Mer Hooys
- ◇ Shopping trip for children from Gavar Orphanage

June

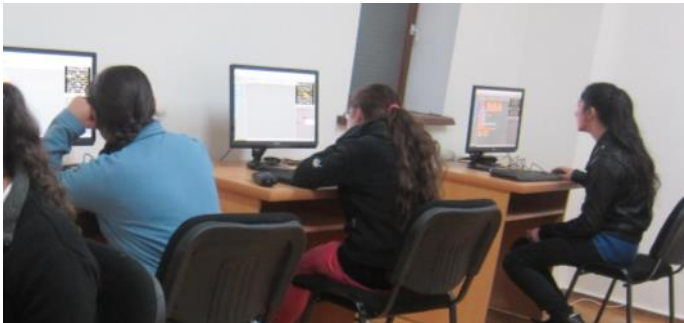
- ◇ New garage door and stairs for Warm Hearth
- ◇ Construction of Family Suite was constructed at Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage (to facilitate reunification between children and their biological families)
- ◇ Construction of a soccer field at Terchoonian Home
- ◇ Renovation of soccer field at Our Lady of Armenia - Tashir
- ◇ Repair of Minibus for Nubarashen

July

- ◇ Three sofas for Orphanage of Fridtjof Nansen
- ◇ A day at Lake Sevan for the children from Kharberd Orphanage
- ◇ Infirmary room dividers for Mer Houys
- ◇ 250 hats, T-shirts, and other camp supplies for the Holy Cross Armenian Church of Javakh Summer Day Camp
- ◇ Diapers for Kharberd
- ◇ \$6000 for the Voice of the Armenian Church camp
- ◇ New computer lab for Mer Doon
- ◇ Construction of soccer field at the OLA Summer Camp
- ◇ Floor sitters for Children's Home of Gyumri
- ◇ Trip to concert hall for Kharberd and Vardashen children and their teachers
- ◇ 260 bed sheet sets for Children's Home of Gyumri
- ◇ Auto repair for Vanadzor Orphanage.



Distributions



August

- ◇ Paper cutting machine and equipment, bed linen, cloth, and supplies for needlework at Gavar Orphanage
- ◇ Hippotherapy for girl at Mari Izmirlyan
- ◇ New furnishings for Vardashen infirmary
- ◇ Renovation of two classrooms at Nubarashen
- ◇ Construction of Nairi robotics lab for Terchoonian Home

September

- ◇ Furnishings, carpeting, & stationary for new Nubarashen classrooms
- ◇ Stationary items
- ◇ Paper cutting machine, stationary items, and cloth for the girls at Zatik orphanage
- ◇ Construction of Kharberd Family Suite to facilitate reunification of children with their families
- ◇ Construction of Nairi robotics lab for Our Lady of Armenia Center

October

- ◇ Construction of Dental Suite for Kharberd Orphanage

November

- ◇ Ongoing computer lab classes at Our Lady of Armenia Center
- ◇ Visit to the eye clinic for two children from Mari Izmirlyan
- ◇ More than \$330,000 in medical supplies to various orphanages in Armenia
- ◇ Dental supplies for Kharberd Dental Suite
- ◇ Shopping trip for the children of Kharberd Orphanage

December

- ◇ Proceeds from "Boot and Blanket Campaign"
- ◇ 3,000 diapers to Nork Orphanage
- ◇ Holiday parties for 28 locations
- ◇ Refrigerator for Nork Orphanage

The Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund

2014 Contributions from the **Harold & Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund**

- ◇ Furnishings, carpeting, and stationary for the new classrooms at Nubarashen
- ◇ Family suite at Kharberd
- ◇ Robotics Lab for Our Lady of Armenia Center
- ◇ Two classroom renovations at Nubarashen
- ◇ Furnishings for Vardashen infirmary
- ◇ Robotics Lab for Terchoonian Home
- ◇ Three new sofas for Orphanage of Fridtjof Nansen
- ◇ Infirmary room dividers for Mer Houys Orphanage
- ◇ 250 hats, t-shirts, etc. for the Holy Cross Armenian Church of Javakh Summer Day Camp
- ◇ \$6000 to support the Voice of the Armenian Church Orphan Summer Camp
- ◇ New computer lab for Mer Doon



The Gulamerian Story

Originally from Van (Armenia), Harold Gulamerian was born to immigrant parents in 1924. Harold joined the army in 1943, and, after the war, went to City College to get a degree in science and business administration and then a law degree. When Norman, Harold's brother, got home from the service, he apprenticed himself to artist Frederick Taubes (1900-1981). He primed his canvases and ground his paint. Norman, an artist himself, was having trouble finding unprimed linen. Harold suggested they import it from Belgium.

