



# The Manoogian Voice

Southfield, Michigan

December 2016

A.G.B.U. Alex & Marie Manoogian School

## Tribute

October 5, 2016 was indeed a sad and shocking day at the A.G.B.U. Alex and Marie Manoogian School. Long-time teacher and administrator, Dyana Kezelian, went unexpectedly and prematurely to her eternal resting place. High School Principal Dr. Hoses Torossian, High and Middle School Head Teachers Mrs. Judy Kadri and Mrs. Sonia Kalfayan, School Counselor Mrs. Joanna Holsinger, and Faculty gathered the Elementary, Middle, and High School students in separate assemblies and broke the news of Ms. Kezelian's passing. Very Rev. Fr. Aren Jebejian, Pastor of St. John Armenian Church, and Rev. Fr. Hrant Kevorkian, Pastor of St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church, consoled grieving students, teachers, and staff. A special memorial service for current upper school students was held at St. John, where Father Aren offered comforting words and shared vignettes from his frequent hospital visits. He mentioned how much Ms. Kezelian wanted to be present to greet the students on the first day of school on September 6, 2016, but her doctors thought otherwise. Father Aren also remarked how her eyes opened wide and lit up



radiantly when he would tell her about his periodic visits with students at the school. A multitude of students, past and present, alumni, and parents attended the wake, funeral, burial, and the memorial lunch in memory of Ms. Kezelian.

Ms. Kezelian began teaching at the Manoogian School in 1976 and became a fixture as the second grade teacher until her ascent to the position of Principal of Pre-K, Elementary, and Middle School in 2005. Her forty-two year tenure of commitment and dedication to the school

remains unparalleled. She was the pillar of the school and knew its every nook and cranny. Ms. Kezelian embodied the best qualities of an educator. She was full of love, happiness, and joy, knowing how to cajole and motivate students and how to communicate effectively with parents. She left an indelible impression upon her students who cherished her presence and now cherish her memory.

Mrs. Sonia Kalfayan, Ms. Kezelian's long-time colleague, aide, and confidant, has been selected by the Manoogian School Board of Education to serve as Acting Principal. Ms. Kezelian would be pleased with the smooth transition that has transpired. The Manoogian School is on sound footing and has a bright future, thanks in large part to the selfless devotion of Ms. Kezelian, who sacrificed her personal life and comfort for the benefit and well-being of the school. She faithfully carried forth the vision established by the school's illustrious benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. Alex and Marie Manoogian. Ms. Kezelian will be sorely missed, but her memory will remain in the minds, hearts, and souls of all those she touched.

## The President and Vice President of the American University of Armenia Visit Michigan

In the month of November, there was great excitement in the Detroit Armenian community involving the A.G.B.U. Detroit Chapter and the A.G.B.U. Alex and Marie Manoogian School.

Participating in the 89th General Assembly of the A.G.B.U. in New York City were the President and Vice President of the American University of Armenia (AUA), Dr. Armen Kureghian and Mr. Ashot Ghazaryan. The A.G.B.U. is the founder and principal supporter of the AUA. Taking advantage of the situation, Dr. Nadya Sarafian, the Chairwoman of the

A.G.B.U. Detroit Chapter and the past Principal of the A.G.B.U. Manoogian School, invited the AUA officials to Michigan.

Architect Osep and psychologist/pedagogue Dr. Nadya Sarafian have been selflessly serving the Detroit Armenian community since 1980. During her distinguished twenty-year tenure as Principal, Dr. Sarafian wisely guided the school toward financial solvency by turning it into a charter school, while maintaining its Armenian curriculum and cultural programs. Today, the Manoogian School is considered one of

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# NEW FACULTY

**Suzanne Collins** is thrilled to be teaching 2nd grade again at Manoogian! She feels so fortunate to be able to return to the same classroom she left eight years ago to raise her children.

