

# ARARAT

## H Y E L I G H T S

A Publication of Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc.®

Summer 2016



### *meet our new chairman:* **Michael Stephen Surmeian**

With utmost confidence, the Ararat Home Board of Trustees has elected as its new chairman, Mike Surmeian, an energetic, intelligent and competent individual with professional expertise in finance and strategic thinking. Born in Van Nuys, California, Mike is a graduate of Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School. Upon earning his B.S. degree in Business Administration with concentrations in Accounting and Finance from California State

University, Northridge, he began his career as a CPA with Ernst & Young LLP. In time, he was promoted to Senior Manager. After 10 years, he was hired by Natrol, Inc. and was promoted within two years to Vice President of Sales. Since 2008, he has been employed by TABS Analytics as Senior Vice President of Consulting.

Mike lives by his parents' words of wisdom, "Secure your family situation first, then give back to the community." He and his wife Laura have three wonderful children: Luke (20),

Samantha (18) and Mia (14). Mike's passion for community service began at a young age with the Triple X Fraternity, where he held numerous positions in the Los Angeles Junior chapter. Presently, he serves as Chairman of the Board and Grand Chapter Secretary. Additionally, he is currently on the Church Council of the United Armenian Congregational Church and is Vice Chairman of the Christian Education Board; he has taught Sunday School and has volunteered as a Youth Group Leader.

Mike's involvement with Ararat Home began in 1990, when he joined the Annual Picnic Committee. In 2007, he served as an advisor on

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## *celebrating* **TEN YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE**

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*"Humility, patience, sincerity, devotion, truly caring, supportive, capable, always ready to help, beloved by all..."* This is how many at Ararat Home describe Derik Ghookasian, our Chief Operating Officer.

Derik was born and raised in Tehran, Iran. In 1989, he immigrated to the Los Angeles area and began working for Sears Roebuck & Company, where he was employed for 11 years advancing to gradually higher managerial positions. During this time, Derik received his undergraduate degree in accounting and obtained a Master's degree in Business Administration. In 2006, he joined Ararat Home as Controller and was promoted in 2014 to Chief Operating Officer.

As COO, Derik is involved in all areas of the Home's operations: from resident care, human resources matters, maintenance, campus landscaping, budgeting to community outreach, fundraising, interactions with membership and activities of Ararat-Eskijian Museum. If you have a question about the Home, he has the answer!

As the COO of Ararat Home, Derik is an active member of the California Association of Health Facilities and Leading Age California, which are non-

profit organizations in the aging services industry. He is also an officer on the Board of Directors of GuardianComp, Inc., a self-insured group of 30 non-profit senior living facilities.

Additionally, Derik was very recently selected to serve on the Advisory Loan Insurance Committee, an appointed body by the Director of the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development within the California Health and Human Services Agency. This is a citizen advisory committee that reviews and recommends applications for the Cal-Mortgage program, which provides loans for non-profit healthcare facility development. This is indeed a very prestigious appointment for which we whole-heartedly congratulate Derik.

We thank Derik for his commitment to the mission of the Home and for ten years of dedicated service in advancing that mission. Ararat Home shines through his good work!



### Derik says...

*Ararat Home is a jewel of the Armenian community and a place of pride for our heritage. Thanks to the visionaries who established this organization, our elders have a "home," where they can be cared for with love, respect and compassion. I consider our elders our national treasures, and I cherish their wisdom and affection. I am proud to be a member of the esteemed Ararat Home team and honored to be able to serve my community in this capacity.*

— life at —

# ARARAT ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY

*"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." – George Bernard Shaw*

Nothing is more rewarding or true to those words than to hear one of our 90-year young residents say at the end of a day, "I have not had so much fun in years!"

Over the decades, we have learned that wellness is achieved when an individual feels content, needed, actively involved in life's experiences and is allowed to age with

dignity. At our Assisted Living Facility, residents engage in life-enriching activities every day. We encourage laughter, creative expression as well as opportunities to socialize and foster meaningful relationships. Our focus is on helping residents maintain a full, stress-free, high quality life.



outdoor activity



story and afternoon  
coffee hour



kefir time



bingo



Father's Day celebration



Christmas party



morning exercise



dancing at a Monthly  
Tuesday Luncheon



cheers on New Year's Eve



*Ararat Home is a dream come true for so many of our residents. Knowing that we make a difference in their lives each and every day is inspiring. I am immensely proud of the ALF team for the excellent care they provide our residents and the passion they share for this work as we continually strive to make this facility one of the best.*

Administrator Rita Noravian



# — life at — ARARAT CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL

Located in Eagle Rock, Ararat Convalescent Hospital has been serving the Armenian community since 1980. We have been awarded a 5-star rating by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and we have received a Bronze Commitment to Quality Award by the American Health Care Association for the exemplary care delivered at our 42-bed facility.