That was the start of Utrecht Art Supply.



Harold and Norman sold their Belgian linen out of their basement in Brooklyn. The two brothers dedicated themselves to supplying artists with the "highest quality art materials and supplies for the best value." In 1951, they rented an office at 119 West 57th St.

The Gulamerian brothers' artist supply business grew quickly.

In 1957, they developed their revolutionary acrylic gesso for priming artist canvas. In 1958, they rented factory space at Bush Terminal in Brooklyn. By the end of the early 1960s, they had expanded the Utrecht line to include professional-grade artist oil paints, acrylics, and watercolor supplies, sold at manufacturer-direct prices.



The Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund

In 1968, they opened their first retail store at 32 Third Avenue in New York City. They then opened locations in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Washington DC, Berkeley, and San Francisco.

By the time they sold their business in 1997, they had grown from a small space in Bush terminal to 50,000 square feet and an additional 50,000 square feet of retail space.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold and Josephine Gulamerian visited Armenia in 1998 at the invitation of Catholicos Karekin I. The Gulamerians were very moved by this visit, especially by the orphaned children they met. The Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund is dedicated to improving the lives of orphaned Armenians throughout the world..

Through a cooperative agreement with SOAR, the Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund provides support for the orphanages and summer camps in Armenia, Artsakh, Javakh, Lebanon, and Syria.



2014 Contributions

from the
**Harold & Josephine
Gulamerian
Armenian Orphan Fund**

- ◇ Soccer field at the Our Lady of Armenia Summer Camp
- ◇
- ◇ Floor sitters for the Children's Home of Gyumri
- ◇
- ◇ Bedspreads for Children's Home of Gyumri
- ◇
- ◇ New garage door and stairs for Warm Hearth
- ◇
- ◇ Family Suite for Mari Izmirlyan
- ◇
- ◇ Renovation of soccer field at Our Lady of Armenia - Tashir
- ◇
- ◇ Repair of minibus at Nubarashen
- ◇
- ◇ Freezer & refrigerator for Nork Orphanage
- ◇
- ◇ TV, furniture, art supplies, and hot water heaters for Mer Hooys
- ◇
- ◇ Bedroom renovations at the Our Lady of Armenia Center

Chapter Highlights

SOAR–National

In December, SOAR held its third annual online auction through Bidding For Good. Nearly 300 items were available for sale, along with funding opportunities for capital projects, sponsorships, etc. The auction raised nearly \$12,000.

SOAR–Alaska



SOAR–Alaska held its first annual charity event in the Golden Heart City of Fairbanks. As 25 guests enjoyed delectable cheese boeregs and paklava, the featured film, *Sunrise over Lake Van* fed their souls, minds and spirits. The guests were very receptive to the information on SOAR’s mission and its connection to the Armenian Genocide. “All in all, our voices were heard representing the Armenian orphans and the unspoken stories of our ancestors.

They would have been proud of us!” the chapter reported. The event was a great success, raising over \$700.

SOAR–Amsterdam



SOAR–Amsterdam board members gathered in January for their inaugural meeting.

SOAR–Atlanta



At a lovely baby shower given for Grace Yacoubian Wiegner in July, several “in-lieu-of-gifts” donations were made to sponsor a little boy housed at Birds’ Nest Orphanage in Lebanon. The sum was added to through Mari Avedissian’s employee matching gift program, so that SOAR–Atlanta was able to commit to a two-year sponsorship

SOAR–Baltimore



Thanks to the “Boot and Blanket Campaign,” organized by SOAR–Philadelphia member Michael Knudson and supported by donations from SOAR–Baltimore, children from the Our Lady of Armenia Center received new winter shoes and blankets.

Chapter Highlights



January—The newly formed SOAR–Baltimore hosted tables at the Armenian Association of Greater Baltimore’s annual holiday dinner. Nearly everyone visited SOAR’s tables to learn about the mission and to purchase handicrafts in support of Nork orphanage. There were many expressions of goodwill and contributions received. Through the generosity of direct donations and proceeds from the sale of handicrafts, the chapter raised \$800 for baby supplies.

SOAR–Brussels



November—SOAR–Brussels chapter hosted its first SOAR Europe Regional Meeting, attended by special guests George Yacoubian and Sister Arousiag as well as chapter leaders of SOAR–Amsterdam, Berlin, Cadiz, Copenhagen, Cyprus, London, Luxembourg, Milan, Southern Netherlands and Zürich.

