



**SOCIETY FOR ORPHANED ARMENIAN RELIEF (SOAR)**

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**2016 Report to the Albert Tamberchi Foundation**



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## Creation and Management

George S. Yacoubian, Jr. and his wife Erica began their adoption process in 2005. Throughout that spring and summer, they went through home study and various levels of domestic governmental approval. While in Armenia visiting the Our Lady of Armenia Center Summer Camp, they saw Liliانا for the first time. George and Erica submitted their dossier to the Armenian government that fall, received preliminary approval in December, and obtained final approval the following March. Liliانا arrived in the United States on April 23, 2006.

The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) was established in the fall of 2005 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian relief to orphaned children living in Armenia. In early 2006, an experienced Board of Directors was assembled, a network of Partners in Armenia was recruited to assist with distributions, and the web site was launched. In 2009, a National Board of Trustees was created to annually review SOAR's fiscal operations and distributions.

Represented by 110 Chapters and 6 Junior groups worldwide, SOAR supports 38 institutions throughout the world. Some volunteers are parents of adopted Armenian children; others simply recognize the significance of SOAR's work and want to help perpetuate its mission. The common bond among them all is the recognition that orphaned Armenians represent the most vulnerable population of Armenian society.



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# Quality Control

SOAR has a strict quality control protocol to assure that all donations, in their entirety, reach the intended recipients. This protocol has five essential elements:

1. SOAR rarely makes cash distributions directly to the orphanages. Rather, goods and services that can be procured in Armenia are purchased by SOAR's Partners and distributed directly to the orphanages.
2. It implements chain-of-custody procedures for any distributed goods or services, providing assurance that these items have been received by the orphanages in the exact quantity intended. These procedures have three steps:
  - a. Partners sign for the shipments and/or attest to the type and quantity of goods or services procured in Armenia. This invoice includes an exact description of the type and quantity of goods and services.
  - b. The recipient orphanage's director signs this same invoice, indicating that the exact type and quantity of goods and services received is the quantity indicated.
  - c. Both invoices are mailed to SOAR's Executive Board Chairman.
3. SOAR Partners, Yerevan Chapter members, and other volunteers who visit Armenia make random inspections of the orphanages. Any distribution discrepancies are to be reported immediately to SOAR's Executive Board Chairman.
4. When possible, goods donated or services provided by SOAR are engraved and/or stamped with a corporate seal. Capital projects are acknowledged with a dedication ceremony and plaque.
5. A zero-tolerance policy for fraud, theft, and/or deception is imposed. Any malfeasance would result in the termination of assistance.



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## Institutions We Support

SOAR supports 28 institutions in Armenia, two Armenian orphanages in Artsakh, an orphan summer camp in Javakh, four Armenian orphanages in Lebanon, and three Armenian orphanages in Syria:

**Armenian Evangelical Boarding School** is in Ainjar, Lebanon, and is home to approximately 75 healthy social orphans.

**Birds' Nest Orphanage** is in Byblos, Lebanon and has been home to thousands of Armenian children in the Middle East region for more than 80 years. There are currently 37 children housed at Birds' Nest, ranging in age from 6 months to 17 years old.

**Boarding School #1** is a state orphanage in Stepanakert, Artsakh, housing approximately 35 children (both healthy and with special needs) between the ages of 4 and 16.

**Boarding School #2** is a state orphanage in Kashatagh, Artsakh, housing approximately 17 children between the ages of 6 and 17.

**Bzommar Orphanage** is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order of nuns established in 1847. Throughout the year, the Sisters carry out catechetical, cultural, and social work with both natural and social orphans. Approximately 25 girls are housed at Bzommar.

**Cardinal Aghajanian Orphanage** is in Ainjar, Lebanon. The orphanage is home to approximately 24 male social orphans.

**Children's Home of Gyumri** is a state orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 100 children with special needs, ages 6 years and younger.

**Community Development and Social Support Center (CDSSC)** offers alternative care and material assistance to children with special needs ages 6-18. The Center started its activities in 2012.

**Children's Home of Gyumri** is a state orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 100 children with special needs, ages 6 years and younger.



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**Dzorak Care Center**, in Yerevan, served as an orphanage for 400 children during the 1940s. In 1959, it became a boarding school/sanitarium for children from underprivileged families. Today, Dzorak serves as an orphanage and nursing home for approximately 120 adults with severe physical and psychological disabilities who have outgrown the traditional orphanage.

