

# ABMDR

ARMENIAN BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTRY

## 2018 NEWSLETTER



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

So much of ABMDR's success is measured by numbers, and by that account we can certainly view last year as a success: we added 1,117 more prospective donors to the Registry, held 25 recruitment drives, and have connected with 15 international registries through membership in a powerful new online software program (EMDIS), which will greatly enhance our ability to find patient matches in the months and years ahead. But equally important to these quantitative measures are the qualitative aspects of our work. I am very pleased to relay that the cooperative agreement we made with Armenia's health leadership has resulted in a robust collaboration between ABMDR and the Armenian Bone Marrow Transplantation Center, with 14 patients and their 24 siblings tissue-typed as of this writing. This attention to quality carries over in our focus for this year, as we vigorously target the healthy youth of Armenia and Artsakh in our recruitment efforts. And quality is always evident among the hundreds of volunteers and supporters who work side by side with me and our Yerevan staff. Your continued dedication is what truly defines our success.

**Frieda Jordan, PhD, President**



### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

In the 18 years that I have been associated with the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry, its work has grown exponentially in scope: 30,000 potential donors from around the world, connections and matches facilitated with Armenians and non-Armenians alike. I marvel at the fact that our base of operations is still run solely by volunteers. It is truly astounding what Dr. Frieda Jordan and her team have accomplished and continue to accomplish with their vision and commitment.

**Mark Geragos, Esq.**  
Chairman of the Board of Directors



### MESSAGE FROM THE HONORARY CHAIR

I am so proud to be part of an organization that is making such an impact on others. ABMDR has not only evolved into a substantial international registry, but a powerhouse of medical innovation. It is using cutting-edge technologies in the fields of stem cell harvesting, auto-transplantation, immunophenotyping, and cord-blood banking. These procedures are making the difference between someone's disease being detected early or not, between someone's body accepting or rejecting a therapy or a transplant. ABMDR is doing things never done before in Armenia, things that are saving lives.

**Bella Kocharyan, MD**  
Honorary Chair, former First Lady of Armenia

## Officer helps save life of cancer patient



See story on page 6

## By becoming donors, parents are investing in the future health of their children



A scene from one of our latest stem cell / bone marrow donor recruitments.

THANK YOU, OUR SPONSORS, FOR YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS





DR. NUBAR BOGHOSSIAN

FIGHTING CANCER  
IS ABOUT *life*. YOUR FIGHT  
TO *live* AND HAVE A LIFE  
AFTER DIAGNOSIS AND  
CANCER THERAPY.

THE DOCTORS AND STAFF OF THE  
LOS ANGELES CANCER NETWORK  
ARE *dedicated* TO BEING  
YOUR TEAM FOR LIFE!



DR. BORIS BAGDASARIAN



# LOS ANGELES CANCER NETWORK

[www.LACancer.net](http://www.LACancer.net)  
[www.facebook.com/lacancernetwork](http://www.facebook.com/lacancernetwork)

Glendale Memorial Hospital  
222 West Eulalia Street, Suite 100C  
Glendale, CA 91204  
(818) 553-8160

Glendale Adventist Medical Center  
1505 Wilson Terrace, Suite 200  
Glendale, CA 91206  
(818) 409-0105

## Interview with ABMDR Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan

**Q: The Internet has made it easier and faster for people to connect — from professional and personal networking to shopping online. How is ABMDR taking advantage of the latest technology in this regard?**

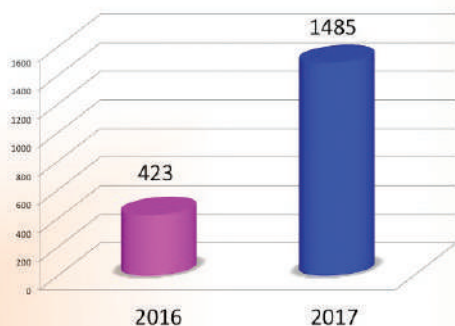
A: In November 2017, we acquired membership in the EMDIS (European Marrow Donor Information System) software program, which allows access to 40 international registries with one click of a button. In less than two months, we have connected with 15 registries, and are getting three times more daily search requests compared to the established email and fax communications.



**Q: That is an exponential increase in a very short period of time! What are you projecting the impact will be in the months ahead?**

A: Right now the ABMDR is getting unprecedented international visibility. In the months ahead, we expect to expand our donor population by recruiting a new generation of young, dedicated individuals with a high level of receptiveness to our call to join the Registry as active donors. This will significantly improve the number of potential matches and will augment the quality of donated cells for transplantation. Beside that, we expect a geographic expansion in the provision of our donor-match services and higher availability of Armenian donors in international search efforts. This step is key in maintaining the status of ABMDR as a reliable and valuable entity in the global bone marrow transplantation community.

