



AYF

Annual Report



2010 - 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE

EDUCATION

HELPING THE HOMELAND

COMMUNITY SERVICE

ACTIVISM

CAMARADERIE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AYF AT A GLANCE

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

1

2

3

4

5

7

8

9

11

The Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) strives to advance the goals of a free, independent and united Armenia. Toward these ends, the AYF is dedicated to the principles of freedom, democracy, self-determination, economic justice, and social equality.

The AYF is committed to the moral, social and intellectual advancement of Armenian youth in order that they may gain a better understanding of themselves. It is guided in these aims through its five long standing pillars of Political, Cultural, Educational, Athletic, and Social activity.

With a legacy of over seventy-eight years of community involvement and organizational structures in over 17 regions around the world, the AYF stands prepared to play a leading role in the preservation and advancement of the Armenian nation.

MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE

The 2010 – 2011 fiscal year was marked by continuous expansion of programs and activities of the Armenian Youth Federation. From Hai Tad activism to fundraising efforts, the year signified a new height for the organization, proving that the Armenian youth possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to move the nation forward.

During the course of the year, the AYF focused on further developing its programs in Armenia and Artsakh and serving more youth in the homeland. Locally, the outreach efforts were expanded to strengthen the ties with various youth, public and human rights organizations. Similarly, new bridges were built with the organization's alumni and cultural events were organized to bring together various segments of the community.

The Armenian Youth Federation remains committed to the political, intellectual, and educational advancement of the Armenian youth. In the spirit of accountability, we are offering this report to our supporters and the public at large with hopes that their input and commitment to our cause will further strengthen the AYF and our nation. We thank you for your trust and confidence in our organization.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'David Arakelyan', with a stylized, overlapping 'A' and 'Y'.

David Arakelyan
Chairperson
Armenian Youth Federation-Western US



"We're proud of our young Armenian-American intellectuals and look forward to their many accomplishments in both the Armenian and global community as they make their way through college and beyond."

-Gev Iskajyan, Montebello "Vahan Cardashian"

EDUCATION

The Cornerstone of Progress

The AYF's fiscal year began with a highly acclaimed public lecture featuring **Dr. Richard Hovannisian** on the "Lessons of the First Republic." Dr. Hovannisian spoke to a capacity crowd in Hollywood about the **experiences and achievements of the Armenian Republic of 1918-1921**. He brought the audience up to the present, drawing lessons and making lucid comparisons between the governments of Armenia then and the successive administrations in Yerevan since 1991.

In December, the AYF hosted a special **leadership workshop** for high school students in conjunction with the Glendale Unified School District. Over **8 high schools** (both private and public) participated in the event which offered skills-based workshops by experts on techniques for leading campus initiatives and activities. AYF members also delivered over **25 individual presentations** to college and high school Armenian clubs throughout the year.

This year also saw the second installment of the **"Karekin Njdeh" Future Leaders Program**, an intensive 8-week program for students seeking to gain experience in community activism. Nairi Bagramian was selected as this year's intern, through which she received bi-weekly lectures on a range of community issues. She also conducted her own specially tailored research project on the politics of Familial Mediterranean Fever, a disease which largely affects people of Armenian descent.

In addition, the theme of this year's **Annual Educational Seminar** was **"Artsakh: Past, Present and Future."** Participants had the privilege to hear lectures by individuals directly involved in the liberation struggle. The AYF also continued its support of higher education by giving out **\$3000 in assistance** to Armenian high school and college students through the **"Nanor Krikorian" Memorial Scholarship**.

HELPING THE HOMELAND

Building Bridges to Armenia

There is no greater calling for this generation than **strengthening Armenia's statehood, security and prosperity**. The AYF works year-round, both on a local and central level, to build bridges with the homeland and make a tangible contribution to its development.

Our flagship program in this regard is **Youth Corps**, a 6-week summer program where volunteers from the Diaspora serve as camp counselors for underprivileged youth in Armenia and Artsakh.

This year, the program expanded from its base in Gyumri to add **3 additional camps in Stepanakert, Shushi and Broshyan**. **Twenty-five volunteers** served as counselors for **600 of the neediest children in these regions**, providing them with daily meals, arts and crafts exercises, games, educational lectures, song practices, and group discussions.

The overflow capacity at each camp and high rate of local demand showed how successful the volunteers were in touching the lives of the young campers. In turn, for the participants involved, working with Armenia's youth directly on the ground helped them build a stronger bond with the future of their homeland.

