

*Education Committee  
AAA of San Jose*

*Mission Statement*

Dedicated to providing financial assistance to Assyrian students in less fortunate regions who demonstrate merit and need in achieving their higher education goals.

*In this issue...*

Program Overview	1
Star Student - 2006	3
Travel Journal	4
Program Supporters	5
Fellow of the Year	6
Believe in the Vision	8



## Program Overview

Talented Assyrian students worldwide are not pursuing their educational goals due to financial hardship. Recognizing this fact was the catalyst for establishing the Education Committee at the Assyrian American Association of San Jose. In summer of 2005, Marcel Josephson and Yolanda Bebla established the foundation for this committee. In a few short months, Ramin Daniels joined the group and continued expanding the vision for the program. In November of 2006, Mariana Yadgar also joined, bringing with her innovative ideas.



*L to R: Ramin Daniels, Yolanda Bebla, Mariana Yadgar, Marcel Josephson (San Jose)*

### *Republic of Georgia*

As Bay Area Assyrians may know, Father Benyamin Bethyadgar (Fr. Benny) of the Assyrian-Chaldean Catholic Mission in Georgia, visits San Jose annually. The expansion of this program to Georgia required a local representative who was familiar with the community, was trustworthy and had the means to establish a partnership. Given his track record in the past decade, we approached Fr. Benny and asked for his assistance. As it turned out, his Mission in Georgia was already supporting a few students, but in a very limited capacity. Formalizing an independent committee to work with us would enhance the support available to local Assyrian students.



*Dalila Arzumanyan (Armenia)*

Upon his return to Georgia in the Fall of 2005, Fr. Benny identified ideal individuals to administer this program and we formally established the Education Committee in Georgia.



*L to R: Lena Adamov, Giuli Gulua, Diana Bit-Vardi, Olga Bid-Babik (Georgia)*

Mrs. Diana Bit-Vardi and Mrs. Olga Bid-Babik, both Professors of Russian Literature, along with Ms. Giuli Gulua, graciously accepted the request to volunteer

*Continued on page 2*

## Program Overview *continued from p. 1*



*Helen Tasoeva in State University's building (Georgia)*

*“Lena Tasoeva passed her college entrance exam in September of 2006 with a high enough score, earning her a 30% grant towards her college tuition!”*



*Tsira Aghakhanova with Russian Language & Literature Instructor (Georgia)*

their time in this program. We are honored to work with such highly qualified and professional individual who care so deeply about our nation. They are the backbone of this program in Georgia and work tirelessly to ensure that it is administered according to the established guidelines.

Since its inception, the program has supported six high school students in after school group tutoring, helping prepare for their college entrance exams. Additionally, one high school senior, Lena Tasoeva, was put through an intensive individual tutoring program. We are proud to report that Lena passed her entrance exam in September of 2006 with a high score, earning a 30% grant towards her college tuition! The program continues to support Lena in the balance of her tuition costs at the Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University.

In summer of 2006, during their trip to Georgia, Marcel and Ramin met with many local Assyrian representatives, including David Adamova, Vice President of the Assyrian National Congress in Georgia. Through him, they learned of another Assyrian student who was preparing to take her college entrance exam in the town of Batumi. Irina Khavshamba indeed passed her exams in the Fall and was formally admitted to our program. She is now studying at the University of Batumi and her tuition is being covered by this program.

The group tutoring continues in the 2007 academic year under the guidance of Mrs. Bit-Vardi and Mrs. Bit- Babik and we look forward to more of our students earning admission to college next fall!

### **Armenia**

In Armenia, Marcel and Ramin met with local Assyrians, including Mr. Arsen Mikhaylov, president of The Assyrian Association of Armenia, and Miss Dalila

Arzoumanyan, Secretary of the Association.

A significant amount of their time was devoted to meeting with young Assyrians, researching and understanding their needs. One common factor noted in all the Assyrians, young and old, was their Assyrian pride! No matter what the living and financial conditions, they were proud to be Assyrian and displayed it in their classrooms, offices and activities.