She was born in Brooklyn, New York and lived there for a short time until her family moved to Michigan. She is one of four children. She has two younger brothers and a younger sister. Her father was a Marketing Director and her mother was an elementary and Pre-K teacher, which led her to eventually choose teaching as a career.

She graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Communication from Michigan State University and worked as a Brand Development Manager for an advertising and marketing company in Southfield. After three years in the field, she decided to follow her desire to teach and returned to school. She enrolled in the Masters of Arts in Teaching program at Wayne State University and earned her Masters in May 2005. She has been teaching, in one capacity or another whether in the classroom, volunteering, or tutoring, since 2001. Teaching is her calling and she has found her return to the profession to be very fulfilling.

Mrs. Collins is married and has a daughter and son, who are in 3rd and 1st grades, respectively. Outside of school, she enjoys running, exercising, reading, cooking, traveling, and spending time with her family.

**Ronald Thielman** is the new Physical Education/Health teacher, as well as the new soccer coach, whose team went undefeated this season. He will also be teaching Tae Kwan Do after school. He is a graduate of Wayne State University and this is his second year of teaching. He has been involved in physical activity his entire life, particularly training in the martial arts, attaining Black Belts and instructor ranking in a variety of different styles.

Before entering the field of education, he worked for many years in a factory making grinding wheels. Over time, he wanted to do something more with his life, something that would make a difference in people's

lives. That is when he decided to teach Physical Education. He truly believes that people's lives are enhanced through physical activity and lessons can be learned, such as courtesy, integrity, teamwork, cooperation, perseverance, the value of hard work (working towards a goal), and self-control.

Mr. Thielman is looking forward to a great year, having heard such wonderful stories about the students here at Manoogian.

**Alexandra Lacraru** is the new high school math teacher. She graduated from Oakland University this past April with a Bachelor's degree, majoring in Mathematics w/ Secondary Education and minoring in Teaching English as a Second Language. Before beginning her teaching career at Manoogian, she tutored students of all ages and grade levels, from 6th grade to college!

Going back to the beginning of it all, she was born in Romania and moved to the United States when she was almost two years of age. She did not learn much English until she started school, so she knows (and can still recall) the challenge of learning English and trying to manage her way through school, due to the language barrier. Right now, her English is much better than her Romanian, although she is still fluent in Romanian, since it is her primary language at home. Although her immediate family is in the U.S., most of her relatives live in Romania and a few in Italy. She still goes back to Romania to visit, the last time being the summer of 2015.

Her hobbies mainly center around music. She loves finding new songs and looking at music trends to see where and when a new song will be popular based on the country's music chart history. Another hobby is singing, and people have described her voice as being "really good, but unexpected, coming from a person looking like you!" She still thinks she can improve, so she's always practicing and strengthening her vocal range.

**Erick Tracer**, the new high school Social Studies teacher, graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 2009 and has officially been a teacher ever since, although, truth be told, his very first

teaching experience was in high school, where he assisted in running an after-school program, teaching computers to younger middle schoolers.

Prior to coming to Manoogian, he taught in private and public schools. However, probably the most interesting past experience he brings with him is having worked at the Yankee Air Museum in Belleville, MI, which he states, in all frankness, was not nearly as boring as it sounds. The museum specializes in military aviation history, and this provided him the opportunity, not only to deepen his understanding of various eras of U.S. history, but also to handle and inspect some really amazing historical artifacts.

On a more personal note, he is a huge science fiction and fantasy fan, having watched far too many television shows and movies within those genres, and probably read even more books on the same subject! Additionally, he takes great enjoyment out of playing tabletop strategy games, including chess, which he has also had the opportunity to teach to students. Lastly, but not least, he has been happily married for just under 14 years, and he and his wife have one beautiful daughter. ("Mind you, we are probably biased like most parents.")