An exceptional charity cocktail reception was organized in the beautiful premises of Villa Empain, Boghossian Foundation, attended by 150 international guests including representatives from different European chapters. A concert of classical Armenian and European music, Armenian traditional dance, exhibition of handicrafts made by Armenian orphans, and an exclusive auction whose winner got a personal “portrait musical” created by a talented and award-winning composer, delighted the guests. Proceeds benefited Zatik and Warm Hearth orphanages, four individual orphans in Mari Izmiryan Orphanage, two children from the Social Childcare Center in Gyumri, and S. O. Khach orphanage in Syria.



March 8—SOAR–Brussels’ inaugural event was a resounding success! Some 300 guests enjoyed the chapter's first annual “Mask Party,” which raised nearly €2,700 (\$3,800). Thanks to the many sponsors and volunteers, the party included a face-painting atelier, traditional khachapuri cookies, flowers for the ladies to celebrate International Women’s Day, and a tombola offering a dinner for two in a local Armenian restaurant. All proceeds benefitted SOAR’s three Armenian orphanages in Syria.

SOAR–Budapest

SOAR–Budapest began conducting Russian language tutoring through the SOAR Language Tutoring Program.

SOAR–Cadiz

SOAR–Cadiz began conducting Spanish language tutoring through the SOAR Language Tutoring Program.

SOAR–Chicago



December 7—SOAR Chicago’s second annual Christmas luncheon at St. Joachim and Anne Armenian Apostolic Church raised sufficient funds to sponsor Christmas parties for the Vardashan and St. Theresa’s Little Flower orphanages.

Chapter Highlights



June 21—SOAR—Chicago’s fourth annual fundraiser was held at Alhambra Palace in downtown Chicago. Funds were raised for the Nairi Lab, for Our Lady of Armenia orphanage, for an infirmary, for renovation at Vardashan Orphanage, and for winter gloves and hats for various orphanages.



August 24—SOAR—Chicago hosted a booth at the Taste of Armenia Street Fair. As one of the premiere Armenian picnics in the area, Taste of Armenia has become a favorite event for Chicagoans of all ethnic backgrounds. It attracts well over 1,000 people every year and offers a leisurely afternoon of delicious Armenian food, rousing music, and great company.

SOAR—Chicago also continues to offer its benefit wine label.

SOAR—Cleveland



After sponsoring a fellowship at St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church to spread awareness and get sign-ups for its first big event, SOAR—Cleveland held the “Let’s SOAR!” 5K run in September. With several sponsorships and great prizes, the event proved a fun and productive time.

SOAR—Colorado



January—The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief’s Colorado chapter raised \$4,658 at its annual January Art Show to benefit the 2014 art program at Warm Hearth. Warm Hearth is a group home in Armenia founded in 2006 for orphans with disabilities who have outgrown orphanages. “With your continuous support, we are showing the Armenian government a model of an effective group home that is an alternative to life in institutions. While the residents are thriving, growing and healing, Warm Hearth continues its

groundbreaking work and carries the torch for dignified life for orphans with disabilities,” Board President Maria Stepanyan said. Since 2010, the art show has raised the annual budget of Warm Hearth’s art program from zero to nearly \$5,000. The program allows Warm Hearth residents to have art teachers, quality materials, and supplies. Warm Hearth residents enjoy painting, papier-mâché, beading, carpet-weaving, drawing, embroidery, and making traditional Armenian dolls. The residents now participate in exhibits and fairs in Armenia and sell their artwork to support the home. The January Art Show has raised a total of \$16,444 since the first event five years ago.



Summer—SOAR—Colorado’s second annual charity garage sale raised \$1,190 to support its annual art show.

Chapter Highlights



April 6—Shoghig and Maral Vayedjian, local supporters of SOAR–Colorado, held a special event to benefit Warm Hearth. Hosted at the Pinnacle Clubhouse in Denver, the event brought friends new and old together for Armenian Lenten foods, drinks, and music, followed by a bake sale and raffle. \$1,725 was donated, and all of it sent to Warm Hearth.

SOAR–Cyprus

SOAR–Cyprus started the Life Skills Coaching Program.

SOAR–Detroit

SOAR–Detroit started the Summer Camp placement component of the SOAR Volunteer Program.

SOAR–Geneva

August 12–October 11—SOAR–Geneva mounted a campaign to fund sponsorships of 10 children for the next two years.

November 16—SOAR–Geneva presented “Born Somewhere: Crossed Viewpoints,” an exhibition of photographs taken by the children at Vanadzor Orphanage in Armenia.

