February 8, 2014 marked the official grand opening of the Avakian Wing of the Nursing Facility of Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc. adding 58 much-needed beds. Clergy, dignitaries, and over 500 benevolent sponsors and supporters of the Home attended the Black-Tie Jubilee Dinner Dance. The historical event began with the official ribbon cutting ceremony by Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Co-Chair of the Building Committee, Joseph Kanimian, Esq., past Chairman of the Board and Co-Chair of the Building Committee, Mr. Nazar H. Ashjian, Jr., past Chairman of the Board and former Chairman of the Building Committee, Mr. Armen Hampar, and executor of the Avakian Family Trust, Mr. Robert Taylor.

Greeting the guests in true Armenian fashion, beautiful Armenian hostesses dressed in traditional Armenian costumes served brandy and chocolates as they were ushered into the new wing.

A capacity crowd included religious leaders, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate of Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of the United States, Reverend Joseph D. Matossian, Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, Very Reverend Monsignor Andon Atamian of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy, and many Archbishops and reverend clergy accompanied our religious leaders. Our religious leaders commended Mr. Kanimian for his exceptional leadership and expressed appreciation to the board, administration and staff for their hard work and dedication in superbly providing a nurturing, stimulating and safe environment for our elders.

Present also in this historic event...
Anchor of Fox 11 morning News, Araksya Karapetyan, served as mistress of ceremonies for the evening. She reiterated the importance of the theme of the evening; “The Brightest Stars are Those Who Shine for the Benefit of Others,” and expressed her feelings that there is nothing more fulfilling and rewarding.

Following the salt and bread blessing ceremony and tour of the new wing, guests enjoyed a beautiful reception in the elegantly decorated foyer of the Deukmejian Ballroom. The dramatic and striking décor continued into the ballroom, accentuating the festive and celebratory mood of the occasion.

The jubilee banquet was begun by tenor Raffi Kerbabian, accompanied by organist Hovsep Torosian, singing the national anthems of both the United States and Republic of Armenia. His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian read the Pontifical Message of Blessing and Commendation of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, who extended his blessings to the chairman, the board and the staff for their undying devotion in maintaining the highest level of care for our elderly residents.

His Eminence Archbishop Mousheg Mardirossian read the Pontifical Message of Blessing and Commendation of His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia who proclaimed, “2014 the ‘Year of the Elders’ reminding and inviting us all to honor and thank our parents and grandparents for their infinite love, care, and wisdom throughout this year and in coming years. How wonderful for the opening of the new wing to coincide with this beautiful proclamation.”

Armenian hostesses dressed in traditional Armenian costumes serve brandy and chocolates to guests attending the ribbon cutting and blessing ceremony.

His Eminence Archbishop Mousegh Mardirossian read the Pontifical Message of Blessing and Commendation of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, who extended his blessings to the chairman, the board and the staff for their undying devotion in maintaining the highest level of care for our elderly residents.
purposeful than helping and giving to those in need. She continued with a brief overview of the goals and accomplishments of the Home since its inception in 1949. The goal of the Home has been to provide the best possible care for elderly Armenians in Southern California. The many accomplishments include: The Nursing Facility has been listed in US News & World Report as one of the top nursing homes in the country; Both Mission Hills Nursing and Eagle Rock Convalescent Home have received a “Five Star Quality Rating” from Centers for Medicaid-Medicare Services; Recently, the Mission Hills Assisted Living received its seventh consecutive year of Zero Deficiency Survey from the Department of Health Services. Ms. Karapetyan was most impressed with the level of independence the residents enjoyed living at the Home.

A video titled, “A Day in the Life of Ararat Home,” depicting the activities of a typical day for residents, administrators, board members and staff was presented. This was followed by remarks made by the New Wing Celebration Committee Co-Chairmen Ron Nazeley and Berj Shahbazian, who had worked so diligently with their energetic committee members to make this a truly successful evening.