### The EMDIS effect: Dramatic Increase in Preliminary Search Requests



**Q: What other ways are you seeking to recruit more prospective donors?**

A: We now have nearly 30,000 donors in the Registry, and every additional registrant increases our statistical odds of finding matches for our patients. We are thrilled with the potential of the EMDIS to expand our visibility, but we must always be aggressive in organizing recruitment drives for targeted populations of our world community. For 2018, we are specifically planning major recruitments in Armenia and Artsakh.

**Q: You mentioned “targeted populations.” What does that mean?**

A: Although we encourage registrants between the ages of 18 and 50 to sign up as potential bone marrow/stem cell donors, scientifically speaking, our most viable prospective stem cell donors are in the younger demographic segment, between the ages of 18 and 29 or so. Therefore we attach strategic importance to maintaining ongoing contact with the ministries of education in both Armenia and in Artsakh, as they are our traditional partners in organizing recruitment drives at universities and other higher-education venues. In addition, military schools — and cadets in particular — are also within the permanent scope of our interest.

## ABMDR: your friends for life

By Dr. Nubar Boghossian

Stem cell transplantation remains an effective and sometimes the only treatment option for many patients suffering from any of a wide range of malignant (leukemias and lymphomas) and sometimes nonmalignant conditions.

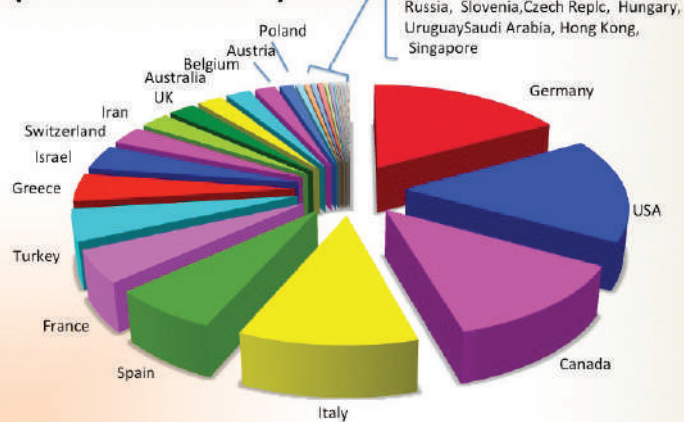
Recent advances in technology, science, supportive care, HLA-typing (human leukocyte antigen), and treatment/management have led to improved outcomes for patients undergoing transplantation. Hematopoietic stem cells are immature precursor cells residing within the bone marrow spaces that are capable of giving rise to most of the cellular elements within the blood, including lymphoid, erythroid, and myeloid lines.



Hematopoietic stem cells can be obtained from peripheral blood, bone marrow, or umbilicus cord blood. Allogeneic stem cell transplantation has progressed enormously over the past decade. Extensive planning and coordination of care is required for all transplantation candidates, usually involving a network of physicians, nurses, and coordinators as well as supportive staff.

Choosing the right donor for a successful transplant is a complex science. It involves the highly specialized HLA antigen testing in order to search for an HLA matched donor, beginning with siblings, matched related donors, syngeneic donors (twins), haploidentical (parents) donors, or matched unrelated donors. Careful donor selection and evaluation are integral parts of the pre-transplantation process. That is where the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry comes in, in light of the very promising and encouraging results that have shown a great impact on our society in terms of treating hematological malignancies.

### CT + HR Requests (from 35 countries)

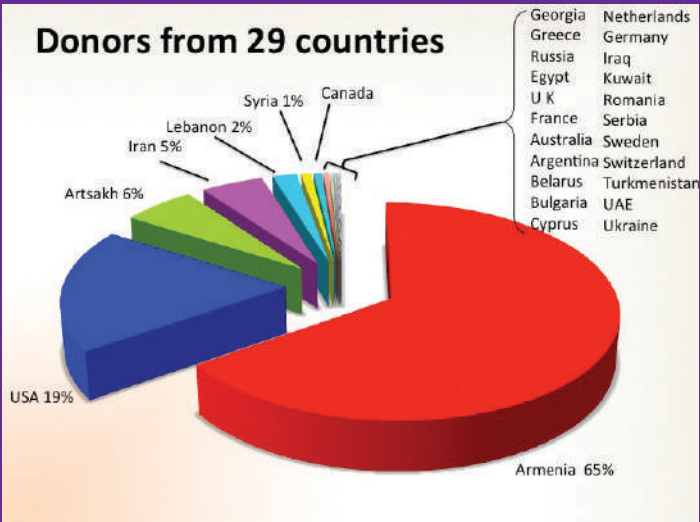


With ongoing and generous grassroots support of its HLA-typing, outreach, and educational work, and with as many potential bone marrow stem cell donors joining its ranks, the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry will be able to continue to help save lives of Armenian and non-Armenian patients across the globe.