**Gavar Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Gavar housing approximately 115 children between the ages of 3 and 18.

**Gyumri Social Childcare Center (GSCC)** is a day center in Gyumri. Since July 2006, approximately 230 children from around the province have been served at the Center.

**The Holy Cross Armenian Church of Javakh Summer Day Camp** in Akhakalak, Georgia, serves 250 social orphans living at or below poverty level in the nearby villages. The camp was created to provide the children with a safe, clean, fun, and spiritual environment during the summer.

**Kharberd Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Kharberd housing approximately 280 children with special needs between the ages of 6 and 18.

**Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Yerevan housing approximately 100 children with special needs between the ages of 6 and 18.

**Mer Doon** offers a home in Echmiadzin for Armenian children who have outgrown their orphanage. Mer Doon offer education and a loving and compassionate family environment, thus easing the transition from orphanage life to mainstream society.

**Mer Hoos** houses approximately 20 teenage girls in the Arapkir district of Yerevan. The girls receive language and job skills training, computer instruction, college preparation and education, religious foundational teaching, life skills training, psychological support, and hope, confidence, and love.

**Orran**, "haven" in Armenian, was established in Yerevan in April 2000. The Center started with 16 children, but within 6 months had expanded to 26 elderly and 40 socially vulnerable children. In 2009, a second Orran center was established in Vanadzor. Today, Orran support approximately 95 elderly and 200 children across Armenia.



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**Nork Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Yerevan housing approximately 80 children (both healthy and with special needs) ages 6 years and under.

**Nubarashen** is a state boarding school in Yerevan housing approximately 83 children with special needs, ages 7 to 18.

**Orphanage of Fridtjof Nansen** is a state orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 83 children between the ages of 4 and 18.

**Our Lady of Armenia Center** is a private orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 45 girls between the ages of 6 and 18. The Center is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order of nuns established in 1847.

**Our Lady of Armenia Center Summer Camp** hosts approximately 800 children ages 8 to 15 throughout the summer, in four 16-day sessions. The Camp provides nutritious food, physical rest, recreational activities, and religious-educational experiences both to orphan and otherwise needy children throughout Armenia.

**Our Lady of Armenia Annie Bezikian Youth Center** is a private facility in Kanaker that houses girls between the ages of 16 and 22 who have outgrown the traditional orphanage and who are transitioning to independent living. The Center is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order of nuns established in 1847.

**Our Lady of Armenia Educational Center** in Tashir, Armenia, is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and provides meals and after-school activities to approximately 30 orphaned and otherwise needy children.

**Our Lady of Armenia Educational Center Summer Camp** in Tashir hosts approximately 50 children ages 7-15 for four weeks throughout the summer. The Camp provides nutritious food, physical rest, recreational activities, educational opportunities, and religious experiences to children from the Tashir community.



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**Saint Theresa's Little Flower Orphanage (Azizie and Meydan)** is the House of Providence. After the 1915 Genocide, the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception stood responsible for the displaced and served as comforting and caring “mothers” for the lonely Armenian orphans. In 1936, “The Providence Orphanage” (Nakhaknamootian Doon) was founded in the Syrian region of Azizie and was a haven for 300 orphaned children. Before March 2011, the orphanage housed up to 35 girls who lived in an environment of peace and who attended regular school. Because of the war and the unrest in Aleppo, many of the Armenian orphans could no longer stay at The Providence Orphanage. Some live in Meydan, a very poor Armenian section in Aleppo, and attend Zvartnotz School, while other orphans live in Azizie and attend Zanabek, the other Armenian school run by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

**Shengavit Kindergarten** is the only one of its kind in Armenia. The students, who stay overnight Monday through Friday, are children whose families live in extreme poverty or which have histories of abuse, domestic violence or alcohol or drug addiction. Although some children return home on the weekends, approximately 150 stay at the school full-time.

**S.O. Khach Orphanage** in Syria has been a family for more than 90 years. Before March 2012, the children lived in the Telil area of Syria. In March 2012, the children moved to a beautiful new facility in the Sis Hamaliren region. Unfortunately, due to civil unrest, the children moved to the Aram Manoogian Community Center in September 2012. The children are cared for by a couple who live with them full-time. There are currently 14 boys and girls living in S.O. Khach Orphanage, ranging in age from 8 to 19 years old.

