
WARM HEARTH

In the Small Corners

Song Scraps

Dear friends,

This is a special time of year when the snow and cold has quieted the world and collectively, we are moved by necessity toward interiority, to gathering around a fire and propping up our feet.

In that stillness, I imagine our group homes as two fires that are burning brightly and warming a small gathering of people in snowy and

inclement weather. Our residents and staff members are gathered around the fires. Their hands tend and stoke the fire with care, beauty and proficiency. One resident walks off in search of more wood. Friends and neighbors and *you* are huddled close to the fire—absorbing warmth, light, the dance of flames. There are some people in the distance who notice the fires from afar. They are curious and come closer. But finally, they are finally drawn into the fire circle by the beauty of the songs.

Our residents sing often—for one another, for visitors and for friends. They sing to celebrate and they sing as a balm when their hearts are hurting. They sing without heed to the quality of their voice. They sing with vigor, abandon and vibrato. One day, I arrived at one of our group homes and was still outside, paying a taxi driver. Something beautiful caught my attention but I could not yet place it. It took a few moments to realize that the residents were singing and a scrap or two of melody was floating out into the street as a greeting, as a benediction. May you hear their voices today, however faint.

And may you receive scraps of songs wherever you are, as a benediction for this holiday and Christmas season.

Sincerely Yours,

Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri

Founder & Executive Director





Gohar

Gohar is one of the new residents at our home in Arinj. Before coming to Warm Hearth, she lived at the orphanage in Kapan for 12 years. No one knows the conditions under which her family dropped her at the orphanage when she was a child, though we imagine she was abandoned due to her disability as her brother and sister still remain with her family. Her family is living and unknown to her. Despite this trauma, she has a delightful and timid spirit with a vivid and rich imagination. She dances beautifully and has a deep well of tenderness and kindness.

Our 2018 Goals: sustainable and loving care for our residents and two forever homes that are increasingly independent.

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Your kindness sustains our residents, our hearts and our home.

- Your gifts and generosity made it possible to provide our Armenia-based Executive Director with one-on-one leadership training through Leading Spirit, Inc. Thank you to **Grace Flannery** for her wisdom and insight.
- Thank you to **SOAR Wisconsin & SOAR National** for gifting our 2nd home with a new minivan, which will make transportation to the college much smoother and will provide a way to go travel for appointments and adventures for many years to come.
- Thank you to **Lee Ann Williams** and **Marshal Bryant** for representing our homes at various Armenian festivals and bazaars.
- Thank you to **Lisa Kradjian** of St. John Garabed Armenian Church (San Diego) for gathering clothing for our residents and shipping it to Armenia.