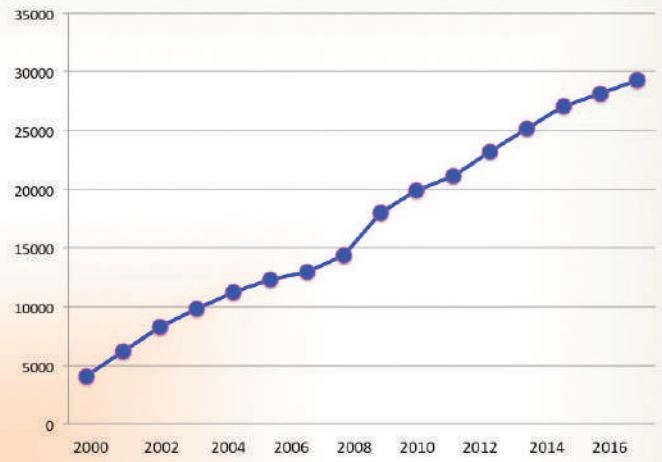
*Dr. Nubar Boghossian is a hematologist with the Los Angeles Cancer Network, in Glendale, California, and a member of the ABMDR Board of Directors.*

# ABMDR ARMENIA LAB ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

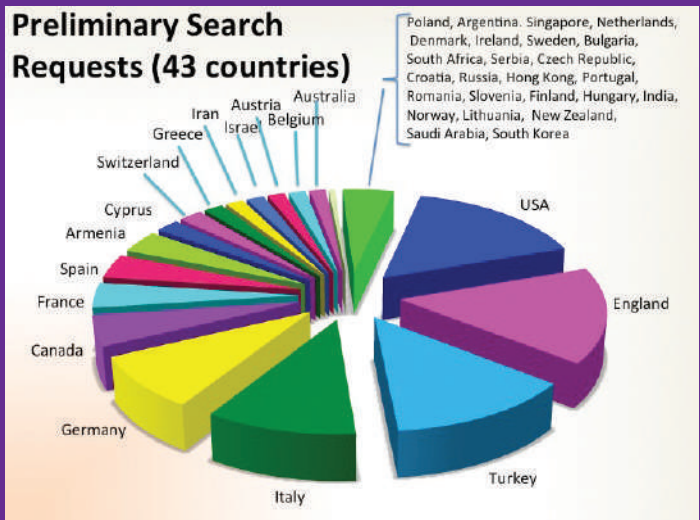
## Donors from 29 countries



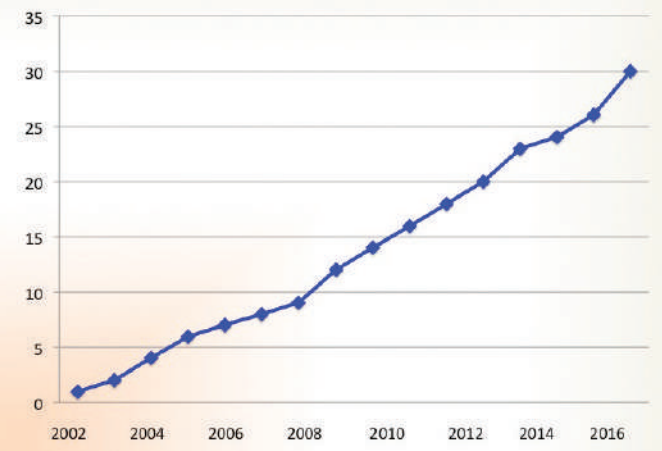
## Total number of donors (over 29,000)



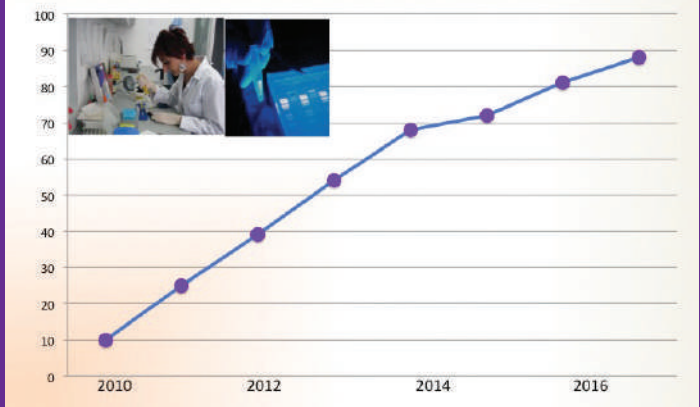
## Preliminary Search Requests (43 countries)



