



# Newsletter

## September 2017

### **SOAR Welcomes New Chapters!**

As of August 2017, SOAR has **114** chapters!

We would like to welcome the new chapters that have joined in 2017:

SOAR Leeds (Joined May 2017)

SOAR Lisbon (Joined May 2017)

SOAR Malta (Joined March 2017)

SOAR Melbourne (Joined December 2016, but we wanted to recognize them!)

SOAR Naples (Joined February 2017)

SOAR Nottingham (Joined April 2017)

SOAR Richmond (Joined May 2017)

***Welcome to the SOAR family!!!***



### **New Sponsorship Platform**

SOAR has switched to a new platform to keep track of its ever-growing sponsorship database. The platform is REACH and can be accessed here:

<https://www.soarusorg.reachapp.co/>.

# REACH®

SOAR has three types of sponsorships available; Child, Services to Children in Their Own Home (SCO), and SOS Village. The former platform only allowed us to match sponsors with one type of sponsorship, the child sponsorships. It was necessary to keep track of the others outside of the platform on spreadsheets. Payments were also done separately, so keeping track of everything was difficult. Using REACH now enables SOAR to keep all sponsorship types and payments in one location, making it easier to see when a payment for a child/family/village is behind or cancelled. This will ensure that we can immediately reach out to the sponsors or establish a new sponsorship if needed.

If you are already a sponsor and haven't set up your payments through the REACH platform, now would be the perfect time to do so. Check out all the profiles of our kids!!

### **SOAR Vetted by Project Cure**



Thanks again to the tireless work of Kohar Mardirossian-Pelter, SOAR has been vetted by Project Cure and has received their seal of approval.

This comes on the heels of SOAR receiving and distributing a large shipment of medical equipment, supplies and rehab equipment including very specialized handicap wheelchairs, special needs beds and mattresses to 4 orphanages (Kharpert, Nork, OLA, and Mari Izmirlyan) in Armenia and Gyumri. It also distributed over 130 pairs of clogs to the Syrian Armenian

Center in Yerevan. The entire shipment was valued at \$300,000! ***Thank you, Kohar!!***



## **Mother Arousiag Appointed Mother General**

Our own Mother Arousiag of Our Lady of Armenia Center (OLA) in Gyumri has been appointed Mother General of Armenian Sisters of Immaculate Conception.

Born in Syria in 1945, having grown up between Aleppo and Beirut, Mother General had wanted to be a “missionary in Armenia” since joining the Congregation of the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in 1965. But her hierarchy sent her to Philadelphia (United States) where she founded and ran an Armenian school for twenty-five years, while assuming the responsibilities of vicar general.

Often called the “Mother Theresa of Armenia” she has been the Superior of the Our Lady of Armenia Center in Gyumri, Armenia, since September 1990. The Our Lady of Armenia Center was established by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order of nuns established in 1847 to educate Armenian youth. Mother Arousiag earned a Bachelor’s Degree from Cabrini College in Radnor, Pennsylvania, in 1967 and a Master’s Degree in Education from Villanova University in Villanova, Pennsylvania, in 1973. She is proficient in several languages, including Armenian, English, French, and Italian.

*Congratulations Mother Arousiag Sajonian, Superior*

## **Lili’s Bed and Breakfast**

Lili’s Bed and breakfast, named in honor of George Yacoubian’s oldest daughter, Liliana, who was adopted from Armenia in 2006, officially opened May of 2017. The B&B is owned and managed by SOAR and all proceeds from Lili’s B&B go to SOAR’s Orphan Transitional Fund.

[http://soar-us.org/orph\\_trans\\_fund.html](http://soar-us.org/orph_trans_fund.html)

It is adjacent to the Ani Bezikian Youth Center in Kakaner, a section of Yerevan approximately 10 minutes from City Center. The Youth Center is a transitional residence for older teenage girls who have aged out of the Our Lady of Armenia Center, an orphanage in Gyumri overseen by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (Mother Arousiag Sajonian, Superior). The Kanaker residence facilitates independent living in a safe and nurturing environment by allowing the girls to work and go to school.



Lili’s B&B boasts a beautiful view of Mount Ararat and Aragats, quiet rooms to rest after a busy day of sightseeing, private baths to energize you for the next day’s adventures, evening snacks, and a delicious breakfast buffet of regional and traditional dishes.

***Make sure to book a stay next time you plan to visit Armenia.***

To see pictures and make reservations, visit their website, <http://lilisbedandbreakfast.com/>.

## **Children of Gyumri Depend on SOAR Dental Clinic**

“SOAR Dental Clinic” in Gyumri has operated free of charge for all of the disadvantaged children in the city and the neighboring regions of Spitak, since November 2016. Now it has an added responsibility in assuming all essential care for dental health of the region.

This comes right after the state ceasing to provide any state-supported dental work. State provided dental care has historically been of poor quality, as well as lacking in ability to perform complex dental care, patient education, and preventative measures. The primary beneficiaries of the clinic continues to be the disadvantaged children from child care and protection institutions of the Gyumri, including :

Our Lady Of Armenia Convent, Children Home of Gyumri, Nansen Boarding School, Thrhoonian Home, Gyumri Social Childcare Center, and Boarding School N 1.

SOAR Clinic is open also for the other vulnerable children who come from poor and needy families of the community.



## **Welcome Anna!**

Our own Raffi Jehanian, SOAR's Vice-Chairman, has enlarged his family! Read about it below...

We met Anna in 2013 when Danielle, Teni and I visited Our Lady of Armenia Center in Gyumri. It was very interesting as she was drawn to us and we to her.

After meeting her and going home we decided to sponsor her then kicked around the idea of adopting.

After many calls to Mother Arousiag, talking to George and doing financial homework unofficially in mid-2014 we decided to adopt her.

In January 2015, we officially started the process by hiring a local adoption agency to start our home study. After many road blocks, finally after 31 months we brought Anna home as our daughter on Monday 7/10/2017.

*“Anna was meant to be with our family. Our chance meeting with her solidified that fact the day we met, and continued until the adoption was completed.”*

*By Raffi Jehanian*



## **Conferences in November**

This November SOAR will be holding conferences both in Delafield, Wisconsin for the US chapters, and in Geneva, Switzerland for the European/Asia chapters.

The meetings in Wisconsin will be November 10th through November 12th and in Geneva from November 17th through November 19th. (*Good luck with that, George!*)

In addition to the educational component, this is a wonderful opportunity for the members of the different chapter boards to meet each other live, share stories about the orphaned children we have supported over the years, and grasp the true reality of the impact we are making.

All members are perpetuating SOAR's mission!