

Armenian Educational Foundation's 65th Anniversary

Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) is celebrating its 65th anniversary on January 31st 2016 at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Established in 1950 in Los Angeles by six visionary California Armenians, the AEF mission has been and continues to be the promotion and financial support of the Armenian student and Armenian educational institutions. In the 1950s and 60s, AEF began supporting Armenian schools in the Middle East, and continues to do so to date. In the 1970s and 80s, AEF helped and supported the establishment of Armenian day schools in the United States. And with the Independence of Armenia, since 1990s, AEF has been supporting the Armenian student and educational institutions in Armenia, Artsakh and Javakhk. AEF has renovated 185 schools, provided computers, school supplies and financial assistance to thousands of students, including hundreds of full 4-year tuition scholarships for public university students.

In 2015, with the help of AEF members, supporters and endowment funds, AEF provided scholarships and grants in the United States, financial support to schools and colleges in the Middle East, and in Armenia, built a new 14-classroom school building in Arevadasht village, renovated five other village schools, provided classroom furniture, school supplies, full tuition scholarships for 128 university students, and computers and teacher instructions for 35 village schools.



Annual Banquet, Armenian Educational Foundation, Hotel Statler – Los Angeles, California, April 3, 1954

Anniversary Gala

To celebrate AEF's accomplishments over the last 65 years, the AEF will be having a Gala Banquet on January 31, 2016. The Gala will be held at the Beverly Hills Hotel, in Beverly Hills, CA. The Gala will be not only a celebration of the AEF's accomplishments, but will also be an evening to honor two individuals who have supported AEF over the years. The honorees will be Mr. Ralph Tufenkian, who will receive the "AEF Legacy Award", and Mr. Hacop Baghdassarian, who will receive the "AEF Lifetime Service Award". Both of these gentlemen are not

only longtime supporters of the AEF, but also longtime supporters of many other Armenian charities and organizations.

Also, as a special treat, we will have a very special guest speaker, Professor Richard Hovanissian. Professor Hovanissian is the First Holder of the AEF Chair in Modern Armenian History, UCLA, and Adjunct Professor of History with the Shoah Foundation, USC. Tickets and/or sponsorship opportunities are available for the Gala. Please call the AEF office at (818) 242-4154, or email at aef@acfweb.org.

Endowments Funds

Armenian Educational Foundation (AEF) holds and administers 12 endowment funds for various scholarship programs and grants to educational institutions in the Diaspora and Armenia.

The endowment fund provides the donor a means to promote or support, in perpetuity, a particular cause or wish. The endowment funds administered by AEF include mostly university scholarships in United States, Lebanon, Armenia and Artsakh, some grants to schools and colleges in Lebanon, and one for a seminary student scholarship in Antelias, Lebanon.

AEF is actively pursuing establishment of additional endowment funds because they provide a continuous and stable source of funding for AEF to pursue its mission of financially supporting the Armenian student and Armenian educational institutions.

School Renovations



Opening of Renovated School in Darbas Village (Lori) in October 2014

School Renovations project started after 1988 earthquake. Initially AEF decided to build and renovate schools in the disaster area. Later we decided to include border villages. First, was Krashen village elementary school and kindergarten, then, with the donation of Savey and Ralph Tufenkian Gyumri No 5 Richard Tufenkian School was rebuilt. Prior to AEF's 50th anniversary, in 1999, the board decided to renovate 50 schools that became reality in two years. AEF has completed 185 school renovation projects in villages and towns in Armenia, Artsakh and Javakhk. To date, AEF has provided \$4.4 million dollars for school renovations. These renovations are made possible with a partnership with our generous donors, many of whom have adopted schools and sponsored the majority of the renovations and ongoing support for the school of their choice.

Scholarships



Reception for Graduates and Recipients of Scholarship Program in Yerevan, October 2015

One of AEF's many educational programs is to provide full tuition scholarships for students attending public universities in Armenia and Artsakh. In 2007, the first year of this program, AEF provided 22 scholarships, which has grown to 131 this year. The success of the scholarship program is dependent on the generous support of numerous sponsors who donate \$1,000 per year to pay the full tuition for each student. AEF's Armenia Scholarship Committee in Yerevan includes local and expat members, who volunteer their time to ensure a fair and objective selection process. The committee uses a mathematical model to rank scholarship candidates, with points given for various criteria such as; financial need, student of a single parent, multi-children families, if the student resides outside of Yerevan (i.e. villages), parents' participation in the Artsakh war, military service, volunteer work, academic achievements, etc. Once the scholarship recipients are selected, AEF wire-transfers the tuition directly to the university on behalf of the student.

One of the requirements to continue receiving the AEF scholarship is to volunteer and engage in community service. As such, AEF scholarship recipients volunteer for various organizations by helping at orphanages, tutoring students, assisting the elderly and disadvantaged families, and donating blood, to name a few. For example, on April 27, 2015, after thousands visited the Genocide Memorial Monument, the students assisted with the clean-up of flowers at Dzidzernakapert - Armenian Genocide Memorial Monument Yerevan, Armenia.

Scholarship recipients write thank you letters annually to their sponsors. Furthermore, AEF encourages and facilitates scholarship sponsors to meet their sponsored student when visiting Armenia. In the fall of each year, AEF hosts a reception in Yerevan, with members and sponsors, to honor all scholarship recipients.

AEF Diaspora Allocations

AEF programs are designed to address the needs of Armenian students in Armenia and Diaspora and they have changed throughout the years to better fit the current need of Armenian students. Prior to 1988 all AEF's programs were focused on the needs of Diaspora. AEF provided funding to build Armenian day schools in the Middle East, in Southern California and established the Modern Armenian History Chair at UCLA.