**Alexandra Bastajian** is the new Pre-K 3 teacher and Director of the Pre-K program at Manoogian. She was born and raised in the Greater Boston Armenian community. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Sociology, and a Master of Elementary Education degree in Leadership, Teaching, and Educational Transformation, both degrees from the University of Massachusetts in Boston. Prior to marrying and moving to Metro Detroit, she taught at the Armenian Sisters' Academy in Lexington, MA and the St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, MA. She has been actively involved in the Youth Build Youth and Community Development Program in Somerville, MA, as well as Homenetmen Boston Scouting/Athletic Organization and the Armenian Youth Federation of America, both in Watertown. Mrs. Bastajian is fluent in Armenian and English, and she loves to play the piano.

# The Visit Michigan

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the best in the Greater Detroit area.

The Sarafians had organized two events on November 1 for the AUA dignitaries. The first was a morning visit and meeting with Manoogian School students, and the other an evening gathering with active members of the Detroit Armenian community. It was evident just how people, young and old, took an abiding interest in the activities and achievements of the AUA.

November first was the first time that a delegation from a university in Armenia had visited the Manoogian School. There was keen interest and curiosity among the High School students; thus, High School Principal Dr. Hosep Torossian decided to invite all students in ninth through twelfth grades to hear the guests speak and watch state-of-the-art videos about the AUA.

Dr. Kureghian and Mr. Ghazaryan gave a comprehensive overview of the history and current status of the American University of Armenia. Dr. Kureghian explained that the rules for acceptance and matriculation at the AUA were the same as for any American university. He mentioned some of the advantages of studying at the AUA, such as the thrill of living in the ancestral homeland and gaining a first-rate education at an affordable price. The students asked numerous questions about the level of education, courses offered, and dormitory life. During the next anticipated class trip to Armenia in 2018, Dr. Torossian promised the students that they would have a chance to visit the AUA and become acquainted first-hand with the daily activities and educational curriculum at the university, and also meet with instructors.

After their meeting with the students, the guests visited several classrooms. They were particularly impressed with the school's modern facilities and scientific laboratories.

In the afternoon, the guests visited Mr. Richard Manoogian at MASCO headquarters, as well as St. John Armenian Church, the Manoogian Museum, and the Mardigian Library.



*AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kureghian, AUA Vice President Ashot Ghazaryan and his wife Anahit with Manoogian High School Principal Dr. Hosep Torossian and Mr. and Mrs. Osep Sarafian*

The evening get-together at the school was well-attended. Dr. Torossian offered welcoming remarks and introduced the guests. Mr. Ashot Ghazaryan was the long-time Director of the A.G.B.U. office in Yerevan, before assuming his current position as the Vice President of the AUA. Dr. Armen Kureghian is the fourth President of the AUA. He is a meritorious professor and tireless researcher in the field of seismology. He has written more than 400 scientific articles for various scholarly journals. The audience had questions regarding courses, degrees, scholarships, etc. Dr. Kureghian pointed out that a degree from the accredited American University of Armenia is accepted anywhere in the United States and that AUA's standards are comparable to major educational institutions in America.

Dr. Torossian thanked Dr. Kureghian and Mr. Ghazaryan for visiting Michigan, and he wished continued success for the AUA. Dr. Torossian had special kudos for the hospitality shown to the guests by the Sarafians.

Dr. Nadya Sarafian stressed the importance of having a high-caliber institution of higher learning in the ancestral homeland. In this regard, she stressed the essential role of the AUA. She also gave thanks to the A.G.B.U. which has sponsored and supported the AUA since its inception. At the conclusion of the gathering, Dr. Torossian invited everyone to a reception where the guests from Armenia talked informally with attendees.

This visit was a worthwhile experience for the community and an unforgettable day for the students at the Manoogian School.



