

ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009



ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION

ARF YOUTH ORGANIZATION OF THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY

With its five durable pillars—social, athletic, cultural, political and educational—the AYF has produced generations of thoughtful and committed leaders who have been on the forefront of defending the interests of the Armenian nation. The 2008-2009 fiscal year carried on this proud legacy of the AYF and once again showed that the youth possess the skills and knowledge to move the Armenian community forward like no other.

AYF members worked tirelessly this year—on both a central and local level—to build bonds of friendship, raise awareness, promote civic activism, assist the homeland, establish forums for discussion, and advance the Armenian Cause. In the process, the youth developed priceless experience in teamwork, leadership, education, communication, and organizing—skills which will help propel the community forward for years to come.

The below snapshot of the AYF's activities in the 2008-2009 fiscal year is only a sample of its many contributions to the community. Nevertheless, it sufficiently represents the wide scope of work the AYF and its 14 chapters carryout annually within the Western United States. We present this overview of the AYF's work in appreciation of the support shown to the youth by the community, without which none of this work would be possible.

SOCIAL, ATHLETIC & FUNDRAISING

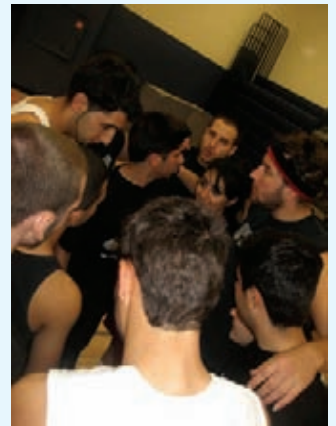
MONTEBELLO 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

One of the AYF's oldest chapters in the western United States, Montebello's "Vahan Cardashian" Chapter, celebrated its 50th anniversary on November 15, marking simultaneously the 75th anniversary of the founding of the AYF. Nearly 1000 alumni and supporters turned out for the event, celebrating the twin birthdays and marking the important role the AYF has and continues to play in the life of the community.

AYF OLYMPICS

This year, from November 28-30, over 160 AYF members from throughout the western region travelled to Fresno in full-strength, for what turned out to be one of the most vibrant AYF Olympics in recent memory.

Upon arrival participants had the opportunity to relax and socialize with one another in between games of basketball, volleyball and an obstacle course relay. Following the games and the awarding of trophies to the winning chapters, a special victory *barahantes* celebrating the AYF Olympics was held in the hall of the Fresno Armenian Community Center, featuring singer Sahag Sislian and DJ Raffy.



ANNUAL SKI TRIP

On the weekend of January 16-18, over 150 Armenian youth attended the AYF's 3rd Annual Ski Trip held at AYF Camp. The winter getaway served as a fun and relaxed atmosphere for the youth (both AYF and non-AYF members) to interact and enjoy one another's company. Special lift tickets were arranged with Mountain High, allowing the group to ski with friends and socialize. The gathering this year also raised a considerable sum for the AYF's year-round activities.

AYF ANNIVERSARY DINNER DANCE

It has become a tradition for the AYF-Western Region to celebrate its anniversary with an annual dinner dance. Alongside serving the goal of celebrating the organization's anniversary, the dinner dance is a medium the AYF uses to provide Armenian youth with a healthy social setting. The entertainment for the dinner dance this year, held at the Pasadena Armenian Center on May 8, was provided by Harout Pamboukjian and attracted over 250 youth and community members. The dinner dance also served as the AYF's single largest fundraiser, generating over \$10,000 in net income.