At AEF our projects are funded either by endowment funds, that have specific "directives" to fund projects, or AEF raises funds to cover other specific programs.

Directed Diaspora funding are provided to different Armenian schools in Lebanon and college Scholarships in the US that are provided through the Tufenkian Endowment. AEF's US scholarship committee, which is comprised mostly of educators, reviews the applications submitted and selects the top students to receive \$3,000 scholarship each.

For Non-Directed Diaspora funding, instead of competing with various Armenian organizations to raise funds for the same project, AEF identifies projects that have no other funding. Examples are: Program to help at risk students conducted by Committee for Armenian Students in Public Schools (CASPS), funding the costs of Naviance software for Armenian high school students that helps them with their career planning and college search that increases the number of their college applications and acceptance rate, and allocation of funds to Armenian schools in Lebanon.

Since 2000 AEF has provided a total of \$1.3 million dollars in scholarships to students in Armenia and Diaspora.

Computer Information Systems Program at Artsakh State University



Computer Information System Department meeting with AEF Representatives at Stepanakert University, October 2015

In May 2013 the Armenian Educational Foundation announced that is funding a 4 year Computer Information Systems (CIS) degree program, in Stepanakert State University in Artsakh. The funding was to help finance computer hardware, software, instructor salaries, and student scholarships and start a four year CIS degree program with the aim of promoting IT, modern technology and employment and empowerment in Artsakh.

AEF recognized the importance of economic development for Artsakh and believed that this project will have a big impact in developing the infrastructure needed to bring information technology companies to Artsakh.

Every year, AEF representatives meet with the University representatives and students registered in the new CIS program and receives updates on the progress of the program. The first class admitted to the program was comprised of 23 students. The program that started with support from AEF has grown and currently, interest in the CIS program has increased to the level that the program had the second highest number of applicants at the university. In total 87 students are registered in first through fourth year programs, including returning students who had to take a sabbatical from their studies to serve in the army.

International IT companies have established offices in Artsakh and there are employment opportunities for students of the CIS program. Several of these students are currently employed at these companies. It is anticipated that graduating students will receive full-time employment. The growing demand for IT graduates has caused increase in number of applicants.

Village Computer Education Program



Village Computer Education

AEF's village computer education program was established in 2009 to bring computer education to rural area villages in order for these students to become better prepared to take part in the growing IT industry in Armenia. AEF's program is unique in that, in addition to providing computer equipment, it also provides education on the latest computer software, often lacking for proper training of students in village schools. As part of this program, AEF worked on developing the course curriculums for both instructors, as well as the students taking into account, the computer equipment and software that AEF will be providing to these schools as part of village training program.

To date, as part of AEF's village training program, 87 school instructors from Lori, Tavoush, Shirak, Aragatsotn, Vayots Dzor, Syunik regions of Armenia, and Artsakh, have received the needed computers and printers, plus 6 to 8 weeks of computer education, the proper course curriculum, resulting in improved quality of education, as part of their daily education in village schools.

School Supply Project



AEF School Supplies Delivered to Artsakh Students, January 2014

“Every child's face lights up when he/she walks into a colorful classroom. Every student deserves to have basic supplies,” said Lily Savadian, chair of AEF’s School Supply Project committee. Since its first shipment in 2007, SSP has delivered backpacks and school supplies to 18,000 students in the most rural and hard-to-reach schools in Armenia, Artsakh, and Javakhk.

Various schools have made the collection of initial supplies their yearly drive. Upon conclusion of the deadline they deliver their collected items AEF. On a designated day AEF supplements the supplies by providing the additional material and by inviting volunteers from all walks of life: students, scouts, parents, and teachers to sort, pack, and ship the boxes to Armenia. The boxes arrive to AEF office in Yerevan, Armenia and are distributed to the designated schools. AEF volunteers and members are often on hand to deliver the supplies to the schools and personally witness the appreciation and gratitude of the students, principals, teachers, and parents. Due to SSP's efforts, the classrooms and libraries have become livelier with new decorations and with increased student art projects. Students look forward to attending these classes.

A backpack filled with notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, sharpener, pencil pouch, markers, crayons, colored pencils, arts and craft material, calculator, and highlighter delivered to its destination costs \$20 per student.

Take a moment to reflect back to your childhood, when a Mickey Mouse pencil would make you look forward to doing homework or when a sticker on a test well done would continue to motivate you to get better grades so that you would receive more stickers. We have so much and giving these gifts is the least we can do.

The AEF-SSP mission statement is simple: "To solicit, collect and deliver school supplies to the neediest schools in Armenia, so that the children there have the basic supplies needed to facilitate their education". Please consider joining this work and helping bring smiles to children in our homeland.

Closing

Armenia Educational Foundation (AEF) is a volunteer organization with a working Board of Directors. The Board members or any AEF member is never remunerated for their time or reimbursed for their travel expenses in pursuit of AEF projects and programs. AEF maintains an office in Glendale with one part time administrator and one in Yerevan staffed with one scholarship director.

AEF projects and programs have grown phenomenally in the past twenty years, with total transparency of its finances and activities.

In 2016 AEF intends to continue its mission and its existing programs with emphasis on growing the extremely popular and successful scholarship sponsorship program and pursuing establishment of additional endowment funds.

Please call the AEF office at (818) 242-4154, or send your email to aeff@aeffweb.org if you have a question or wish to participate in these programs.