Having become acquainted with Miss Dalila Arzoumanyan, they were impressed with her dedication to the Assyrian community. Responding to their request, she graciously accepted to work on this program with us and serve as the local representative of the Education Committee in Armenia.

*Continued on page 3*



*L to R: Olya Givorgizova, Lyusya Mikhaylova, Alyona Chichyan, Oksanna Petrova, Anush Mirzoyan, Juna Simonova, Luiza Mikhaylova, Liana Ivanova, Marianna Aleksanova. Back: Edgar Piroev & Sahak Avdishyan (Armenia)*

**Program Overview** *continued from p. 2*

Since summer of 2006, Dalila has single handedly managed this program. She has identified the students, validated their eligibility and needs, coordinated instructors for the tutoring program and has been a liaison between our San Jose group, the students and universities. Her meticulous record keeping, reporting and follow through have made her an invaluable asset to this group.



*Sarrah Masolova & George Bijamov with Georgian Language & Literature Instructor (Georgia)*



*Luiza Mikhaylova with History Instructor (Armenia)*

In the 2007 academic year, the program in Armenia is supporting eight students currently attending college and four high school students in the tutoring program.

Collectively this program has impacted the lives of twenty one young Assyrian students thus far. Supported by generous donations from Assyrians living mainly in the Bay Area, we have successfully implemented the program in both countries and hope to expand it in upcoming years.

**Student Summary**

The following is a high level overview of the student count by category and country.

	Group Program	Ind. Program	College
Georgia	5	1	2
Armenia		5	8

**Assyrian Star Student - 2006**

Congratulations to Lilit Ionanova of Yerevan! She is our Assyrian Star Student 2006! Lilit passed her entrance exam with a high score, earning her a *full scholarship* at Yerevan State University! An exemplary student, Lilit is currently majoring in Philology (study of language, literature / comparative linguistics). As recognition for her achievements, the program awards her 50% of her tuition as a cash bonus.



*Lilit Ionanova (Armenia)*

*“Lilit passed her entrance exam with a high score, earning her a full scholarship...”*

**History of Assyrians in Armenia & Georgia – Trivia**

**Q** – Name a prominent Assyrian journal published in Georgia during the early 1900’s.

**A** – Kokhva-d-Maddenkha (The Star of East) was published in Tbilisi between 1922 – 1927.

**Q** – Name one famous Assyrian nationalist from Tbilisi in the early 1900’s.

**A** – Freidoun Atouria (Bet-Avraham) lived in Tbilisi.

## Travel Journal

In June 2006, Marcel Josephson and Ramin Daniels traveled to the Republic of Georgia and Armenia. Upon their return, Marcel compiled a report entitled **“A Trip to Armenia and Georgia - An Assessment Of Post-Soviet Socio-Economic Conditions And Needs Of Assyrians Living In Caucasus Region”**. He presented his findings and recommendations at the AAA of San Jose, the Assyrian National Convention in Chicago and The Berkeley Foundation. The reports and personal accounts of his experience have raised awareness, motivated action and moved many of those in the audience. Additionally, Ramin made the same presentation to the Executive Committee of the Assyrian Aid Society of America. The following are a few excerpts from Marcel’s travel journal.



*Second grade Assyrian language class in Dvin*

### ARMENIA

“In Dvin, we visited the village school (Pushkin) which has 360 students. State sponsors the teaching of Assyrian language in the school curriculum. We attended a second grade Assyrian language class. Students were phenomenal and very energetic. They did two plays for us in Assyrian (one on Assyrian alphabet and one with nationalistic theme).”



*School conditions in Arzni*

“School building is in very poor condition. The roof is leaking and they do not have heat in the winter. Government’s budget is limited and they have to prioritize. Parents have to send in logs or other form of fuel to keep the classes warm. ...we were told that the leakage is not very important because they can put buckets in upside-down orientation on the roof to prevent most of the leaks.”

