



The Youth Newsletter

Երիտասարդական Լրագիր

PROVIDED BY THE ARMENIAN YOUTH FEDERATION & HOMENETMEN EASTERN REGION USA

Volume 2, Issue 2

February 2017

Serendipity

By Mari Tikoyan

When I reflect on my time at Javakhk, the first word that comes to mind is serendipity - a fortuitous discovery. While in Yerevan for the summer of 2015, participating in the AYF Internship in Armenia, Javakhk was not on my agenda; but it turned out to be the place I uncovered a lot about myself. Those few days gave me a new appreciation for the strength of the Armenian diaspora.

I was one of the very few interns in the house who had no initial interest to participate in Camp Javakhk and was insistent on staying in Yerevan. I had made so many friends and finally started to feel comfortable in the city. Javakhk was a foreign area to me, and I felt intimidated going to a land where being Armenian is frowned upon. After many weeks of AYF members attempting to persuade me and persistently refusing to participate, I eventually agreed to attend Camp Javakhk three days before it opened.

I stayed in the village of Dzalka, which is the most underdeveloped of all the villages in Javakhk. Dzalka is the type of place where you eat whatever you find in your backyard, where you encounter more livestock than people, where you need to stand in a certain spot in the village to connect to Wi-Fi, and where there is one functioning toilet in a town of 1,000 people. You get the real *kyugh* experience staying in a place like Dzalka.

After a long day of traveling from Yerevan to Dzalka, we began preparing for camp and I was so overwhelmed by all we needed to do. I remember turning to U. Sevan Markosian at this point and saying, "I wish we stayed in Yerevan." She agreed and we both went to bed that night upset.

The next morning, we woke up – still bitter – and head to camp. The second we arrived at the campsite everything changed. Hugs, kisses, and dance performances while the entire village of Dzalka greeted us. Kids fought to see who could hug me the longest and who could kiss my cheeks till they were sore – all while the girls tried to braid my thick, curly hair. I was surrounded by complete strangers, but I had never felt more at home.

Throughout the week, I was able to teach lessons on health, English, Armenian history, songs, and dance – not realizing how much this experience would teach me. I loved seeing how empowered the kids felt after they learned new material. My older village helpers came up to me and asked more questions after each health lesson. The hunger the kids had for education was truly inspiring. I learned to value education and to never take my pristine education in the U.S. for granted. I gained a whole new appreciation for educators too and realized that education truly does have the power to change lives. It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do, but it was honestly so rewarding.

Other than running the camps, we also had the chance to form connections with the local village folk. I grew close to my helper, Gayane. I remember one day we both needed a break, so we decided to leave camp for a little while. While we went on a walk around Dzalka, Gayane started asking me questions about America, how it was living away from my parents, about all the freedom I had, my hopes and aspirations, and about my life experiences. As I answered her questions, I could see her eyes light up with amazement. I then asked her similar questions, to which she replied, "I am seventeen, there is no use in having dreams or aspirations because I need to get married within the next year." That conversation with Gayane was one I will *NEVER* forget. She is someone so special to me because that very conversation sparked my decision to change my career path.

Talking to Gayane made me realize that there are women in this world who have no option but marriage. There are women who will never get a taste of freedom or feel independent. There are women who will be robbed of the opportunity to receive an education, to travel, or to do whatever *they* desire. This made me wonder why I was the lucky one to be born in the U.S. and to have all these opportunities, while there are women like Gayane, who have no option but marriage.

The second I got back to campus for my sophomore year of college, I decided to change my pre-dental path to a more meaningful career. I decided to major in public health and am now on a pre-law track. It's because of Gayane that I want to go to law school for human rights law and my eventually pursue a Master's degree in public health. Because of Gayane, I want to get involved with non-profits and possibly start my own one-day. Gayane inspired me to devote my life to health and female empowerment. She inspired me to hopefully start a non-profit in Armenia that empowers women through health and education.

Javakhk encompasses everything about the word serendipity. In that one week, I learned more about myself and changed my career path. Thanks to my experience in Javakhk, I have memories I will never forget and deep connections with the people there. I resented Javakhk at the beginning, but I admit, it ended up being the best spontaneous decision I have ever made.

The Homenetmen Boston Soccer Club gets ready for 2017 Season

The Homenetmen Boston Men's senior soccer team is gearing up for their first season in the Bay State Soccer League (BSSL) this spring. The Bay State Soccer league is the premier adult soccer league in Massachusetts. The league is governed by the Massachusetts Adult State Soccer Association (MASS) and affiliated with the United States Soccer Federation. The league consists of 40 teams separated into four separate divisions.

Prior to 2017, the men's soccer team competed in the Massachusetts State Soccer League and decided to make the switch to BSSL this past offseason. The team has been very competitive in recent years and their success can be seen at the annual Homenetmen Eastern Region Navasartian Games. Playing in these leagues has prepared them well for various tournaments. At the Navasartian games, they are winners of four straight in the seniors men's soccer tournament and six out of seven overall.