SOAR–Greensboro

SOAR–Greensboro and Hopscotch Adoptions jointly hosted an evening of wine, Armenian hors d’oeuvres, and live jazz piano in support of Armenian orphans.

SOAR–London

August—SOAR–London held a very successful fundraising event at the Armenian Street Festival in London, where it sold items made by the residents from Zatik and Warm Hearth orphanages. The money raised will help meet needs at Zatik Orphanage and Our Lady of Armenia Centre.

September—Together with SOAR–São Paulo, SOAR–London started the student internship component of the SOAR Volunteer Program.

SOAR–Los Angeles



SOAR–LA staged a glittering “Soaring 20s & Great Gatsby Glamour” fundraiser on August 10th.

SOAR–Miami

SOAR–Miami began conducting English tutoring through the SOAR Language Tutoring Program.

Chapter Highlights

SOAR–Milan

SOAR–Milan started the Mentoring Program and began conducting Italian language tutoring through the SOAR Language Tutoring Program.

SOAR–Minsk

SOAR–Minsk began conducting Russian language tutoring through the SOAR Language Tutoring Program.

SOAR–Montreal

SOAR–Montreal organized a fundraiser hosted by Dr. Sarkis Yeretsian in his home. The event benefitted two homes for orphans with special needs—the Children’s Home of Gyumri and Sisters of Charity, Bethlehem.

SOAR–Munich

SOAR–Munich manages the Computer Science Program in cooperation with SOAR–San Antonio/Austin.

SOAR–New Jersey

November—NJ Junior Chapter organized a Christmas Spirit Night at Chick-fil-A, where ten percent of supporters’ receipts were donated to SOAR. Proceeds were dedicated to SOAR’s sponsorship of Christmas and New Year celebrations for the institutions it supports.



May—SOAR–NJ put on its first annual Mother’s Day brunch.



August—NJ Junior Chapter organized a “Dining to Donate” event at Applebee’s.

SOAR–New Orleans

SOAR–New Orleans helped start the SOAR Mentoring and Language Tutoring Programs.

SOAR–New York

June—SOAR–NY sponsored a “Pop, Fizz, Clink [to] Support Armenian Orphans with Special Needs” happy hour at Almayass restaurant. Proceeds benefitted Children’s Home Gyumri.

October—SOAR–NY presented a showing of “Music to Madness: The Story of Komitas” at St. Illuminator’s Armenian Apostolic Church.

December—SOAR–NY put on an evening of free appetizers and entertainment at Le Pain Quotidien, with Anna Kaz offering her beautiful, handmade jewelry with 100% of profits to be donated to orphanages.

Chapter Highlights



SOAR–Orange County

The newly formed SOAR–Orange County chapter organized “Haroutiun Galentz (1910–1967): From Armenian Orphan to Armenia’s Modern Master Artist and National Treasure.” Held at the Fairmont Hotel in Newport Beach, the event was well received by its guests and raised \$3,500. The opportunity for the event arose when Haroutiun Galentz’s son Saro, an accomplished artist himself and founder-president of Galentz Cultural

Foundation, graciously donated to SOAR twenty pieces of his own personal works of art. Saro spoke on the life of his father, who lived through the tragedy of genocide and went on to become one of our nation’s most accomplished artists.

SOAR–Oxbridge

The Oxbridge chapter started the SOAR Multidisciplinary Tutoring Program and comanages it with SOAR–Munich.



SOAR–Philadelphia Metro

February 8—SOAR–Philadelphia and SOAR–Delaware hosted a delicious Italian dinner at St. Mark’s Armenian Church in Wynnewood, PA. The event included a Chinese auction and many different desserts to take away the winter blues. Everyone enjoyed an evening of socializing with friends and family.

March—Stephanie Rapp LeGrand of SOAR–Philadelphia Metro started the Birthday Fund.



May—SOAR–Philadelphia and SOAR–Delaware cohosted a pancake breakfast at Applebee’s.

September 5—Thanks to the generous sponsors of SOAR–Philadelphia Metro’s first annual SOAR JR. Mini-Golf Outing, the chapter was able to sponsor one orphan at Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage and another at the Our Lady of Armenia Center.



Winter—Children received new winter shoes and blankets thanks to funding from the “Boot and Blanket Campaign,” a special collection of winter giving organized by Michael Knudson of SOAR-Philadelphia and supported by donations from SOAR-Baltimore.

SOAR–Pisa

The Pisa chapter oversees all medical-related initiatives and interventions SOAR supports.

