

Warm Hearth **ANNUAL REPORT**

2019





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

03	Message: Executive Director
04	Warm Hearth Geghanist
05	Up Close
06	Year in Review
07	Financial Statements & Stewardship
09	Mission, Vision & Values
10	Leadership

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Relationships move at the speed of trust.  
Social change moves at the speed of relationships.**

**- Bailey and Flowers**

2019 took us by surprise, plain and simple. We were getting our bearings having opened a second home in Arinj the year before. We were plodding faithfully along--hoping to secure some Armenian government funding for that home. We were dreaming up how best to include seven more residents who had been promised a home a few years back. We were contemplating expanding the Arinj home to make room for them. But then in one fell swoop, the plans changed.

Alya, our director in Armenia, received a call from the Armenian Ministry of Labor & Social Issues. They promised some funding for our Arinj home but also for a portion of a 3rd home, if we could open it right away and if, in the future, we could cap our homes at eight residents.

Our first response was tentative. Is this what's best for those individuals? What size home do we prefer? Is this in line with our plans to focus on sustainability for our Armenian nonprofit in the next four years? Do the numbers support this path? After considering all these questions, we were met with a resounding yes.

We were thrilled that these individuals who had been impatiently waiting for a home of their own would have one sooner than we had dared to hope.

So, we dove right in. Together, we bought a third home in the quiet and humble village of

Geghanist. And from that moment on, our foundation in Armenia took the lead. They found staff and trained them. They bought local furniture and stocked the house with cups, knives, sheets and blankets. They hung curtains and assembled furniture. They washed the windows and dreamed of a beautiful life living alongside our newest residents. And finally, they tucked clean sheets on the new beds, fluffed the pillows and brought these people to their forever home in early 2020.

When we opened back in 2006, we began by building trust between resident and staff, with neighbors and governments. Now that trust sustains relationships that are allowing for this sort of social change to occur at a macro level. The Armenian government did not even know what a group home was when we started. And now, they are asking us to open more and helping us sustain them.

Thank you for making room in your heart for this gorgeous whirlwind of change and the wild hope that abandoned individuals with special needs could have a forever home. We could not do this without you.

*Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri*

**Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri  
Founder & Executive Director**



# SUSTAINABILITY

It remains our vision to eventually see this work upheld and sustained by Armenians in Armenia. We need you to help us meet this goal as we are working hard to ensure that the people living closest to our residents are the best equipped to protect, serve, and strengthen them.

# FOREVER

One thing we offer that is different than our counterparts in the USA is the opportunity to have a forever home that is centered around our residents. It is their personalities, desires, dreams and longings that make up the unique culture of each of our homes.

# CHANGE

We see many positive changes in Armenia for people with special needs and we dream of ushering in those changes even more by being committed to having reciprocal relationships with our residents and by showing others the ways we are blessed and transformed through them.

## Warm Hearth Geghanist

Home of *Sirayush, Rona, Nazeli, Fatima, Edita, Diana and Barken*

These seven women seem to be settling in to their new home. They are becoming acquainted with the blessedness of belonging.

When many of us move, we bring whole truckloads of belongings with us. And as much as we can overdo it, it is these belongings that somehow represent something greater to us, be it some sort of continuity perhaps of self, identity or history. But our newest residents, like those before them, came to their home with one small bag of well-worn clothes. Nothing else.

This lack is a symbol not only of material poverty, but of their former lack of belonging. How do we create something as essential as belonging? How do we go about the slow and painstaking work of reminding them that they do, at long last, belong?

On one level, it is a slow and underground work, but on another level, maybe it isn't. They invited the residents from our other two homes to visit last week. As they showed their visitors around, they flung open every kitchen cabinet and every drawer, in every room, showing the others what now belongs to them. Forks, and tea cups, pajamas and shampoo.

There was something powerful about watching this act of show and tell, down to the very last cupboard. In the act of showing even the most prosaic items, it was evident that they already knew, deep inside, that this home really and truly does belong to them.

That's exactly how it should be. That's what we dreamed up all those years ago. That's what each of you believed in when you came alongside of us.

And here it is happening before our very eyes, at the initiative of the Armenian government and people. Could anything be more beautiful?



# UP CLOSE

Patricia Spier (pictured to the right with residents), long-time donor and resident of Colorado, tells about how she became involved in Warm Hearth fourteen years ago and what it was like to finally see the work up close.