Chairman Joseph Kanimian, Esq. greeted the guests and thanked the Jubilee Banquet Grand Sponsors Armen and Nora Hampar, the Jubilee Banquet Sponsor, Lily Barry, Grand Benefactors, Henry and Louise Arklin, Antranik Baghdassarian Family, Sam and Paulette Kardashian, Sinan Sinanian Family, The Avakian Family Trust, and other donors and supporters for making the event possible. Mr. Kanimian stated, “On behalf of the board of trustees of the Home, I would like to express my appreciation to our clergy who visit the home regularly enriching the spiritual needs of our residents and staff, to the countless donors who contribute devotedly to the success of our Home, to the Board of Trustees and all the volunteers, the Guilds, Auxiliary groups and our members who dedicate many hours for the welfare of the institution. He also thanked the Administration and Staff for their “ardent passion and hard work.”

The evening’s grand sponsors Armen and Nora Hampar were recognized with a plaque for their years of dedicated service to the home and their generous contributions throughout the years. Mr. Hampar has served twice as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and chaired several committees, and Mrs. Hampar serves as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees, responsible for the Deukmejian Ballroom rental and has been instrumental in furnishing the Ararat Home Mission Hills Campus. Mr. Kanimian also presented a plaque on behalf of the Board of Trustees to the Avakian family representative, Mr. Robert Taylor, for their unwavering support of the Home.

Honorable, George Deukmejian, 35th governor of the state of California who delivered the closing remarks was warmly and enthusiastically received by all guests. He talked about the impact Ararat Home has made on him and the Armenian community. The Governor praised and commended those who had a role in making Ararat Home the premier facility of its kind in the State with zero deficiencies recorded.

The evening continued with dinner and dancing to upbeat international music. Guests were gifted with a commemorative booklet, which included congratulatory letters from religious leaders and dignitaries.
Aline Boghosian, a jewel residing in the Nursing Facility at the Mission Hills Campus of the Ararat Home of Los Angeles, is an exemplar of the rich and productive type of life that our residents have experienced prior to choosing the Home as their final place of retirement. Mrs. Boghosian’s father, Sarkis Koçunyan, was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1875 and studied journalism in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1908, he moved to Istanbul, Turkey, where on October 28 of that year along with his brother Misak Koçunyan, he launched a daily newspaper, Jamanak (Times), which today is the longest continuously running Armenian language newspaper in the world.

Her parents, Sarkis Koçunyan and Araxie Karakashian, were married in Istanbul and were blessed with seven children, three sons and four daughters. Mrs. Boghosian attended an all girls’ school, Yessayan School, and was a member of the student organization, Sanotz Miutyoun. She helped her family run newspaper business with letterpress printing. Her hobbies included playing piano and reading whatever books she found available.

Mrs. Boghosian recalls that during the years of the Armenian Genocide and the period following, her parents were instrumental in helping men who had managed to escape the relentless mass murders. With sadness she states, “They were lost, hungry and in need of shelter. My parents and neighbors helped care for these men by providing them with food and housing. In addition, we posted their names in Jamanak to facilitate relatives in locating them.”

She married Vahe Boghosian, an architect who had studied in France, and together they raised three wonderful children: Hilda, Aram and Kevork. Hilda married in France and presently resides in Uruguay. Aram married in Istanbul and has since moved to Los Angeles where he resides with his family. Her youngest son, Kevork, studied business at the University of La Verne and has made Los Angeles his home.

At the age of 73, Mrs. Boghosian moved from Istanbul to join her sons in Los Angeles leaving behind her home and familiar surroundings. She stated, “Initially, it was difficult for me to adjust to the move due to cultural differences, but being close to my sons was worth the sacrifice.”

Access to history books were banned in Turkey as Aline was growing up; consequently, she now reads Armenian history books whenever she has free time. She stated, “Any teachers caught with such literature would be terminated immediately. We were prohibited from speaking Armenian in the streets, and my parents, in fear of being punished, never talked about the genocide.”

Presently, Mrs. Boghosian is working on her autobiography and is writing it in her beautiful Armenian handwriting. When asked about her experience at Ararat Home, she stated, “I always knew that one day I would live here. This is my home now, and I never want to leave.”