EDUCATION

MEMBER EDUCATION

All members of the AYF have an opportunity to participate in a wide variety of centralized and local educational seminars, lectures, and programs throughout the year. In the course of the 2008-2009 fiscal year, AYF members received educationals on such topics as "The History of AYF Accomplishments During WWII" (Greg Aftandilian), "The Organized Labor Movement" (Dr. Ara Khanjian), "The Trails and Trials of an Armenian Repatriate" (Photographer/Repatriate, Arsineh Khachikian), "Political Ideology" (Prof. Roger C. Marhein), "Globalization and the Armenian Diaspora (ARS Inc. Director, Jirayr Beugekian), "The Armenian *Zartonk*" (Crescenta Valley Quiz Bowl), Microsoft Excel (Crescenta Valley Workshop), and "The History of Revolution" (Prof. Senya Lubisich) just to name a few.



ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

Every winter the AYF holds its Annual Educational Seminar at AYF Camp, where members from all chapters have the opportunity to come together in a fraternal and social atmosphere to learn more about our history, our political struggles, and current events concerning the Armenian Cause.

This year, the Annual Educational Seminar, held on the weekend of March 20-22, attracted over 70 AYF members. The director of the three-day seminar was Ung. Aram Madenllian and the theme of focus was Turkish-Armenian relations. Lectures covered the history of Turkey (Garo Momjian), political perspectives on establishing relations (Steve Dadaian), and the economic considerations of opening the Turkey-Armenia border (Aram Kaloustian). Members also had ample time to socialize, meet new friends, share and discuss organizational issues and keep the tradition of singing patriotic and revolutionary songs.



"READ REVOLUTION" BOOK CLUB

The AYF Central Education Council (CEC) introduced a new book club program this year called "Read Revolution." Raffi's *The Fool* and Armen Garo's *Bank Ottoman* were the two books featured in this year's program. Over 80 copies of each book were distributed to interested members and, after participants had a chance to read each book, a special discussion facilitated by the CEC was held at Sardarabad bookstore. AYF members gathered to discuss the themes explored in each book and how they relate to the multifaceted life of an activist and the Armenian struggle today.



COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

TURKISH REPUBLIC DAY BALL DEMONSTRATION

Over 50 AYF activists demonstrated in front of the Turkish Republic Day Ball at the Hilton Long Beach on October 25. The event was organized by the Association of Turkish Americans of Southern California and sought to celebrate the founding of the Turkish Republic.

Demonstrators drew attention to Turkey's violent abuse of human rights and ongoing denial of the Armenian Genocide. Chants and statements read by AYF activists outside the hotel penetrated deep into the Hilton lobby, triggering discussion on the issue among many guests and passersby. A smaller group of AYF members also silently demonstrated inside the hotel lobby, wearing t-shirts depicting a bloody Turkish flag and the words "Republic of Inhumanity."

"THE OPPOSITE OF SILENCE"

On the anniversary of Hrant Dink's assassination and Martin Luther King Day, the United Human Rights Council (UHRC) organized a special commemorative event titled "The Opposite of Silence," which brought together hundreds of youth and community members to remember the lessons that emerged from the brutal assassination of Dink and the importance of struggling against oppressive forces. In addition to remarks by AYF members themselves, the evening also featured musical performances, informational displays, video presentations and poetry.

In addition to the formal program, members of the UCSB chapter of Human Rights Watch were in attendance promoting the "Red Hands Campaign," collecting red handprints to present to the United Nations as a form of petition for stricter enforcement of its virtually disregarded ban on child soldiers. AYF members also brought hundreds of canned goods to the event to be donated to community food banks in the area as part of the ANCA's "Cans for the Cause Campaign."

AZERBAIJANI CONSULATE PROTEST

More than 100 members of the AYF were joined by students and youth from throughout the community on February 23 to protest a gathering at the Azerbaijani Consulate in Los Angeles. The event attempted to paint the events in Khojaly 17 years ago as massacres perpetrated by Armenians. The protestors called on the Azeri government to cease distorting history for political gain and bare responsibility for the pogroms it committed in Sumgait, Baku and other regions. They also affirmed their support for Artsakh's right to independence.