“We visited Arzni on Thursday, June 1, 2006. ...We visited the village school which has a total of 370 students of which 160 are Assyrian. The Assyrian language is not taught in this school. But their assembly hall had two paintings hanging on the wall; both were Assyrian symbols. A piano with a few broken keys is sitting on the stage. But it is tuned very precisely.”



*Paintings on school assembly hall walls in Arzni*



“We visited Rabi Taisa (Taia) Muradova, a retired Russian language teacher and an outstanding woman at her home in Koylasar. Here, I really got a grasp of how life was like during the soviet. Her furniture, bookshelf, hutch, buffet and many other things told a lot of stories. She served fresh strawberries, chocolates, water and more importantly, hosted us with her talents and beautiful sprit. I loved this woman. It was her birthday and one of her sons called from Russia.”

### GEORGIA

“What impressed me was that Fr. Benny has instilled in these individuals that money coming from San Jose for education has not grown on trees. This is the donation of Assyrian immigrants to the US who work very hard to survive, but yet are attentive to the needs of other fellow Assyrians in other parts of the world.”

“Thursday, June 8, 2006 was a really busy day for us in Georgia. We visited Kanda (30km west of Tbilisi), Gardabani (40km east of Tbilisi). We also met with the board of directors of the Assyrian National Congress of Georgia. Our car between two villages stopped working when switched from propane to gasoline. We pushed it as hard as we could; it did not work. It finally got towed and the engine started again”.



*Assyrian Youth soccer team in Tbilisi, Georgia*

## The Lifeline of the Education Program

### *PLATINUM CIRCLE \$1000+*

Assyrian Aid Society of America	\$2,500	November 10, 2006
Anonymous (check # 3075)	\$1,000	March 7, 2006
Anonymous (check #2540)	\$1,000	September 28, 2006

### *GOLD CIRCLE \$500 - \$999*

Anonymous (check #10014)	\$700	February 25, 2006
Marcel Josephson	\$600	February 4, 2006
Emil & Yolanda Bebla	\$600	February 14, 2006
George & Daisy Zaia	\$600	February 15, 2006
Raman MirzaPour	\$600	December 13, 2006
Anonymous (check #1721)	\$500	December 6, 2006
Bell Moradkhan	\$500	December 17, 2006

### *SILVER CIRCLE \$200 - \$499*

Anonymous (check #101)	\$300	December 10, 2006
Anonymous (check #279)	\$250	March 3, 2006
George Ab-Basteh	\$250	September 23, 2006
Yosep Betkolia	\$200	December 15, 2006
Annabelle Daniel	\$250	October 7, 2006
Mloan & Rubina Amrikhas	\$250	November 6, 2006
Agnes Dexter	\$250	November 6, 2006
Anonymous (check #2078)	\$200	March 6, 2006
Anonymous (check #2351)	\$200	March 13, 2006
Alex Isaac	\$200	November 28, 2006
Emanoel & Rachelle Daryoush	\$200	November 29, 2006

### *BRONZE CIRCLE \$1 - \$199*

Anonymous (check #2018)	\$150	November 28, 2006
Anonymous (check #3997)	\$150	December 9, 2006
Anonymous (check #1147)	\$120	October 26, 2006
Anonymous (check #5328)	\$100	February 28, 2006
Anonymous (check #1698)	\$100	March 1, 2006
Rochelle Yousefian	\$100	March 2, 2006
Anonymous (check #428)	\$100	November 15, 2006
Mona Malek	\$100	November 23, 2006
Yosep Betkolia	\$200	December 15, 2006
Cardelia Daniel	\$100	December 15, 2006
Anonymous (cash)	\$50	February 22, 2006
Louise Bet-Yadegar	\$50	February 26, 2006
Youbert & Carmen Valadio	\$50	March 1, 2006
Anonymous (check #1207)	\$50	December 9, 2006
Anonymous (check #5516)	\$50	December 11, 2006

*Do you believe that  
you can change  
the future?*

*These fellow  
Assyrians do.*

## ***Fellow of the Year - 2006***

The response from our community and the supporters of this program has been remarkable. Many have supported the program financially. Many have given us words of praise and offered their assistance.