With the encouragement and attention given by the Ararat caregivers, residents like Mrs. Boghosian continue to enjoy productive and gratifying lives.
Transition without change in mission was the theme of the 2014 Annual Ararat Home Membership Meeting held at the Mission Hills campus on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 23. Board Chairman Joseph Kanimian, Esq. gave special thanks to those who had retired from their administrative leadership posts, Mrs. Margo Babikian and Mr. Robert Taylor. The passing of long-time, much admired Secretary to the Board, Ms. Beatrice Malkhasian, was recognized with a moment of silence.

Introductions were made of new administrators, Mrs. Margarita Kechichian (Mission Hills Nursing Facility) Ms. Varsenik Keshishyan (Ararat Eagle Rock Convalescent Hospital), and new Secretary to the Board, Ms. Ani Dikranian. Newly promoted Mr. Derik Ghookasian (Chief Operating Officer) and Mrs. Rita Noravian (Mission Hills Assisted Living Administrator) were also introduced and praised. Hearing their reports, all in attendance agreed that this is a strong, youthful team to be leading Ararat Home into the future.

Mr. Kanimian spoke of the rebirth of Ararat Home. Besides renovations at Ararat Convalescent Hospital, the past year marked the completion of the new wing of Ararat Nursing Facility. He recognized the diligent work of former Board Chairman Nazar H. Ashjian, Jr. who co-chaired the Building Committee by presenting him with a plaque of appreciation for his dedicated service to the Home.

Board members and committee chairmen gave reports of successful activities throughout the year. Trustee Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin reported the activities of Ararat-Eskijian Museum and the Armenian Timeline Quiz Bowl. Among others, reports were received from Treasurer Michael Surmeian and Trustee Gary Kaloostian on the Picnic and Casino Night respectively. Trustee Nora Hampar reported on the usage of Deukmejian Ballroom and Trustee Armen Hampar reported on the ever-increasing Endowment Fund. Trustee Nazar H. Ashjian, Jr. reported that construction of the 58-bed new wing of the nursing facility is completed and with the anticipated certification approvals, occupancy is imminent.

Members voted to elect two new Trustees, Edvin Minassian, Esq. and Vahe Vartanian. The six trustees that were re-elected for a three-year term included Debbie Avedian, Shahe Boyadjian, Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin, Ron Nazeley, Joseph Ouzounian, M.D. and Kohar Mardirossian Pelter.

Chairladies of Ararat Home’s supporting organizations presented their reports and their annual contributions. Through their hard work and dedication, the Ladies Auxiliary, the various area Guilds and the Gift Shop benefit the operations of the Home.

At this meeting, the organizations together contributed $154,000. Celebrating Ararat Home’s status as a premier facility for elder care, a delicious meal was enjoyed.
What has made Casino Night such a successful event for the past ten years? There are several answers to that question. First, from a “bottom line” point of view, there are very generous sponsors and prize donors. Dozens of individuals, couples, businesses and foundations ensure a profitable evening benefiting Ararat Home. This year, Grand Sponsor, the John & Hasmik Foundation, that is the Margditchian family foundation affiliated with Commerce Casino, underwrote much of the expense of the occasion. Second, of course, the Casino Night Committee, chaired by Gary Kaloostian, may take a bow for putting in the time and effort and attention to detail, which makes for so much enjoyment. Third, all those who attend! That’s where the real fun comes in… shouting at the Craps table, cheering or groaning at Black Jack… cashing in chips for opportunity drawing tickets and rushing up to choose/claim wonderful prizes. And this year, the 10th anniversary was celebrated with a special $1,000 grand cash door prize donated by Armen and Nora Hampar. Is it any wonder that everyone is looking forward to next November’s Casino Night XI?
There are just a few dates throughout the calendar year which we circle automatically: birthdays, holidays and the Ararat Home Annual Picnic! Thanks to the loyal, hard-working men of the Triple X Fraternity, the picnic continues to be one of the most anticipated events every year. The last Sunday in September on the beautiful Home grounds in Mission Hills, Picnic Chairman Mike Surmeian and his extensive committee welcomed several hundred attendees to a day filled with delicious Armenian foods, games and prizes for children, a professional dance group, a lively band, fabulous raffle prizes and a glorious day of meeting old friends and new. As soon as the 2013 picnic ended, we all started looking forward to September 2014!