Earlier in the year, AYF members also mobilized the community around a **holiday clothing drive** which **secured over 5000 pounds** of clothing, bedding and household supplies for villages throughout Armenia, Artsakh and Javakhk.

In April, the Orange County AYF held its **"Reaching Beyond Ruins" benefit photo exhibit** dedicated to those who lost their lives in the tragic 1988 Spitak earthquake. All proceeds from the event went to aid those in Gyumri, Spitak and neighboring regions still affected by the earthquake.

Other activities dedicated to the homeland included **financial donations** to socio-economic projects in Armenia and participation in the celebration of Armenia's National Armed Forces Day.

"These kids are not only having a good time at camp for a couple weeks, then going home to their usual lives. They are molding into better, more open-minded, and Hayrenaser versions of themselves."
-Arpa Hatzbanian, Crescenta Valley "Zartok"





*"It's important for us to have our finger on the pulse of Armenians so we, as an organization, can serve their needs and help fight their fights."
-Maria Maadanian, Hollywood "Musa Dagh"*

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Working for the Greater Good

Serving the community on a grassroots level is the cornerstone of the AYF's mission. Our programs and activities are geared toward **making a difference on both a local and global level**, while instilling an active passion for service and volunteerism within the youth.

Here in Los Angeles, the AYF has worked since 2003 to ensure that the officially designated district of **Little Armenia** remain clean and taken care of. Under the banner of **revitalizing our "Home Away from Home"**, hundreds of Armenian youth flooded the streets of this densely populated district of East Hollywood, **picking up trash, planting trees and removing graffiti**. The annual effort was carried out this year in conjunction with City Council President Eric Garcetti and State Assemblyman Kevin de Leon, as well as local community organizations and student groups.

The City of Los Angeles Sanitation Department estimates that nearly **30,000 pounds of trash have been removed** from the streets of Hollywood as a result of the youth's effort.

This year also saw the launch of an ambitious new tutoring program for low-income high school students in Glendale. Working in conjunction with the ANC of Glendale, the AYF introduced a pilot run of the **"Path to College" Tutoring Program** in May, offering students free tutoring in Math, Science and English, 3 days a week. Given its success, the project was adopted as a staple initiative and carried forward into the Winter 2011 season.

Another project launched in Glendale this year was the **Community Health Fair** in May which provided free medical screenings and services to the uninsured. Community members young and old took advantage of free screenings for blood pressure, hearing, blood glucose, scoliosis and vision. The AYF also participated in the **Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry's "Walk of Life."**

*"It is clear that as the leading youth organization in our region, we must work harder to serve the needs of our communities locally and to strengthen our ties with our communities in Armenia."
-Arek Santikian, Hollywood "Musa Dagh"*



"I'm here to support my Armenian friends because genocide is not just an Armenian issue, it's a human rights issue and everyone deserves justice."
-Javier Hernandez, Human Rights Supporter

*"We must [keep pushing this movement forward] because we hold the pen that writes history, and the ink that floods that pen is our collective strength, our perseverance, and our relentless refusal to back down."
-Razmig Sarkissian, Montebello "Vahan Cardashian"*

ACTIVISM

Tomorrow's Leaders Today

Media coverage of the AYF's Hai Tad work **reached unprecedented levels** this year, both within and outside the month of April.

The year began with the **"Yes, It's Genocide" Campaign**, a collaborative effort between the AYF, ANCA, and System of a Down's **Serj Tankian**. Supporters utilized action alerts, music downloads, video contests, and community presentations to call on president Obama to honor his pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Several outlets covered the initiative, including NBC's "Last Call with Carson Daly" and AOL's "Noisecreep" music site.

When word leaked out later in the year that Lakers basketball star **Kobe Bryant** signed a deal to be the "global ambassador" for **Turkish Airlines**—a company owned in large part by the Turkish government—the youth channeled the community's anger into concerted action. AYF representatives were interviewed by **local and national media**, with the controversy gaining traction on ESPN.com, CNN, UPI, USA Today, Sports Illustrated, Huffington Post, LA Weekly, NPR, and countless other outlets.

This barrage of coverage over Kobe's airline deal came on the eve of a vote expected on **House Resolution 252**, the Armenian Genocide Resolution. AYF members utilized the story to **raise awareness** about the Armenian Genocide and **push for passage** of the resolution. Members also **volunteered in large numbers** for phone banking in support of the legislation.

In the month of April, the AYF took a lead role in organizing a demonstration urging President Obama to keep his campaign promise and recognize the Genocide. Over **1500 demonstrators** were joined by Tankian in front of the fundraising dinner where Obama was speaking.