I fulfilled a long-time wish to visit the Warm Hearth homes in Yerevan, Armenia. I have been a donor to Warm Hearth from the beginning, and when I give time, or give monetarily, to an organization, I eventually like to personally see the work that those organizations do.

Finally after fourteen years, when my schedule permitted, I contacted Natalie to ask when a good time would be to travel to Yerevan. Because of who Natalie is, she invited me to visit while she, her mother and her oldest son were going to be in Yerevan, during the 2020 New Year celebration.

I first heard about what would become Warm Hearth when I was attending the University of Denver, where I met Bridget Brown, a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV). Being a RPCV myself (from Sierra Leone), there was an immediate bond. She told me about what she and Natalie were planning, and I got involved.

When we arrived at the home in 3rd Village (the first group home in Armenia), we were all greeted with delight from both residents and staff. The residents showered Natalie with pure unadulterated love.

Their smiles, hugs and tears were a testament of what Warm Hearth's goal is--to provide a place of safety, respect, support, learning and sharing--a forever family.

When visiting the second home in Arinj, we received the same delighted reaction. I don't speak Armenian, but regardless of my lack of language skills, the language of love was apparent through all our visits.

At both homes, the residents happily showed us their homes, displayed their fantastic dance moves, told stories to Natalie (who graciously translated for us), shared projects that they have done, shared their individual photo albums showing past adventures, and opened gifts that Grandfather Winter brought them.

Their animated chats with Natalie were like those I've experienced in my own family when a beloved family member comes home for the holidays.

Both homes were just that--homes. They were emotionally warm, clean, and welcoming. Meeting the residents and staff at two Warm Hearth homes, and seeing the vision flourishing, was a gift to me, as it is to the residents.



# 2019 IN REVIEW



Our homes are forever. They belong to our residents. Our residents are the center. They are the ones who gather at the hearth each night. They are the ones who shape this work. But you have the honor of protecting and serving them, making a beautiful and peaceful life possible for them.

February - We hosted the first ever EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) trauma training in Armenia.

March - The Human Rights Defender office of Armenia visited Warm Hearth.

April - Our nonprofit in Armenia hosted its first charity event in Yerevan through the Tigranyan Musical School.

June - Gayane (resident) started working for Kean, a small nonprofit in the Araguyugh, helping village women learn carpet weaving. A volunteer noted: "I could see such pride in [Gayane's] face as I sat next to her. I witnessed her determination as she taught the women in the village."

July - Inclusion Collective, which provides professional volunteer support to support individuals with disabilities, visited Warm Hearth homes for three weeks and worked closely with staff and residents. One of the team members, Julie, said of this work: "It was evident that the staff showed love and care for the residents like they were their own family."

July - Along with Inclusion Collective and other local organizations, we hosted a Disability Rights & Advocacy Conference in Yerevan with nearly 80 attendees.

July - Janna, our Program Manager tells the story of Agappy's birthday celebration: "I can't explain her happiness. We had guests from the USA and her friends were visiting. While

she and I had gone shopping for her party, the employee from the store asked her where she was from, assuming she was a visitor from another country. Agappy replied, "I'm from Warm Hearth, and I don't want to be in any other place; I'm very happy that I live there." I was quietly listening and realized that the employee assumed we are friends. I'm proud that people do not see any distinction between us. When we returned home, the residents and staff had decorated the entire balcony. Seeing this, she lost control and began to cry. The staff and some of the other residents did as well. I did not have words. These were happy tears and I was so happy. I always try to share the residents' joy and sadness. Agappy is a miraculous person and friend who will be by your side to help you in anything. I love talking to her, listening to her opinion, interacting with her as a mature and wise person--as equals."

September - Paros Foundation's mobile dental clinic provided services to all of our residents.

October - Our residents began dance therapy at the Special Education Complex in Yerevan.

December - You helped us purchase our third home in the village of Geghanist. We received government funding for a portion of the costs of three homes in 2020 and prepared to grow from serving 22 residents in 2019 to 30 in 2020.

# 2019 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

In years past, we have shown financial statements that combine the income and expenses of both our US organization (Friends of Warm Hearth) and our Armenia organization (Jermik Ankyun Foundation). Due to the growth and expansion of Jermik Ankyun Foundation, we have determined to only provide financial statements for Friends of Warm Hearth going forward. However, all our costs in Armenia are audited so that we can be assured of proper stewardship. Additionally, in the narrative on the next page, you can see the income streams that allow us to run our forever homes.