The team is filled with players in college, fresh out of college, and some slightly older veterans. They are led by Coach Armen Arakelian who has been coaching the team for 4 years. Since they are new to the Bay State Soccer League, the club will be starting in the 3rd division with their first game coming on April 1st against North Shore FC.



Executive Order and the Armenian Impact

By Rachael Minassian

On January 27th 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order mandating the following:

1. Syrian refugees blocked indefinitely from entering the United States
2. U.S. refugee admissions system suspended for 120 days
3. Immigrants from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen banned from U.S. entry for 90 days
4. Refugee claims prioritized on the basis of religious persecution (this allows the White House to prioritize Christian refugees over Muslim refugees)
5. Lowered the total number of refugees to be accepted from any country in 2017 from 110,000 to 50,000.

Upon this executive order's national announcement, immediate chaos ensued throughout the country. At airports and ports, confused officials detained approved refugees, valid visa holders, and U.S. legal residents, as they had not been properly briefed on the details of the hastily announced order. Almost immediately, however, a federal judge in New York ordered a stay on the deportations for people with valid visas. Soon after, District Court Judge James Robart

suspended the Trump administration's travel ban, labeling the order a direct violation of our Constitution, and this suspension was upheld in a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on February 9th. In other words, the immigration ban is not happening – for now at least.

However, the passionate outcry from a large portion of the country's population in the face of this executive order, as well as the uneasiness felt by people on both ends of the political spectrum, is worth a discussion. More importantly, we must consider these events through the lens of our Armenian heritage and history. We must remember that we ourselves, as a people, were once refugees and immigrants seeking a safe haven from persecution by Turkey – and in some ways, we still are today.

We as Armenians are defined by immigration through the scars we've accumulated over time, and this has molded our identity permanently. We have an enormous diaspora, with Armenians in virtually every part of the world, and this is a part of the beauty of our culture. However, let us consider what might have been if our ancestors, so desperately in search of safety during the Genocide, had been denied access to the places in which they had eventually come to rest. Would I be here today if Lebanon had closed its borders to my grandmother? Would you be here today if Syria had kept out your grandfather? And yet, from behind our own borders we look on present-day Syria, where our fellow human beings are being slaughtered by the thousand, and we tell them that there is nothing we can do for them.

I think that the key element in this equation, that we have missed so terribly, is the notion that these people whom we ban, based on their religion, skin color, country of origin, etc., are people just like us. They are people. They have hopes, dreams, fears, and quirks. They have mothers, brothers, cousins, and children. They cling to the hope of a better life, as did our grandparents and great grandparents. Except, our ancestors were given the opportunity to make a new life for themselves. Who are we to deny these people the same opportunity?

Camp Haiastan 2017: Staff Wanted!

As Camp Haiastan of the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF) Eastern Region moves into its 66th year of operation, responsible and qualified staff members are needed as it is imperative in running a smooth, healthy, and safe camp environment.

The following positions for the summer 2017 season are still open:

Aquatics Director

The Aquatic Director will oversee the instructional and recreational activities at the swimming pool and waterfront. The Aquatic Director is responsible for the development of lifeguard staff, ensuring that all safety protocols are strictly enforced without exception.

In addition, the Aquatics Director will direct, supervise, and evaluate lifeguards and instructors assigned to the program and teach alongside them. He/she will also have the responsibility for the basic maintenance and operation of the swimming pool and camp's small craft at the pond.

Qualifications: At least 21 years of age. Valid possession of: Water Safety Instructor or Aquatic Director, Life Saving, CPR/First Aid, and Small Craft Certifications through the Red Cross, YMCA, Boy/Girl Scouts, or other nationally or internationally recognized organization.

Preferred Qualifications: Valid possession of Certified Pool/Spa Operator, and recent previous experience as Water Safety Inst. or Head Lifeguard.



Lifeguard

Lifeguards will be responsible for enforcing all pool and waterfront rules. Lifeguards are required to be at all instructional swim and waterfront activities as well as free swim each afternoon. Lifeguards report directly to the Aquatics Director. Lifeguards are required to assist with cabins when necessary.

Qualifications: CPR, AED, and First Aid Certifications are mandatory.

Head Boys & Girls Counselors

Two positions, one for a man and one for a woman to work and live directly with campers and counselors. The Head Counselor will assist the Camp Director in supervising and scheduling of the Cabin Counselors in all aspects of the Counselor's functions. Head Counselors can be responsible for performing the duties of Cabin Counselor. Head Counselors report directly to the Director.

Mandatory Qualifications: At least 19 years of age, minimum 1 year of college with employment experience in education, and/or physical education and recreation programming, and administration and/or organized residential camp counseling. Previous experience as a Head Counselor and/or Cabin Counselor is preferable. Demonstrated ability to direct, supervise and schedule subordinates. Computer skills, record keeping and maintenance are required.

Cabin Counselors

Positions for men and women to work and live directly with campers within a cabin group teaching, guiding and mentoring the skills of daily small group living away from home. In essence the Cabin Counselor is the surrogate parent for campers assigned to them for two-week sessions. Cabin Counselors are accountable for their campers at all times and will mentor them in aspects of camp life including but not limited to: Activity participation, daily personal hygiene, dining, all-camp activities, free-time and quiet time. Counselors, where qualified will teach within the program areas of the camp, but all counselors assist with all programs and activities of the camp. Cabin Counselors report directly to the Head Counselors, and Camp Director.