ANNUAL APRIL 24TH PROTEST

Over 10,000 people turned out for the AYF's annual April 24 demonstration in front of the Turkish Consulate. Activists and community members demanded an end to Turkey's ongoing denial of the Armenian Genocide and voiced sharp disappointment at President Barack Obama's failure to properly recognize this crime against humanity. The demonstration is a symbolic focal point for the community and represents the AYF's year-long struggle to gain proper recognition and restitution for the crime of genocide perpetrated by the Turkish government.

CYCLE AGAINST DENIAL

More than 250 community members took part in an 11-mile bike-a-thon in Encino on April 25, organized by the San Fernando Valley “Sardarabad” AYF in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. The chapter chose to hold the bike-a-thon as a symbolic representation of the cycle of genocide which continues today as a direct result of Turkey’s ongoing denial of the Armenian Genocide.

PRESIDENT OBAMA DEMONSTRATION

On Wednesday, May 27, hundreds of AYF members and supporters gathered in front of the Beverly Hilton Hotel, in Beverly Hills, where President Barrack Obama was scheduled to host a Democratic Party fundraiser. The demonstrators were there to remind the President of his campaign promise to recognize the Armenian Genocide and urged him to do so to regain his integrity. During his speech inside the hotel, President Obama acknowledged the protestors and their chants of “Obama, keep your promise.”

NATIONWIDE PROTEST AGAINST CHEVRON

The AYF joined with Armenian Americans and human rights activists across the country this summer in kicking off a campaign to raise awareness about energy giant Chevron’s opposition to Congressional recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

The protests began on July 22, 2009 at Chevron headquarters in San Ramon, CA and local stations across the U.S.—including sites in Burbank, La Crescenta, Pasadena, San Fernando Valley, Orange County, Glendale, Fresno, as well as Bethesda, MD, Orlando, FL and Philadelphia, PA. The mass action generated significant media coverage exposing Chevron’s disgraceful lobbying efforts.



PUBLIC SERVICE

NANOR KRIKORIAN SCHOLARSHIP

The AYF continued offering its Nanor Krikorian Scholarship, established during the 2002-2003 fiscal year, to graduating high school seniors and college students. From 19 applications, four graduating high school seniors and two college/university students were chosen to receive grants totaling \$3000.

This year, the winning scholarship went to Tamar Abrilian, a High School graduate from Houston, Texas. She took home \$1000 to use for her studies as a Biology major at the University of Texas.

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

The AYF teamed up with Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, the American Red Cross and other community organizations this year to donate blood and help save lives. Nearly a hundred AYF members and young Armenian volunteers poured into the auditorium of Hollywood Presbyterian on March 5 and donated their blood throughout the day. Chapters in Hollywood, Burbank, La Crescenta, Montebello, Orange County, Torrance, Pasadena, and the San Fernando Valley all joined together to mobilize their respective communities behind this important project.

Commenting on how excited he had been to see so many young Armenians take part in the blood drive that day, Caesar Fontanilla of the Red Cross stated, "They overwhelmed us with their support and dedication with boatloads of donors."

LITTLE ARMENIA BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

More than 300 Armenian youth adorned in bright green t-shirts and armed with cleaning supplies made their way through the streets of Los Angeles' Little Armenia region on March 29 for the AYF's 6th Annual Beautification Project. With rakes, shovels, brooms, bags and other utensils in hand, the young volunteers proceeded to pick up trash, plant trees, and remove graffiti.



Following the official designation of Little Armenia in 2000, the AYF has taken upon itself to consistently show its gratitude and ensure that the area remain clean and presentable. Working in conjunction with Councilmember Eric Garcetti's office, hundreds of volunteers have come together every year to revitalize the streets of this densely populated district of East Hollywood.

OFFICIAL PARTNERSHIP WITH U.S. CENSUS

In 2000, only about 1/3 of Armenians were officially counted in the US Census—a very gross underestimation of the actual number residing in the US. In order to change this underestimation and secure our community's voice in the American process, the AYF decided to sign-up as a partner with the US Census Bureau in June and raise awareness in the community about the importance of participating in the 2010 Census.