**STEWARDSHIP:** We value forever homes for our residents, a person-centered approach, honesty and complete transparency about how we use our funds. We seek to balance frugality with respect for our residents' homes and livelihoods. We are open to any questions or concerns about how we use funds and resources. Please just ask.

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### ASSETS

Cash - Restricted	\$ 293,000
Cash - Unrestricted	66,505
Prepaid Expenses	19,040
Houses and Land in Armenia	402,066
Furniture, Equipment and Vehicles	32,410
Less Accumulated Depreciation	-70,123

**Total Assets** **742,898**

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	3,074
Restricted Net Assets (Forever Fund + 3rd Home)	296,000
Unrestricted Net Assets	443,824

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** **742,898**

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

### INCOME

Cash Contributions	\$ 161,536
Contributions of Goods & Services	15,855
Interest Income	1,477

**Total Income** **178,868**

### EXPENSES

Program Services	93,004
Promotion & Fundraising	15,885
General & Administrative	23,073

**Total Expenses** **131,962**

**Changes in Net Assets** **46,906**

**LEGACY GIVING:** One way to make a lasting impact on our residents is to join our Forever Society by making a gift to Friends of Warm Hearth through your will or state. This is a way to ensure that the homes we provide our residents truly are forever. Read more about this on our website.

**GRASSROOTS:** Our residents rely on your grassroots fundraising efforts. Special thanks to the following people who raised funds on their behalf: Maria Stepanyan and Charlie Hickman, the Dilanchyan and Setian families, Elenor Avanesian, SOAR Colorado and SOAR National.

## ARMENIA

We are so proud of our foundation in Armenia for raising over \$53,000 in 2019. This included generous donations by individuals, businesses, and SOAR (Society of Orphaned Armenian Relief). Thanks to all of those who visited our home, caught the vision and gave in 2019 and a special thanks to SOAR volunteers worldwide.



## GOVERNMENT

After years of lobbying and proving the value and beauty of our model (not to mention the worth and wonder that is our residents), the Armenian government has stepped up and in 2019 provided \$51,000 toward our operating expenses.



## USA

In the USA, we raised approximately \$119,000 from individuals and nearly \$43,000 from foundations, businesses, and grants. Special thanks to each of you and to the Gogian Family Foundation for believing in our work.



# MISSION, VISION & VALUES

## Vision

Holistic, integrated and forever homes for all abandoned Armenians with special needs and mutually transformative relationships between resident, staff, neighbor and fellow citizen.

## Mission

To provide abandoned Armenians with special needs an alternative to psychiatric institutions and homelessness by offering individualized care in a group-home setting that mimics family life to the extent possible and empowers them to live as independently and confidently as possible.

## Values

We will act in the best interests of our residents' social, physical, mental, spiritual and vocational development. We will provide growth opportunities for people of all abilities.

We believe in community integration that honors culture and tradition. Within this context, we will amplify the voices and gifts of people of all abilities.

We will protect our residents' dignity, choices, fulfillment, privacy and independence.

We will create inclusive communities of friendship and mutuality where resident and staff members seek to break down barriers between them.

We will move toward being locally led and sustainable.

We will be agents of change in the nation of Armenia, promoting radical acceptance.



# USA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bridget Brown

Marshal Bryant

Satenik Grigoryan

Chantay Jett

Juliet Setian

Vartuhi Vartanyan

Lee Ann Williams



# ARMENIA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Alya Kirakosyan  
Executive Director

Janna Hayrapetyan  
Program Manager

Margarit Mnoyan  
3rd Village  
House Manager

Lilit Samvelyan  
Arinj  
House Manager

Sona Hayrapetyan  
Geghanist  
House Manager

Anush Gabrielyan  
Psychologist

Adelaida Gevorgyan  
Psychiatrist

Hasmik Karapetyan  
Development Officer

Manan Manukyan  
Head Accountant



PO BOX 1081  
FLAGSTAFF, AZ 86001

(928) 607-7025

[WWW.FRIENDSOFWARMHEARTH.ORG](http://WWW.FRIENDSOFWARMHEARTH.ORG)