The protest attracted a **broad range of coverage** from local and national media outlets, with most reporters outlining the facts of the Genocide and **Obama's clear reneging** of his campaign promise to recognize it.

With April 24 falling on Easter Sunday, the AYF this year decided to hold a large-scale community rally in Glendale one week prior to the day of commemoration. Dubbed **"One Voice, One Cause,"** the rally brought together hundreds of Armenians for an evening commemorating the **survival, growth and rebirth** of the Armenian nation. The event was filled with musical performances and messages highlighting the penchant of Armenians to thrive and persevere even in the face of near annihilation.

Finally, the annual **April 24 Protest** in front of the Turkish Consulate attracted a **crowd of over 5000**, forcing the LAPD to close down a portion of Wilshire Blvd. to make way for the mass demonstration. The message delivered that day was one of unity and resilience in pursuit of proper restitution from Turkey for its unrepentant crime.

CAMARADERIE

Creating Connections

Bringing youth together and promoting Armenian culture is part and parcel of the AYF's mission. Only through **unity and interaction** can the potential of the community be harnessed to move our cause forward. On both a local and central level, various events were organized this year with this purpose in mind.

Early in the year, an AYF bar night was held in Hollywood to raise money for the production of an **Asbarez iPhone App**. Proceeds from the high turnout event helped cover the costs of hiring a developer for the app, which successfully launched in July.

Annual gatherings such as the **Weekend on Ice** at AYF Camp and the **AYF Anniversary Dinner Dance** also proved to be continuing successes, with both members and non-members gathering to celebrate and enjoy themselves.

The highlight of the year, however, was the AYF's one-night only concert in downtown Los Angeles featuring legendary singer-songwriter **Ruben Hakhverdyan**. The memorable night took place before an audience of nearly **2000 fans**, all of whom were captivated by not only Hakhverdyan's beautiful music but the memories and stories that lie beneath them.

Capping off the year was a special **AYF Alumni Weekend** held at AYF Camp in August. More than **100 members and alumni** took part in the weekend whose purpose was to relive the days of AYF past, share ideas, and support the organization's ongoing work. Participants enjoyed traditional AYF Camp activities such as Steal the Bacon and Butt Volleyball, as well as a Saturday night khrahjank consisting of traditional Armenian food, classical melodies, and intermingling between the generations.



"Promoting Armenian culture within the Diaspora is a responsibility of the Armenian Youth Federation."

-Caspar Jivalagian, Hollywood "Musa Dagh"

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Spreading the Message



“The AYF believes in the vital role public relations plays in the life of a community organization. As such, we work throughout the year to engage the public on the collective issues that define our mission and guide our agenda.”
- Allen Yekikian, AYF Central Executive

The 2010-2011 year marked significant growth for the AYF in terms of public relations. Through a more diversified and proactive approach, the organization was able to attract an unprecedented level of **local and national media coverage**, making the AYF a **sought after source** for commentary on developments within the Armenian community.