HELPING THE HOMELAND

BURBANK HALLOWEEN BENEFIT FOR ARMENIAN ORPHANS

For the fourth year in a row, the Burbank “Varak” held a Halloween benefit party for the ARS sponsor-a-child program in Armenia. The chapter was able to raise enough money to fully sponsor the education of 3 high school and 3 needy college students in Armenia.

ARS ORPHANS EDUCATION PROGRAM

As an investment in the future of the homeland and a means for providing youth in Armenia the opportunity to receive a quality education, the Pasadena “Nigol Touman” AYF decided to assist the ARS Orphans Education Program. The chapter took on a 4-year commitment of paying the higher education costs for two needy Armenian students entering college. The chapter has already donated over \$600 to the program and will donate another \$2000 over the course of the next 3 years.

YOUTH CORPS

The AYF Youth Corps program, established in 1994, gives dedicated individuals a unique opportunity to spend approximately six weeks in Armenia, working with people on the ground to make a tangible contribution to the homeland.

Beginning last summer, the Youth Corps program established a free day camp for underprivileged children in Gyumri. The two-month camp touched the lives of hundreds of children that summer and provided much needed assistance to many of Gyumri’s struggling families who have to grapple with economic and social challenges that continue to linger 20 years after the earthquake.

This year’s group departed on July 8 and traveled back to Gyumri to carry on the work of the free children’s day camp. For over a month, these nine Armenian youth from California spent their summer as counselors for over 150 children in a city still struggling to rebuild.



JAVAKHK PHOTO EXHIBIT

A photo exhibit by AYF member Tamar Yardemian, displaying the everyday life of Armenians in Javakhk, was held on July 25 at the Lost Souls Café in Downtown Los Angeles. All proceeds were raised to help purchase cars for the Javakhk Armenian youth organization. Over 100 attendees participated in the event which succeeded in raising over \$2000 for the youth of Javakhk.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

AYF CULTURAL EDUCATION NIGHT AT WILLOW CREEK ELEMENTARY

The administration of Willow Creek Elementary School in Clovis, CA, invited the Fresno “Kevork Chavoush” AYF to put together a cultural program in January that would educate their students on Armenian history and culture. The AYF members prepared a presentation to the school children and their parents about Armenian history, offered them traditional Armenian foods, introduced them to Armenian musical instruments such as the oud, and even performed a traditional Armenian dance. The night ended with the school children coloring in an Armenian flag as the AYF members explained to them the meaning behind each color.

HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTATION

Members of the AYF gave a presentation to the Armenian Club of Hollywood High School on March 6. Over 50 high school students attended the presentation which featured an overview about the AYF, the importance of being involved in the community and an announcement about the upcoming Little Armenia Beautification Project.

TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL

For the past three years, the South Bay “Potorig” AYF has been educating local high school students about the history of the Armenian Genocide. This year, members of the chapter visited Torrance High School on April 20 to give a presentation to over 800 students on the denial of the Armenian Genocide and how Turkey’s ability to escape culpability for its crime continues to fuel the cycle of genocide.

Realizing the importance of working with schools to educate the local community, the chapter has established a partnership with the administration of Torrance High School and plans to continue working with them to organize annual April 24 commemorative events. The chapter also worked this year with USC, organizing a presentation about the Genocide to students studying to become history teachers.

GENOCIDE DISCUSSION AT LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

Hundreds of tenth and eleventh grade history students gathered in the Lakewood High School Library on Monday, March 30, to participate in a discussion on genocide led by members of the AYF-Western Region. The AYF presentation lasted for 4 class periods and covered a range of issues, from the basic history of the Armenian Genocide to how its denial set into motion a bloody cycle of genocide that haunts us to this day.