Chapter Highlights

SOAR–Portland



March—Through hosting of Armenian artist Saro Galentz for two days to teach a master-class art workshop, SOAR–Portland raised \$800, and had fun too! The success of the event was also thanks to Portland artist Benjamin Williamson for donating his studio space, to Scott Lee Sharp for translation services, and to Armen Galentz for the photography.

SOAR–Portland also sent four photographers into SOAR-supported orphanages in Armenia to find out what daily life was like. The photography was displayed on the SOAR–National auction site and is still available for purchase through the SOAR shopping page.

September—SOAR–Portland started the professional delegation component within the Volunteer Program.

October—SOAR–Providence held a wine tasting event at Carolyn’s Sakonnet Vineyard in Little Compton, RI. Besides wine-tasting, the event offered complimentary hors d’oeuvres, a raffle, and a silent auction, as well as a Q&A session with Carolyn Rafaelian, founder of the event’s sponsors, Alex & Ani.

SOAR–Sacramento



January 10—SOAR–Sacramento held a silent auction and toy drive, inviting supporters to join them “for great food and a fun way to fundraise for Armenian orphans around the world!”

May—For its first community event, SOAR–Sacramento represented Armenia and the Children’s Home Gyumri by joining the City of Rancho Cordova in their annual international festival called IFest. More than 1,000 people attended the event in order to celebrate the diverse cultures of the community.

The Chapter was able to educate the public about Armenia and its heritage through the display of artifacts, traditional dance costumes, and photos of historical and famous Armenians throughout time. In addition to this, it raised awareness about SOAR by passing out pamphlets, selling T-shirts, raffling off a Kindle, and accepting donated goods. The community, upon short notice, donated a large number of diapers and clothing to Children’s Home of Gyumri.

SOAR–Saint Petersburg

The Saint Petersburg chapter began conducting Armenian, German, and Russian language tutoring through the SOAR Language Tutoring Program.

SOAR–San Antonio/Austin

The San Antonio/Austin chapter started the Reading Program.

SOAR–San Diego



Throughout the year, SOAR–SD fundraising efforts included raising awareness within the Armenian community and by raffling off unique baskets each month. On November 27, the Chapter held its inaugural gala in Sherman Oaks. The event was a great success. Many supporters attended the event and enjoyed a fun and exciting time. Proceeds were designated for the Armenian orphans and children in Syria.

Chapter Highlights

SOAR–San Francisco/Oakland



May 15—SOAR–SF invited the public to the Cigar Bar for a “Thirsty Thursday” happy hour as a chance to “re-unite with old friends, meet some new ones, and learn more about SOAR and our chapter over cocktails.”

July 24—SOAR–SF held a very successful and fun billiard tournament to benefit the orphans in Armenia. Friends and family partook in the tournament to help a great cause.

Fall—SOAR–SF held an NFL Survivor Pool.

SOAR–São Paulo

SOAR–São Paulo along with SOAR–London started the student internship component of the SOAR Volunteer Program.

SOAR–Seattle



The SOAR–Seattle chapter held its first event as a community meet & greet at the Seattle Wine Outlet. A small group enjoyed an elegant evening of wine tasting, sampling a mix of Armenian desserts and appetizers, and bidding on silent-auction items. Board members enjoyed educating the community about SOAR and how their donations help Armenian orphans. They raised money from this event and spread awareness about SOAR within the community.

SOAR–Southern Netherlands

The Southern Netherlands chapter started the Writing Program.

SOAR–Stockholm

In June, SOAR–Stockholm was launched with a concert held at the Filadelfiakyrkan.

SOAR–Ventura County



August 16—SOAR–Ventura chapter held its first fundraising event since its official formation in May 2014, at the scenic and upscale Malibu Wines in Malibu, CA. Over 100 friends, guests and supporters from the neighboring communities as well as from Baxter corporate offices came and enjoyed the exquisite wines, excellent food and fantastic silent auction. Proceeds from the event’s fundraising efforts will go toward renovating the Nubarashen Orphanage’s classrooms.



October—SOAR–West Region was thrilled to announce that a large medical supplies shipment, valued at \$50,000, had shipped on September 16. The shipment included medical and hygiene supplies and over-the-counter type of consumable goods for infants and older children. It was designated for several orphanages including Kharpert, Mari Izmirlyan, and Nork. This 100% donation was secured from a generous nonprofit organization that partnered with SOAR in Santa Barbara.

Chapter Highlights



November—SOAR’s Ventura County chapter and executive board distributed more than \$330,000 in medical supplies to the orphanages in Armenia.