Preferred Qualifications: At least 18 years of age. Previous experience as a paid or volunteer camp counselor, Staff-In-Training, youth leader, recreation leader, teacher's assistant and/or Camp Haiastan camper.

Junior Staff in Training

Must be 16 years old. Eligible for hire to begin work after Teen Session. Preference will be given to those who attend Teen Session as campers and begin working Session 1. Will rotate between kitchen and maintenance duties as need dictates. Kitchen duties mainly involve dishwashing and general cleaning with some occasional assistance of light preparation and acceptance of food deliveries. Maintenance includes cleaning and stocking of various camp facilities including but not limited to showers, baths and offices etc. May assist in light landscaping and assisting with set up or take down of misc. camp events.

Qualifications: Must be physically fit and able to lift 50 pounds

Armenian School Teacher

An Armenian School teacher is responsible for dividing campers up into appropriate skill level groups for Armenian school instruction and for administering daily lesson plans including but not limited to Armenian culture, history, vocabulary, and language. He/she must work within outlined curriculum established while creating engaging lesson plans for widely differing language and cultural skill levels. All lesson plans should be developed with fellow Armenian school teachers and prepared before the start of each session. Armenian school teachers are required to assist with cabins when necessary.

Qualifications: Must be fluent in reading, writing, and speaking Armenian.

To be a part of the Camp Haiastan staff 2017, please apply at <http://www.camphaiastan.org/staff/>

Homenetmen Eastern Region Navasartian Games WEEKEND ENTERTAINMENT & VIP Pass



**Sunday Night
Dance | July 2nd at
The Providence Biltmore Hotel
KEVORK ARTINIAN
and BAND
& DJ Rams from Boston**
Dance starts at 8PM
Dance Prices
\$45.00 Adults
\$20.00 for children under 12

**Monday Night Victory Gala
Dinner Dance | July 3rd: at
The Rhode Island Convention Center
ELIE BERBERIAN and
BAND
& DJ Rams from Boston**
Dinner starts at 7PM
Dinner & Dance
\$75.00 Adults
\$40.00 for children under 12
Dance Only after 10PM
\$50.00 Adults
\$20.00 for children under 12

VIP DANCE PACKAGE (Deadline June 7th, 2017)

\$80.00 (\$15.00 Savings)
Includes access to both dances without dinner

\$100.00 (\$20.00 savings for adults)
Includes access to both dances and dinner

\$50.00 (\$10.00 savings for children under 12)
Includes access to both dances and dinner

*Children under 4 are free of charge

BOOK YOUR ROOMS IN PROVIDENCE!

Homenetmen Eastern Region 27th Annual Navasartian Games will be hosted by the Providence Homenetmen Chapter!

When: July 1st - 4th, 2017

Where: Providence, Rhode Island

Hotel: The Providence Biltmore, located in the heart of downtown Providence

Rooms are available to book for an affordable rate of \$129 for a single and \$139 for a double.

Please call (401) 421- 0700 or book online [here](#)

Stay tuned for more details as we promise to make this year the most memorable ever! Email navasartian.eusa@homenetmen.org with any questions and we hope to see you this Fourth of July Weekend!

Be sure to follow the Navasartian Games on all social media to stay up to date. Facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/navasartian.eusa> | Twitter @navasartianeast | Instagram – navasartian.east | Snapchat – navasartianeast

AYF Junior Seminar
May 26-29



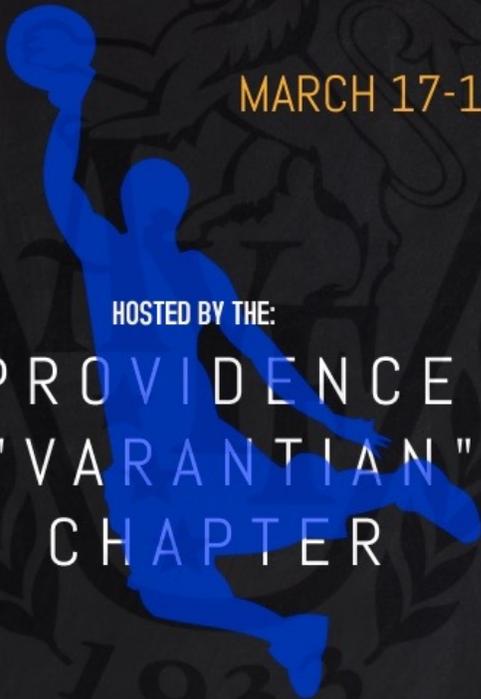
AYF-YOARF EASTERN REGION PRESENTS

JUNIOR WINTER OLYMPICS 2017

MARCH 17-19

HOSTED BY THE:

PROVIDENCE
"VARANTIAN"
CHAPTER



AYF-YOARF MIDWEST REGION PRESENTS

JUNIOR WINTER OLYMPICS 2017

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HOSTED BY THE:

CHICAGO
"ARARAT"
CHAPTER