Each resident at our Convalescent Hospital is provided a customized program of care. We utilize the team approach to comprehensive care, where expert clinical skills are combined with the compassionate delivery of care. Emphasis is placed on creating a comfortable, home-like environment regardless if patients stay for short-term treatment or long-term care.



Halloween celebration



afternoon relaxation



lunch outing at In-N-Out



arts and crafts project



friendship



morning exercises



visiting main campus for monthly luncheon



group activity



Hampartsoom (Ascension) celebration



*It takes the cooperation, selflessness and love of an entire team to be able to deliver the exceptional type of care that Ararat Home does for its residents. At our facility, residents regard the staff as part of their extended families. I feel very grateful to be part of a wonderful team that can provide a nurturing, caring environment in which our residents feel safe and loved.*

Administrator Varsenik Keshishyan



# — life at —

## ARARAT NURSING FACILITY

Ararat Nursing Facility provides comprehensive short-term rehabilitation and long-term nursing care to 254 residents in a loving and respectful environment. The collaborative effort of dedicated employees is focused on the wellness of mind, body and spirit. Continuous therapeutic activities, a specialized dementia program, Zumba and yoga classes, candlelight dinners and other special events organized by the Life Enrichment team

keep the mind active and the spirit enriched. Daily physical, occupational and speech therapies within the Rehabilitation Department and excellent around-the-clock nursing and medical care sustain the body. We nurture interactions between residents, families and staff so that residents thrive physically, delight in new experiences and benefit from an overall high quality of life.



religious service



visiting the chapel



Greek Night themed dinner



morning yoga



backgammon contest



Cinco de Mayo celebration



Christmas party



group activity



Michink (Lent) lunch



*I am proud to lead a team of compassionate individuals who work hard to maintain a reputation for excellence in care at our facility. It is truly a blessing and honor for me to be part of the Ararat Home family and to help provide this invaluable service to the Armenian community.*

Administrator Margarita Kechichian



# annual MEMBERSHIP MEETING 2016

Ararat Home members and supporters gathered on March 13 for the Annual Membership Meeting to review the Home's activities of the past year. Outgoing Board of Trustees Chairman Joseph Kanimian recognized the dedication and devoted service of trustees, employees, volunteers and the invaluable contributions of supporters who are all united in one purpose – providing the best care for residents in a uniquely Armenian environment. Administrators Margarita Kechichian, Varsenik Keshishyan and Rita Noravian explained the various facets of care that are provided to residents in each of the Home's three facilities. Chief Operating Officer Derik Ghookasian spoke of the successes in growing the organization and meeting daily challenges while maintaining focus on delivering quality care to residents.



In addition to resident care services, Ararat Home also serves as a resource for the community in promoting Armenian culture and heritage. Ararat-Eskijian Museum Director Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin reported that the museum hosted nearly 2,500 visitors and organized 22 cultural and educational events in 2015. The museum is increasing its collaboration with other organizations, and its recognition within the community as well as internationally is growing.

Outgoing Treasurer Michael Surmeian reported that the Home's financial standing is sound thanks to operational profits from the three facilities, the steadfast support of community members and the fundraising efforts of the Home's membership. Endowment Fund Committee Chair Armen Hampar reported that the Fund, which started in 1997 with \$346,000, is now valued at over \$10 million. The Annual Picnic and Casino Night committee chairs Michael Surmeian and Gary Kaloostian reported successful results from the two major fundraisers. Richard Jebejian announced the



*Chairs of Supporting Organizations*  
Sonia Sakajian, Joseph Kanimian, Debbie Avedian, Dianne Ohanesian, Lucy Melkonian, Vicky Parian, Geraldine Chuchian, Patty Samarge, Lovey Sherman

planned reprinting of the beloved Ararat Home Cookbook, and Building Committee Chair Nazar Ashjian reported on the much-anticipated expansion of the Assisted Living Facility.

Board Liaison Debbie Avedian recognized the commitment and hard work of the Home's supporting organizations in raising funds to continue improving the services Ararat Home offers its residents. Chairs of the eight organizations – Gift Shop, Ladies Auxiliary, Massis Guild, Orange County Guild, San Diego

Guild, San Gabriel Valley Guild, Valley Guild, Westside Guild – reported on their activities for the year and collectively contributed \$170,000 to support the Home's operations, the Endowment Fund and the upcoming building project.

After announcement of the Board of Trustees election results, in which all nominees were re-elected to new three-year terms, the outgoing chairman was recognized for his three years of service and leadership. The meeting concluded with a convivial buffet dinner.

## *we're* **EXPANDING!**

As the need for residential senior care has increased in our community, the demand for the unique services Ararat Home provides has grown beyond our capacity. Therefore, we are delighted to announce the planned expansion of our Assisted Living Facility!

While the planning phase began in earnest in early 2014, this expansion project had been in the Home's long-term plans for over three decades. Thanks to the diligent work of the Board of Trustees and the tremendous support of our friends who share our vision for the Home's future, this long-time dream will soon come to fruition.