MEDIA RELATIONS

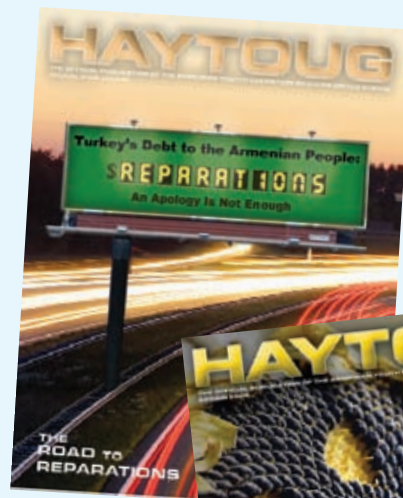
This fiscal year proved to be noteworthy in terms of AYF media outreach and publicity. By writing and distributing over 40 press releases and sending media kits to news outlets regarding our various activities, the AYF received substantial coverage throughout the year in both Armenian and non-Armenian news outlets. This included consistent coverage in Asbarez, Horizon TV, The Armenian Weekly, The Armenian Reporter, Oragark, Lradou Armenian TV, Los Angeles Times, Wall Street Journal, Glendale News Press, Pasadena Independent, KABC, KTLA, and various online sources.

Thirty years ago, the AYF Western Region established its official publication, *Haytoug*, as a medium for Armenian American youth to voice their opinions about a wide variety of issues. What initially began as a newsletter eventually evolved into a quarterly magazine with over 100 issues to its name.

Today, with an international following and a distribution network spanning across the United States, the magazine reaches more people than ever before. With its high quality of content and design, it is widely recognized as the leading platform for young Armenians to make their voice heard.

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the AYF was successful in producing an issue each quarterly season covering a wide range of topics. The issues featured original content written by both AYF and non-AYF Armenian youth. In an effort to further reach younger readers and contributors, the *Haytoug* Council also organized a special high school essay contest for Armenian students this year. The winning essay was featured in the Summer '09 issue.

Through the AYF's collaboration with Asbarez and the steady delivery of the *Haytoug* to subscribers, the magazine is now reaching an audience well beyond the membership of the AYF. With every new issue, we are seeing a growth of new subscribers to the *Haytoug* and plan on continuing this trend through further improvement in both the content and distribution of the magazine.



AYF CAMP

The Armenian Youth Federation Summer Camp, established in 1977, provides a one-of-a-kind atmosphere for young Armenians between the ages of nine and sixteen to make new friends, become more acquainted with Armenian history and culture, and participates in a wide array of athletic activities. Each year Armenian youth from all over the United States and Canada make AYF Summer Camp an integral part of their summer agenda.

Over the last several years, the AYF Camp Board has worked to remodel each of the cabins, lodge, kitchen, swimming pool and bathrooms, making the facilities and amenities at camp state of the art. The AYF assisted in these modernizing efforts this year by participating in two Summer Camp Work Weekends. AYF members also volunteered as counselors, lecturers, and directors-in-training during the 2009 AYF Summer Camp season.

This summer, the camp continued to grow in popularity and became home to more than 750 Armenian youth throughout its seven full-week sessions. Campers learned Armenian patriotic songs; heard lectures about history, culture, and current events; practiced Armenian dance; worked together in group activities; and had the opportunity to make new friends and reunite with old ones.

With your continued support AYF Camp will continue to grow as the largest and most prestigious summer camp program in the western United States, focusing on preserving Armenian culture and heritage.



CONFERENCES & SEMINARS

IUSY WORLD CONGRESS

The International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) is the youth counterpart of the Socialist International. It is made up of 143 socialist, social democratic, and labor youth organizations from all over the world. As the largest international student and youth political organization, its purpose is to establish bonds of solidarity between its members and promote the principles of democratic socialism throughout the world.

The IUSY held its annual World Congress in Zacatecas, Mexico in January. As a full-fledged member organization, the AYF participated in the Congress with two delegates: one from the



AYF-Western Region and another from the AYF-South America. The congress provided the Western Region with the opportunity to share with the rest of the world's leading youth organizations its mission and activities, while learning from and networking with them.