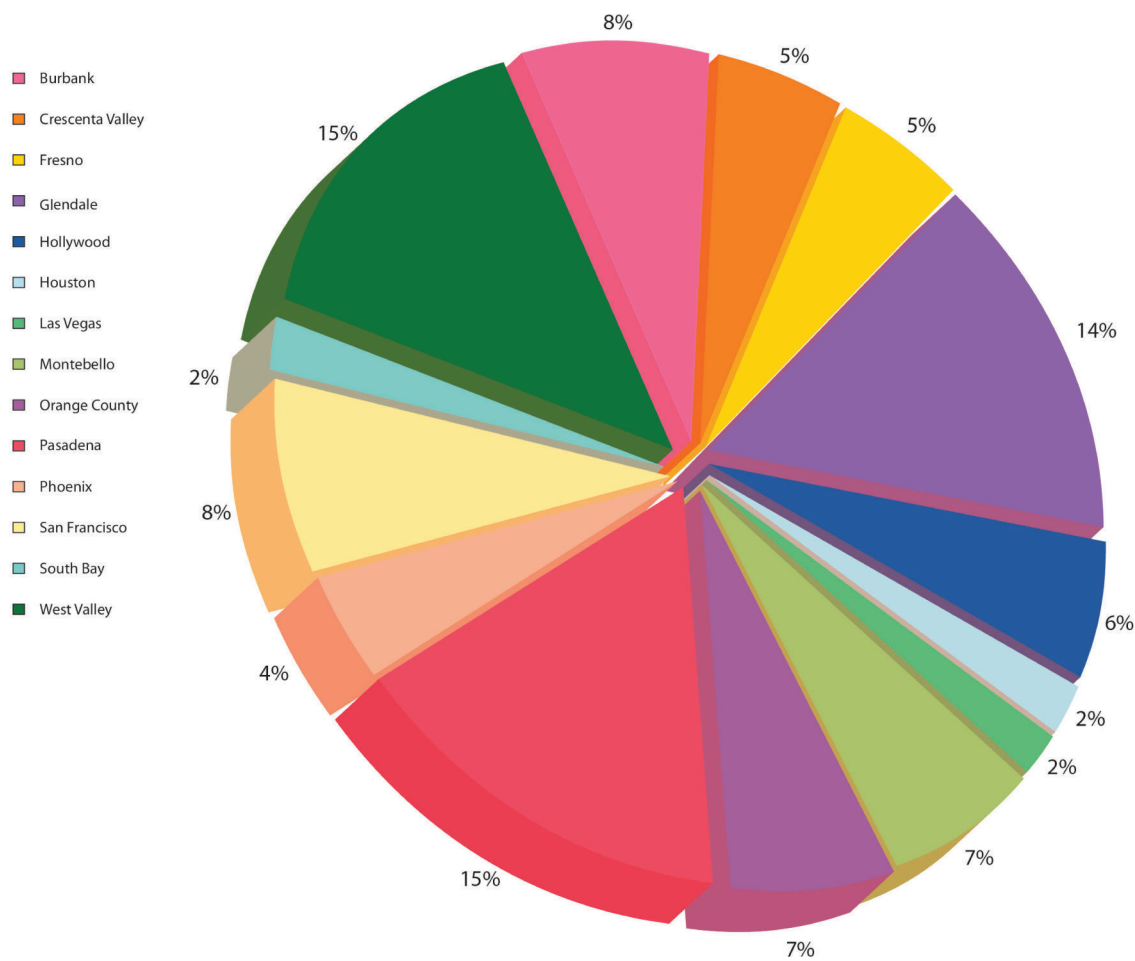
Members also worked through the PR/Marketing Council to increase the presence of the AYF in social media and the web. The council produced over **100 blogs, articles, videos and press releases** during the course of the year, informing the community about what was happening on the ground almost as it occurred.

Publication of the AYF’s **Haytoug Magazine** also provided an added platform for the youth to make their voice heard. Issues dealt with such matters as socioeconomic injustice in Armenia, Javakhk, the Rwandan genocide, young Armenian artists, Diasporan history, the legal response to the Armenian Genocide, and Artsakh.

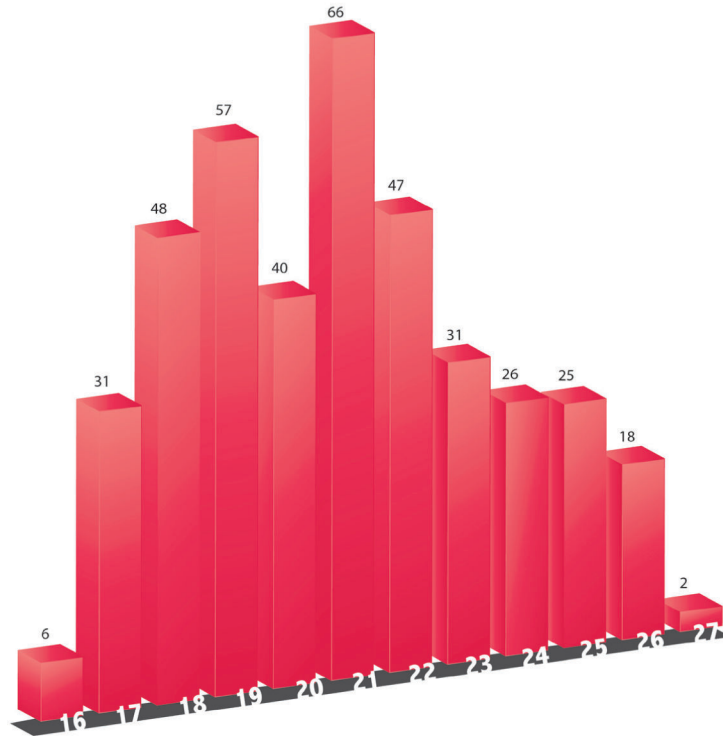
AYF AT A GLANCE

Not surprisingly, the AYF-Western US has its highest number of members in the Los Angeles area, particularly Glendale, Pasadena and San Fernando Valley. With one of the highest concentrations of Armenians outside of Armenia, the AYF places great emphasis on **harnessing the potential** of this diverse and **important Diasporan community**. However, we also maintain vibrant chapters in more distant, yet **growing regions**, such as Houston, Phoenix, Las Vegas, San Francisco, and Fresno.