December—SOAR–Ventura Chapter is proud to announce the visit of supporter and philanthropist John Mekjian and the distribution of humanitarian relief to Birds’ Nest and Ainjar’s boarding school in Lebanon.



December 14—SOAR–Ventura County held its holiday boutique luncheon at the Los Robles Country Club with *huge* success! From the beautiful set up, decor, and table settings to the select vendors and their displays, the event was festive, elegant and organized. The chapter reports: “Our guests welcomed our presentation and are more knowledgeable about SOAR’s mission and efforts since 2005. They also appreciated our chapter, which since its inception has been amazing in fundraising and educating the community.”

SOAR–Wisconsin

In June, SOAR–Wisconsin invited the public to a fundraiser where they would “Play Golf! And help Armenian Orphans . . . and Maybe Win a Harley Davidson Motorcycle”!

SOAR–Zurich

In mid-September, two private invitations in Zug, Switzerland, raised \$640 for SOAR–Zurich at the home of board member Tania Gulekjian Mobayed. By expressing personal reasons why her family supports the Armenian orphans in need, asking guests to donate instead of bringing gifts, and sharing the SOAR website prior to the invitations, guests were generous and impressed with SOAR’s mission and accomplishments. A donation box decorated with a SOAR brochure was available for those wanting to help by making a contribution.



The morning breakfast and evening cocktail events were social in nature among the neighborhood where Armenian and Lebanese culture is rare, raising an interest to learn more about it. The idea of sharing briefly the SOAR goals resulted in focused new donations to the Birds’ Nest and Bzommar institutions for children’s sports items and tuition support.

SOAR Special Programs

2014 saw the expansion of SOAR's work to include five special programs aimed at developing the linguistic, educational, vocational, and emotional capacities of orphaned Armenians around the world.

These programs, each of which is overseen by a particular board or regional Chapter, are listed below.

Language Tutoring Program: Established in May to enhance the foreign language skills of orphaned Armenian children by creating a forum whereby the children can be tutored in English, French, Italian, Russian, and Spanish by SOAR volunteers around the world. The program is overseen by SOAR's Executive Board.

Life Skills Coaching Program: Established in November to inspire and benefit attendants by elevating their overall psychological well-being and helping them to become more resilient to daily life struggles. The curriculum teaches the children to be their best, to live with far less stress, fear, and with greater ease, to make wiser decisions, and to unleash limitless creativity.

Mentoring Program: Established in May as a forum for Chapter Board members to have a personal impact in the life of an orphaned Armenian child by providing insight, direction, motivation, support, and education. Through the program, mentors may positively share education, wisdom, and life and career experiences that can become the difference between personal success and failure in certain areas of their life.

Multidisciplinary Tutoring Program: Established in July as a forum for Chapter Board members to teach orphaned Armenian children. Through this program, orphaned Armenian children can be tutored in mathematics, the natural sciences, computer science, humanities and other important disciplines by SOAR volunteers around the world.

Reading Program: In the Reading Program, high school students in the United States are paired up with students in Zadik Orphanage. The high school students read to their younger counterparts to produce better language skills and an emotional connection between the children.

Sponsorship Program: *Please see next two pages.*

... SOAR Special Programs

Sponsorship Program

The sponsorship program allows you to personally connect with an orphaned Armenian child or adult. ***Your entire donation goes directly to the orphan you are sponsoring; no funds support their orphanage or SOAR generally,*** and SOAR assumes the cost of all wiring fees.



"Want to thank you for the given presents. I hope that having these tools I'll feel more confident to develop my skills and go ahead, get better education and become fully independent and good shoemaker. I am confident that our friendship will be continual and effective. With love, Arsen & Hamlet"



... SOAR Special Programs

Sponsors receive a photo and personal profile of their orphan, updates on his/her health, and notes, drawings, or correspondence from him/her, at least twice a year. In the case of young or children with special needs, updates will come from the facility directors. Please note that for children with extraordinary needs, more than one sponsor may be assigned.



We had an unforgettable and enjoyable full day together with the Gavar children. We started our tour to Gavar at 8.30 am and returned back to the city around 8.00 pm. I took all the sponsored children to the main department store and 4 more shops in Gavar with 4 staff members of the orphanage - teachers, a social worker and a psychologist. Our shopping for everyone took 5 hours. It was a great chance for the kids to make purchases of their own choice, ... Then I took all of the children to a nice outside restaurant for a party. They played, danced, talked freely and had large appetites!"

-SOAR executive director



SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Full Sponsorship: For a minimum of \$50 a month (\$600 annually), your sponsorship will provide items like tuition (or a savings account for future tuition), educational books and supplies, musical tutoring, and medical care. Minimum one year commitments are required. Birthday and/or holiday gifts are always appreciated and can be arranged through SOAR.