In selecting a Fellow of the Year, we had to consider more than the monetary contribution factor. We looked to identify an individual who had taken this program to heart and had become personally involved in helping us meet our goals.

This year we were in the fortunate position of having multiple individuals who deserved this honor. Ultimately, we needed to select only one who truly stood out in his dedication to this program. It is our pleasure to name Mr. Mloan Amrikhas as our Fellow of the Year!

Mr. Amrikhas has been an invaluable supporter. He has taken the time to share this program with his sphere of influence,

has raised financial support for the program and taken a sincere interest in the progress that is being made.

Although he has not formally joined our team, he has become an unofficial good will ambassador of the program. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank him for his sincerity and dedication and honor him as our Fellow of the Year 2006!



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*... we were in the fortunate position of having multiple individuals who deserved this honor.*

## **Student Eligibility Criteria**

All students admitted to the program must meet the following criteria to enter and stay in the program:

- Having been born of at least one Assyrian parent
- Attending a state university
- Completing at least one-fifth of the program of studies each year
- Maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher (only one semester with GPA lower than 3.0 is allowed)
- Performing 60 hours of community service during summer / while at school. Work should be associated with well being of local Assyrian community.

## **With Gratitude**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the individual and organizations who have supported this effort. Without their generosity the dreams of many young Assyrians would remain unfulfilled.

The financial support coupled with the volunteer efforts being put forth in San Jose, Georgia and Armenia are helping creating a better future for young Assyrians students and building a brighter future for our nation.

Thank you for believing that together we can make a difference and bring about positive change! Without your generous support, this program would not be possible.

## Program Participants

*Would these deserving students have the opportunity to further their education without this program and your help?*

	<i>Group Tutoring</i>	<i>Individual Tutoring (last high school year)</i>	<i>College</i>
<b>GEORGIA</b>	Marianna Sonkhyanz Levan Muradov Diana Ananova Sarra Masolova George Bijamov	Tsira Aghakhanova	Helen Tasoeva Irina Khoshamba
<b>ARMENIA</b>		Sahak Avdishyan Olya Givargizoya Arsen Mikhayloya Juna Simonova Luiza Mikhaylova	Oksanna Petrova Alyona Chichyan Edgar Piroev Lilit Ionanova Anush Mirzoyan Liana Ivanova Marianna Aleksanova Lyusya Mikhaylova

*Aren't you proud of making a difference?*



*Luiza Mikhaylova with History Instructor (Armenia)*



*Tsira Aghakhanova with Georgian Language & Literature Instructor (Georgia)*



*Tsira Aghakhanova with IQ instructor (Georgia)*



*Juna Simonova with English Instructor (Armenia)*

*Education Committee*

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*Strengthening Our  
Nation. One  
Student at a Time*



## Believe in the Vision

*ܝܘܠܦܢܐ*  
**YOULPANA**

Do you believe that you can change the future? We do. This program is an exemplary sample of how coming together as Assyrians, without regard to denomination, political affiliation or social association, we can build a brighter future for our young Assyrians and our nation as a whole. We hope that reading about this program has inspired you to take action.

The long-term vision for this program is enormous and we are only at the tip of the iceberg. With your help, this program can grow and expand to other countries where we can further assist Assyrian students in bringing their dreams to fruition. Please, if you truly believe that together we can make a difference, call or e-mail us today with your support. You may also send in the sponsor form below along with your contribution. Your financial support is the lifeline of the program. Every contribution, no matter what the amount, is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your support.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks payable to AAA of San Jose – Education Committee  
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*AAA of San Jose*

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