*Joe Hockey, Australia's Ambassador to the U.S., at the Detroit Economic Club. Mr. Hockey (Hokedounian) has Armenian ancestry*



*In the "Spirit of Giving" students donated 12,100 food items to the needy*



*Women in Engineering at General Motors – Renaissance Center, Detroit*



*Sevag Oknayan and Devan Lirato converted a trash can into a fantastic speaker in Mr. Scott's science class. It works folks. Great project-based learning activities.*

# Pre-School Program

This year, our preschool classes participated in a program designed by The National Kidney Foundation of Michigan, called Regie's Rainbow Adventure. This program was developed to educate children on nutrition and physical activity. By relating the colors of fruits and vegetables to the colors of the rainbow, students incorporated healthy eating in a creative way that was easy for them to understand. Regie's Rainbow Adventure is a 7-week nutrition and physical activity program where students follow Regie, the broccoli superhero, to different islands, based on the colors of the rainbow. He meets new fruit and vegetable friends and earns his power stripes by eating healthy and being physically active. Each week, the children traveled with Regie to a new island, read a new story, tried new fruits and vegetables, and took home a healthy recipe to share with their families.



It is a curriculum implemented by teachers in the classroom, providing activities that reinforce literacy, language development, mathematic skills, scientific understanding, creative arts, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical health & development through the series of seven interactive books, The Adventures of Regie Rainbow.

# A.G.B.U. Raises Funds for Rainbow Connection

The students and staff at A.G.B.U. Alex and Marie Manoogian School are raising funds for the Rainbow Connection, an organization that sends families that have been affected by cancer on dream vacations. This is in support of A.G.B.U. senior, Cybelle Bouery, who is fighting lymphoma. Recently, Mr. Steve Scott, high school science teacher at A.G.B.U., showed his support for Cybelle by having her shave his head because he was so impressed with her spirit.



# National Honor Society 2016-17

The Manoogian Chapter of the National Honor Society held its annual induction ceremony on October 26, 2016, in the school library. Nine new students were selected for membership, based on the four pillars of Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Integrity.

<b>12TH GRADE</b> Celine Bouery Cybelle Bouery Jacob Garabedian Sabrina Kesto Narek Shirinyan Armen Vandavelde Robert Zakharian	<b>11TH GRADE</b> Nadiya Borys Rachel Garabedian Raquel Kesto Angela Kirma Talar Malkadjian Carmen Mirachian Alladia Saco Christina Tufenkjian Justin Zaitona	<b>10TH GRADE</b> Wella Abdulmassih Mary Rose Azar Jessica Kastoää Mykyta Mihalkin Kristina Petrus Khrystyna Prokopiv Aida Richardson Nayiri Sagherian	<b>NHS ADVISOR:</b> Joanna Holsinger, Counselor  <b>NHS FACULTY COUNCIL:</b> Lilit Bablounian, Tim Caldwell, Judy Kadri, Adam Novak, Steve Scott
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# America and Me Essay Contest

The eighth graders participated in the Farm bureau Insurance's 48th Annual America & Me Essay contest. Up to 500 words, students were asked to write about his or her personal Michigan hero.

The following students submitted their essay: Elaine Azar, Karine Calukyan, George El-Khoury, Renee Kesto, Andreana Kirma, Adar Moore, and Zoriana Soviak.

The Farm Bureau Insurance judges will pick three essays for first, second, and third places. Our school's first place paper will move on to compete with other Michigan students.

# Pumpkin Painting Competition

October, the month that Charlie Brown awaits the Great Pumpkin. Middle School students in mixed groups of three or four, representing the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, participated in the very first Manoogian School pumpkin painting contest. There was tremendous excitement as all students took to decorating their pumpkins. Winners: First place: A Mummy Pumpkin – Wahaj Abdulmassih, Christian Saco, and Vasyi Kravets; Second place: Angry Bird and Clown – Victoria Clark, Nataliya Havrylyshyn, Zachary Garabedian; Third place: Trump/Hillary – Julia Avram, Veronika Harahuts, Hagop Alajajian



*Visit Manoogian School's Website: [www.manoogian.org](http://www.manoogian.org)*



**A.G.B.U. Alex & Marie Manoogian School**  
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