This fifth expansion on the Ararat Home Mission Hills campus will add 20,120 square feet to the existing Assisted Living Facility structure. The three-story new wing will include 44 additional rooms, which will provide a home for 56 additional residents. Construction is scheduled to commence this summer with expected completion in one year.

The groundbreaking ceremony in June celebrated the visible beginning of another terrific milestone in Ararat Home's journey. As we now look forward to the coming months of construction and transition, we eagerly anticipate the successful realization of this project and the ribbon cutting ceremony next year!



# save the dates

## ARARAT HOME ANNUAL PICNIC

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 25

11:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Ararat Home Grounds

Contact: 818-365-3000 / [info@ararathome.org](mailto:info@ararathome.org)

## CASINO NIGHT XIII

Saturday, NOVEMBER 12

5:30 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Deukmejian Grand Ballroom

Contact: 818-838-4860 / [anid@ararathome.org](mailto:anid@ararathome.org)

## ARARAT-ESKIJIAN MUSEUM

Contact: 747-500-7585 / [maggiegoschin@gmail.com](mailto:maggiegoschin@gmail.com)

## "THE SEARCH FOR A MASTER'S LEGACY" – JOHN GARO & YOUSUF KARSH

Presentation by Mehmed Ali

Thursday, OCTOBER 13 • 7:30 p.m.

Sheen Memorial Chapel

## SYMPOSIUM ON THE ARTS AND CULTURE OF HADJIN

NOVEMBER (date TBD)

1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Deukmejian Grand Ballroom

## LADIES AUXILIARY

Chair: Alice Kavaldjian

818-466-9389 / [alicekaval@yahoo.com](mailto:alicekaval@yahoo.com)

## MONTHLY LUNCHEONS

First Tuesday of Each Month

11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Deukmejian Grand Ballroom

## MASSIS GUILD

Chair: Lovey Sherman

213-309-5992 / [loveysherman@gmail.com](mailto:loveysherman@gmail.com)

## LUNCH & BINGO

Saturday, JULY 23 • 11:00 a.m.

Armenian Center, Montebello

## PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ

Saturday, SEPTEMBER 17 • 6:00 p.m.

Quiet Cannon, Montebello

## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON AND INSTALLATION

Sunday, DECEMBER 4 • 12:00 p.m.

Rio Hondo Event Center, Downey

## SAN GABRIEL VALLEY GUILD

Chair: Vicky Parian

626-303-2023 / [bparian@hotmail.com](mailto:bparian@hotmail.com)

## ANNUAL KUFTA DINNER

Monday, SEPTEMBER 12 • 6:00 p.m.

Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church  
– Derian Hall, Pasadena

## CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Sunday, DECEMBER 11 • 1:00 p.m.

Embassy Suites, Arcadia

## WESTSIDE GUILD

Co-chairs: Lynnette Amerian

& Geraldine Chuchian

818-389-2500 / 310-339-4474

[lynamerian@yahoo.com](mailto:lynamerian@yahoo.com) / [gsc921@roadrunner.com](mailto:gsc921@roadrunner.com)

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Saturday, DECEMBER 10 • 11:00 a.m.

Beverly Hills Hotel

# 2 TWO fundraisers

If you love Ararat Home, there are two dates which *must* be marked on your calendar every year: one is in late September and the other in November. Yes, the **Annual Picnic** and **Casino Night**. That's what we're talking about! These are our community fundraisers that bring fun-loving friends of Ararat Home to the Mission Hills campus for a great time.

Thanks to the dedicated work of the TripleX Fraternity-Los Angeles Chapter in collaboration with Ararat Home staff and volunteers, the Annual Picnic combines delicious food and wonderful cultural entertainment with a sociable atmosphere and the opportunity to see dear friends from all over the Southern California area. Games are available for kids and terrific raffle prizes for adults.

For more winnings, wait until you see the prize table at Casino Night XIII! The fabulous prizes will include jewelry, restaurant cards, generously filled theme baskets, adult consumables (*also known as liquor*) and more. We'll eat, play casino games, laugh and enjoy ourselves in great company.

Are you with us? We know you are! See you at the Picnic on September 25 and at Casino Night on November 12!



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## Meet Our New Chairman: Michael Stephen Surmeian

the Endowment Fund Committee, and he became a member of the Board of Trustees in 2008. He has since served on the Finance, Human Resources, and Building Committees and currently chairs the Annual Picnic Committee. Mike held the treasurer position in the Board from 2009 until his election to the chairmanship in March 2016.

His goals during his tenure as Chairman include completion of the new wing of the Assisted Living Facility and acquisition of increased skilled nursing capacity. He remarks, "Our facilities' waiting lists for admission are too long. We must work to make the Ararat Home experience more readily available to all those who want it."

With Mike's professional talents and community service background, we are certain that he will accomplish the goals he has set for the advancement of Ararat Home. We are indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated and accomplished chairman leading our organization to future successes.

## ARARAT HIGHLIGHTS

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Published by

(Ararat Home of Los Angeles, Inc.®)

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