AYF TRI-REGIONAL SEMINAR

Three members of the AYF-Western Region participated in the bi-annual AYF Tri-Regional Seminar with the two other regions of the AYF in North America. Held at Camp Kinkora outside of Montreal, Canada on June 11-14, the seminar featured discussions and educational sessions on such pertinent topics as the role of AYF members in the community, foreign policy and Haiti, and the Armenian government's relations with its neighbors.

YOUTH BOARD SYMPOSIUM

The AYF participated in the AYF Youth Board's symposium of youth organizations held on March 29 at the Pacific Community Center in Glendale. The meeting was moderated by Glendale City Clerk Ardashes Kassakhian and was attended by more than 20 Armenian-American youth groups.

The AYF representatives participated fully in the discussions over cultural preservation, political activism, education and social issues facing Armenian youth in Southern California.

While proud of its activities and accomplishments, the AYF is far from satisfied. The future holds many challenges that need to be overcome, both in terms of preserving our culture and defending our nation's interests.

With dangerous steps being taken in Yerevan that threaten to jeopardize international recognition efforts, being more steadfast about the Armenian Genocide and fighting all those who seek to profit from its denial will become even more of a priority for the AYF. Activities concentrated on strengthening the homeland and building a bridge to a more equitable and prosperous Armenia will also be expanded.

In addition, the AYF plans on putting stronger emphasis on communicating our work to the community and general public in the coming fiscal year. Through *Haytoug* Magazine, our AYF website, social networking sites, and public relations efforts, the AYF will strive to have the voice of the Armenian youth reach a much broader audience.

The AYF remains dedicated to serving the community and preparing a new generation of capable and committed youth. We see our boundaries limitless and our responsibilities numerous. With the continued support of our community and the financial assistance of our supporters, we are confident that we can overcome all of the obstacles put before us and forge a new, brighter future.

We are ready to redouble our efforts; we hope you are ready to stand by our side.



Burbank
Varak
Varak@AYFwest.org

Crescenta Valley
Zartonk
Zartonk@AYFwest.org

Fresno
Kevork Chavoush
Kevork.Chavoush@AYFwest.org

Glendale
Roupen
Roupen@AYFwest.org

Hollywood
Musa Dagh
Musa.Dagh@AYFwest.org

Houston
Dro
Dro@AYFwest.org

Las Vegas
Sosse Mayrig
Sosse.Mayrig@AYFwest.org

Montebello
Vahan Cardashian
Vahan.Cardashian@AYFwest.org

Orange County
Ashod Yergat
Ashod.Yergat@AYFwest.org

Pasadena
Nigol Touman
Nigol.Touman@AYFwest.org

Phoenix
Kedashen
Kedashen@AYFwest.org

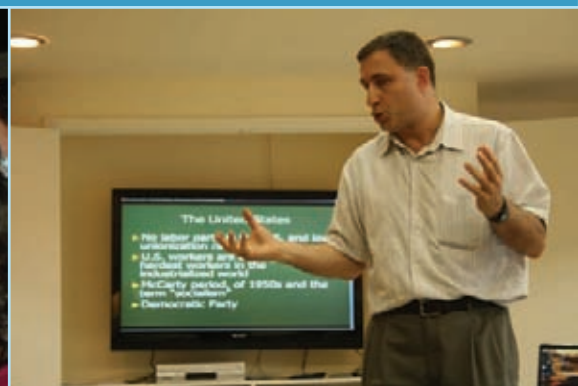
San Fernando Valley
Sardarabad
Sardarabad@AYFwest.org

San Francisco
Rosdom
Rosdom@AYFwest.org

South Bay
Potorig
Potorig@AYFwest.org

"If you want to predict and see the future of a people, look at its youth."

-AYF Founder, General Karekin Njteh



Tel: (818) 507-1933 Fax: (818) 240-3442
104 N. Belmont Street, Suite 206
Glendale, CA 91206
www.AYFwest.org | AYF@AYFwest.org