Mid-Level Sponsorship: For \$25 a month (\$300 annually), your sponsorship will provide items like tuition (or a savings account for future tuition), educational books and supplies, musical tutoring, and medical care. Minimum one year commitments are required. Birthday and/or holiday gifts are always appreciated and can be arranged through SOAR.

Special Occasion Package: For \$150 annually, the Special Occasion Package provides \$50 each for Easter, Christmas, and a birthday gift. SOAR will coordinate all purchases, consistent with the recipient's wishes. We respectfully ask that the \$150 be paid up front and in full.

To join the SOAR Sponsorship Program, please go to <http://soar-us.org/enroll.html>.

How You Can Help

Benefit Wines: SOAR-Chicago, in partnership with Benefit Wines, offers a line of charity wines through ABC Cellars - a lineup of six estate-grown wines imported from a free-trade vineyard in Lontue Valley, Chile. These delectable wines are highly rated, certified organic and vegan friendly, and affordably priced for the wine and charity lover. Offer the wine in wine baskets for your auctions, serve the wine at your function, display the wine at your event for sale.

Birthday Fund: The Birthday Fund began in March 2014 when Stephanie LeGrand's daughter Fiona was dismayed to learn that not all children get to celebrate their birthday. Fiona suggested giving her birthday gifts to kids who don't get any. Since then, parents requesting donations to SOAR in lieu of gifts for their children's birthdays have been able to sponsor monthly birthday parties for several of Armenia's orphanages.

Diaper Fund: Disposable diapers are very expensive in Armenia, and government allocations for the expense do not adequately control for the diaper needs of the children. While SOAR firmly believes that the Armenian government should be exclusively responsible for the cost of baby supplies in the state orphanages, we have genuine concern for hygiene and the children's comfort. Accordingly, the Diaper Fund was launched in October to provide diaper subsidies to Nork and Mari Izmirlyan Orphanages. Diaper purchases are made in-country by SOAR's Executive Director and hand-delivered to each orphanage.

Donations of Goods: Due to new shipping requirements with United Armenia Fund (UAF), it is no longer feasible for SOAR to accept donations of small items that would only partially fill a sea container. It does, however, continue to use UAF when we can fill an entire sea container with either large items (e.g., physical therapy equipment) or smaller items in bulk (e.g., SOAR-LA's recent shipment of nearly 1,100 boxes valued at \$220,000.) SOAR extends its heartfelt thanks to those who have faithfully donated small quantities of goods since 2006. Thank you for your patience during this transition.

Financial Donations

Matching Gifts: Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match charitable contributions made by their employees, and in some cases by retirees and/or spouses as well. Contact your employer to find out if your company has a matching gift policy; the impact of your gift may be doubled or even tripled. All gifts to SOAR are tax deductible. Donations by check will be acknowledged by mail for tax purposes. You may also donate through PayPal at <http://soar-us.org/index.html>

Donor Advised Funds: Donor advised funds give supporters the ability to fund a charitable entity without having to name or give funds to a specific charity that year. The donor advised fund allows you to capture the tax deduction but distribute the fund proceeds to charities like SOAR for years to come. A donor advised fund is an ideal tool to consider if you have an increase in income due to a bonus or equity transaction and are looking for a way to minimize the tax burden and satisfy some philanthropic giving. You can fund the donor advised fund with low cost securities or cash, and qualify for a charitable deduction.

How You Can Help

Funds & Scholarships

Existing funds and scholarships include the following:

Lara T. Arabatlian Memorial Medical Fund
The Sarkis Esmerian Educational Fund
Arlene Marilyn Koumjian Educational Scholarship
Haig and Alice Koumjian Rug Weaving Memorial Fund
Jeanette Koumjian Art Scholarship

Sonya Anne Martin Scholarship for Public Service
Hasmik Nikoghosyan Memorial Education Fund
Megan Nicole Pelter Medical Scholarship
Rick Spears Educational Fund
George and Margaret Yacoubian Charitable Fund
George and Sara Yacoubian Embroidery Memorial Fund

Internship & Volunteer Opportunities: SOAR believes that students learn best when they are actively engaged in charitable activities and offers internships to that end at the undergraduate, graduate, and law school level. While internships will be managed by the Executive Board in Philadelphia, interns can be physically located anywhere, provided they have a computer and Internet access. Applicants should submit a resume and cover letter, including a statement of interest and indication of their semester of availability.