AYF CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP



AYF AGE BREAKDOWN

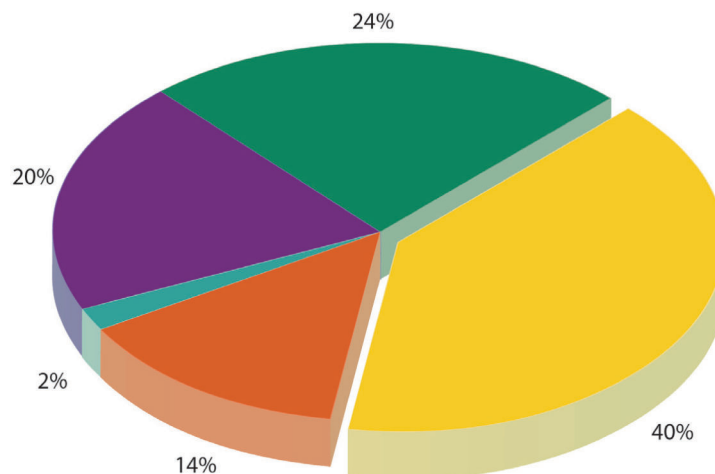


The youthful nature of the AYF is reflected in its demographics, with the majority of members being in their early twenties or late teens. This increasingly **youth-based organization** has made it a point over recent years to expand its scope of activity and community presence. Rather than fall into the stereotype of apathy and disenchantment, the AYF stands as a champion of the **timeless revolutionary spirit** latent within youth.

As seen in the pie chart of AYF activity, the organization's key activities largely fall under the pillar of "**political**" **activity**. This includes actions geared toward justice for the **Genocide, Artsakh, Javakhk, human rights**, assistance for **Armenia**, and civic engagement on local Armenian **community concerns**. This activism is coupled with a healthy array of educational activities, cultural events, and social gatherings.

AYF ACTIVITY

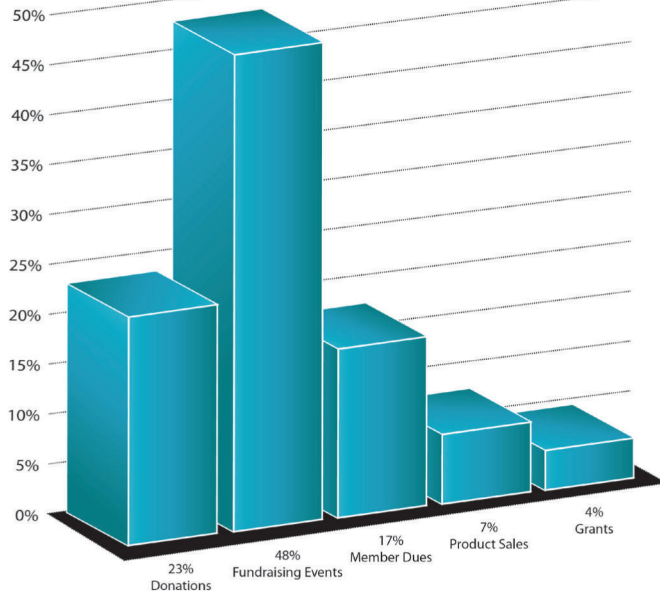
Political Cultural Athletic Social Educational



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Financial support for the AYF's activity does not come from a wealthy benefactor, business or government entity. Our funding comes directly from the community. We pride ourselves on being grassroots-based and beholden to no one but the public we serve.

PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET BY INCOME SOURCE



With a permanent staff of only two, the work of the AYF is carried out annually by hundreds of volunteers dedicating their time and energy for the betterment of their community. Our activism springs from an undying commitment to the future of the Armenian Cause and nation; a commitment similarly held by our donors and supporters.

If you share this commitment and would like to translate it into action on a larger and more effective scale, we ask you to consider making a tax-deductible donation to the AYF today. Your contribution will immediately help enhance our:

- Youth Corps Program in Armenia
- Nanor Krikorian Scholarship
- "Path to College" Tutoring Program
- Garo Madenlian Public Affairs Office
- Haytoug Magazine

Simply make a check payable to AYF and send it to:

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

-AYF Founder, General Karekin Njdeh

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