**SOS Children's Villages' Armenian Charity Foundation (Idjevan and Kotayk)** is a child-centered organization whose core mission is to provide care and development for children without parental care and children in difficult life circumstances. The organization was founded in 1989 in response to the devastating earthquake of December 1988. In 1990, SOS Children's Village in Kotayk opened its doors for children who had lost their parents in the earthquake. It was the first SOS Children's Village in any former Soviet republic. SOS Children's Village in Idjevan was founded in 2009. Presently, SOS Children's Villages in Armenia operate a wide range of child care and family strengthening community and educational activities.

**Terchoonian Home** is a private orphanage in Gyumri housing approximately 75 intellectually gifted children between the ages of 3 and 12.





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**Vanadzor Orphanage** is a private orphanage in Vanadzor housing approximately 90 children 18 years of age and under.

**Vardashen** is a state boarding school in Yerevan housing approximately 82 children who “exhibit socially dangerous behavior” between the ages of 6 and 18.

**The Voice of the Armenian Church Summer Day Camp**, operating under the auspices of the Eastern Prelacy and its Executive Council, is held in the summer retreat of Tsaghgadzor and hosts 50 orphaned boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 16. The Camp, held in July for eight days, exposes the children to comfort, love, compassion, and care, while simultaneously instilling in them the love of Christ and the history of the Armenian Church.

**Warm Hearth**, located outside of Yerevan in 3<sup>rd</sup> Village, is a private group home housing 13 adults with disabilities and mental illnesses who have outgrown the state-funded orphanages. It provides each resident with an alternative to psychiatric institutions and offers holistic care in a family-like setting.

**Zadik Orphanage** is a state orphanage in Yerevan housing approximately 138 children between the ages of 6 and 18. After the age of 18, the children move to either Rainbow House or Zadikavan, a farming village in Arzni.



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## The Albert Tamberchi Foundation

In June 2016, SOAR received \$92,324.51 from The Albert Tamberchi Foundation. A detailed accounting of funds is provided below. Funds were allocated to four projects: the construction of a salt cave at Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage; utility expenses at the Our Lady of Armenia (OLA) Center in Gyumri; the purchase of a minibus for Shengavit Kindergarten with assistance from SOAR-Abu Dhabi; and the purchase of appliances, bedding, sundries, clothing, and miscellaneous supplies for Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage.



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**Budget**

		<b>Date Wired</b>
<b>Opening balance</b>	<b>\$61.56</b>	
<b>New funds</b>	<b>\$92,324.51</b>	6/20/16
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$92,386.07</b>	
<b>Distributions and Capital Projects</b>		
OLA Center	<b>\$23,000.00</b>	Winter 2015-6 utilities 7/29/16
Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage	<b>\$21,842.00</b>	Salt Cave 8/24/16
Shengavit Kindergarten	<b>\$21,200.00</b>	Minibus 9/15/16
Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage	<b>\$25,478.39</b>	Beddings, appliances, supplies 9/28/16
	<b>\$79.84</b>	Banking fees
<b>Total Distributions</b>	<b>\$91,600.23</b>	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$785.84</b>	



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**December 2016:**

**New Equipment, Bedding, and Sportswear for Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage**





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## **New Blankets and Bed Covers for Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage**





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**October 2016:**

**A New Bus for Shengavit Kindergarten**





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**September 2016:**

### **Salt Cave at Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage**







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## Conclusion

The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) was established in the fall of 2005 to provide humanitarian relief to orphaned Armenian children and orphaned Armenian adults with disabilities. SOAR's long-term goal is to provide orphaned Armenians throughout the world with the resources fundamental to their physical, emotional, and intellectual development.

In calendar year 2016, the Albert Tamberchi Foundation distributed \$92,324.51 to SOAR to support the purchase of supplies, and the construction of a salt cave, at Mari Izmirlyan Orphanage (Yerevan); to assist with utility costs at the Our Lady of Armenia Center (Gyumri); and the purchase of a minibus for Shengavit Kindergarten (Yerevan).

SOAR is extremely thankful for the emotional and financial support it receives throughout the world and extends its heartfelt gratitude to The Albert Tamberchi for its generosity in 2016. The desire to improve the lives of orphaned Armenians is the bonding element among our supporters. If you have any questions about SOAR, the institutions we serve, or this report, please contact George S. Yacoubian, Jr., at (610) 213-3452 or by email at [gyacoubian@soar-us.org](mailto:gyacoubian@soar-us.org).