September 5, 2013 was the day to celebrate Ararat Nursing Facility’s compliance of all standards set by the Department of Health Care Services. Sponsored by the administration and Board of Trustees, a special luncheon was served by the Board of Trustees to the fabulous team who render excellent care to Ararat’s residents. The Director of Nursing, Susan Yeranyan, recognized each department for its contributions. The enthusiasm and family spirit of the staff was on display as they took a bow and presented a very entertaining song, which the employees had written. Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Joseph Kanimian expressed the Board’s sentiments by saying, “We are grateful that you are there for our Ararat Home.”

(From right to left) Luis Albert, Interim Administrator, Susan Yeranyan, Director of Nursing and Chairman Kanimian proudly displaying “America’s Top Nursing Homes 2013 Award”
The Ararat Home lost four loyal friends in the past year: Art and Mary Arutian, Charlie Keligian, and Beatrice Malkhasian.

Art was a past chairman of the Ararat Home Board of Trustees and chaired the Fundraising Committee. He was instrumental in establishing the wall tiles and the courtyard bricks as a fundraising source. Art’s wife of some 60 years, Mary, was always there to help Art. She volunteered for many years at the Home and served as the chairlady for both the Ararat Home Gift Shop and Ladies Auxiliary.

Charlie was a devoted Trustee and a longtime member of the Board. He managed the maintenance of the Mission Hills facility and was always there to make certain that everything was in proper functioning order. Charlie’s last major project was overseeing the repairs of the fountain next to the Ararat-Eskijian Museum. This will remain as Charlie’s shining pride for all those who visit the Home.

Beatrice Malkhasian served as a dedicated secretary to the board for over 17 years. She was instrumental in looking after every detail of the Home’s major activities including Home’s Annual Picnic, Casino Night and General Membership Meeting. Beatrice was an effective liaison to the Armenian and American community at large.

All four worked tirelessly and selflessly for the Home. All of them were devoted to the Home and loved serving all the residents. We will miss them all dearly.

SAVE THE DATES

“ARARAT HOME ANNUAL PICNIC”
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

“CASINO NIGHT XI”
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1

“LADIES AUXILIARY”
MONTHLY LUNCHEONS
FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH – 11:00 A.M.
Ararat Home Deukmejian Ballroom
AUGUST 24 - WINE TASTING, Ararat Home
CONTACT: Vernalie Deirmenjian 818-709-4450

“MASSIS GUILD”
JUNE 21, 9:30 A.M. – Bee-Shee Breakfast
Montebello Armenian Center
JULY 26, 11 A.M. – Bingo
Montebello Armenian Center
OCTOBER 18, NOON – Event Extravaganza with Live Entertainment
Details to follow
DECEMBER 7, 2014 – Annual Christmas Lunch and Installation
Rio Hondo Event Center
CONTACT: Lovey Agajanian Sherman 323-722-7994

“SAN GABRIEL GUILD”
JUNE 28, 11 A.M. – Meeting with Brunch to Greet New Members
Embassy Suites, Arcadia
CONTACT: Cindy Kaloostian 626-792-4479

“VALLEY GUILD”
MONTHLY LUNCHEONS – FOURTH MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, 11:00 A.M.
Ararat Home Board Room (Dark July and August)
CONTACT: Lucy Melkonian 818-678-9205

“WESTSIDE GUILD”
JUNE 5, 10 A.M. – Game Day with Lunch
Lakeside Country Club, Toluca Lake
DECEMBER 6, 11 A.M. Annual Christmas Luncheon
Beverly Hills Hotel - Details to follow
CONTACT: Liliana Yousoufian 818-700-1402