Shop Online: Through these entirely free online shopping programs, a percentage of SOAR supporters' purchases go directly to SOAR:

- iGive.com - Shop at over 1400+ stores registered with iGive
- AmazonSmile - Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase to SOAR.
- eBay Giving Works - Shop or sell through ebay to benefit SOAR.

SOAR Shop: Shoppers at SOAR's online store can find apparel for all ages, books about the Armenian homeland, and photography from Armenian orphanages. The store ships within 48 hours of receiving your order.

Special Gifts Program: SOAR's Special Gifts Program includes bequests, charitable gift annuities, charitable lead trusts, charitable remainder trusts, donor-advised funds, endowments, in lieu of flowers, retained life estates, scholarships, and wealth replacement trusts.

Volunteering In Armenia: SOAR is the only organization whose singular mission is to provide humanitarian relief to orphaned Armenians around the world. As such, SOAR's Volunteer Program offers unique opportunities for Armenian and non-Armenian students and professionals to volunteer throughout the year with orphaned children and adults in Armenia. The Program has three categories:

- 1) The Professional Delegation involves short-term medical, dental, and physical therapy missions to undertake a specific project.
- 2) Student Internships allow undergraduate and graduate students to spend a semester or full academic year volunteering at one of the orphanages in Armenia. School credit is available when appropriate.
- 3) Summer Camp Volunteers provided assistance to one of two orphan summer camps in Armenia. The placements can be between one week and summer-long. Students and adults with interest and training in athletics, art, foreign languages, music, and religion are welcome to apply.

Accounting Summary

Total Distributions	\$865,883.85¹
• Armenian Evangelical Boarding School (Lebanon)	\$3,625.00
• Birds' Nest (Lebanon)	\$7,575.00
• Boarding School #1 (Artsakh)	\$1305.00
• Boarding School #2 (Artsakh)	\$300.00
• Bzommar Orphanage (Lebanon)	\$7,400.00
• Cardinal Aghajanian Orphanage (Lebanon)	\$300.00
• Children's Home of Gyumri	\$4,200.00
• Gavar Orphanage	\$8,885.00
• Gyumri Social Childcare Center	\$19,550.00
• Javakh Summer Day Camp (Georgia)	\$11,300.00
• Kharberd Orphanage	\$78,836.28
• Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage	\$327,673.42
• Mer Doon	\$3,810.00
• Mer Hoos	\$12,420.00
• Nork	\$6,900.00
• Nubarashen	\$6,491.00
• Orphanage of Fridtjof Nansen	\$1,750.00
• Our Lady of Armenia Center (Gyumri)	\$170,152.00
• Our Lady of Armenia Educational Center (Tashir)	\$30,000.00
• Shengavit Kindergarten	\$3,500.00
• S.O. Khach (Syria)	\$500.00
• SOS Children's Center (Idjevan)	\$94,052.90
• SOS Children's Center (Kotayk)	\$3,710.00
• St. Theresa's (Azizie and Meydan)	\$11,000.00
• Terchoonian Home	\$3,485.00
• Vanadzor	\$1,920.00
• Vardashen	\$2,650.00
• Voice of the Armenian Summer Camp (VOTAC)	\$6,000.00
• Warm Hearth	\$12,910.00
• Zadik	\$5,123.00
• Miscellaneous (travel expenses, excursions, and staffing)	\$18,560.25

1. This figure includes the work from our Executive Board and all Chapters.

Conclusion

The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) was established in the fall of 2005 to provide humanitarian relief to orphaned Armenian children. SOAR's long-term goal is to provide orphaned Armenian children throughout the world with the resources fundamental to their physical, emotional, and intellectual development. Over time, we aim to provide these underprivileged youth with the tools necessary to become accomplished, educated, and self-supporting Armenian adults.

The SOAR family boasts more than 400 volunteers worldwide, supporting 23 institutions (orphanages and summer camps) in Armenia, two Armenian orphanages in Artsakh, an Armenian summer camp in Javakh, four Armenian orphanages in Lebanon, and three Armenian orphanages in Syria. Our website (www.soar-us.org) provides a complete description of SOAR, the institutions we serve, and the work done to date.

In calendar year 2014, SOAR distributed **\$865,883.85** to our target population, donating a variety of new toys, diapers, games, school and office supplies, personal hygiene products, and mattresses, as well as funding a variety of capital projects across many of our orphanages.

We are extremely grateful for the emotional and financial support received throughout the world. The desire to improve the lives of orphaned Armenian children around the world is the bonding element among all of our supporters, and we look forward to perpetuating our mission and growing the SOAR family for years to come.





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