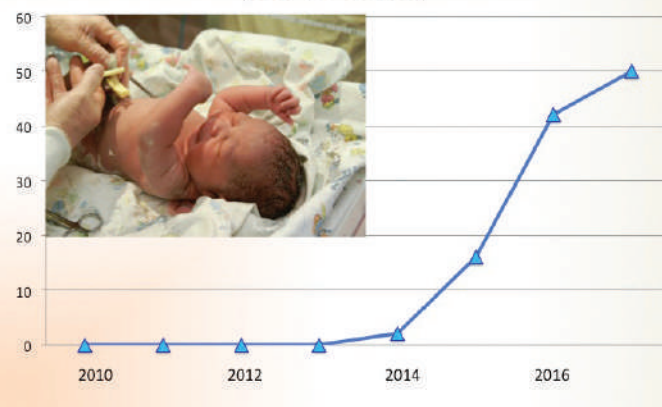
## 30 Transplants



## Kidney Transplant Compatibility Tests (88 to date)



## Cord Blood Banking (50 to date)



# ABMDR: your trusted guide on an unpredictable journey

By Dr. Boris Bagdasarian

Each of us hopes that we will never get that call from the doctor who says, “You have blood cancer,” or “Your child has blood cancer.” But we know all too well that it can happen, and when that news comes, our hearts sink, our minds race, and we can feel paralyzed with fear and anxiety.

As a doctor, I have seen patients and their families experience these emotions when they receive news of a life-threatening disease. Those of us in our profession do our best to allay fears, and to give families a medical “road map” to understand



the journey ahead of them. But when it comes to blood cancer — with the many unknowns of whether various treatments will work, or won't — you also need a personal guide to help prepare you with all the resources you need for this journey of twists and turns.

That guide for ethnic Armenians is the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. I encourage anyone who hears the frightening news from their doctor to immediately contact ABMDR to help them prepare for the journey ahead. And I encourage you to heed the first piece of advice they will give you: have tissue typing done for the members of your family.

There are many forms of blood cancer, and some are more aggressive than others. A stem cell transplant may be an immediate course of action, or it may be necessary only months after other treatments have failed. But no one — not even the doctors — can predict with certainty what lies ahead. If and when that transplant is needed, those families that do the tissue typing at the beginning of the journey and identify a match don't lose any precious time to be ready for that potentially life-saving moment.

How fortunate we are to have ABMDR at our sides when crisis strikes. And for those of us who have not gotten that frightening call from the doctor, I urge you still to plan ahead for that possibility: join the Registry if you haven't already.

We all need to feel empowered as we journey through this life — whatever it throws our way.

*Dr. Boris Bagdasarian is a medical oncologist with the Los Angeles Cancer Network, in Glendale, California, and a member of the ABMDR Board of Directors.*

# Life's lessons, as seen by a physician mother

By Dr. Evelyn Baghdasraian

My first introduction to ABMDR was back in 2005, meeting our beloved little Biurad during his stay at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. I was so moved by his kind soul; his warm, attentive family; and the strength behind his gentle spirit. I will never forget him, and still think about those days when, like many of you, I juggled my days between motherhood and my life's calling in medicine.

It was then that I committed myself to ABMDR's life-saving mission, to find a donor for children in need of bone marrow transplantation, knowing that as Armenians we hold the key to saving each other more than anyone else possibly could.

As a physician, I know this to be a truth. Our teaching indicates that our genetic match is closest to our own, our HLA type more likely to be found among Armenians, yet we can also help cultures close to us in proximity. I know the importance of



creating this registry, supporting our Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, and ensuring the survivability of this important database for our people.

As a mother, I know that there is nothing in the world I would not do for my children. I know that I would give my life to save a hair on their heads. That same love lives in all of us, and together we can save children all over the world from these devastating diseases with the simple donation of bone marrow — one small gesture to help make a world of difference for a family on the edge of devastation, to save their most precious little child. Please be a donor, and give a parent, family, and child the most simple gift: the gift of life.

*ABMDR Board member Dr. Evelyn Baghdasraian is the Chief of Pediatrics and Co-Director of Medical Education at the Woodland Hills Kaiser Permanente Medical Center, and this year's recipient of the prestigious Physician Exceptional Contribution Award for her physician group.*

## BE A DONOR, SAVE A LIFE!

**We have a registry of thousands. But we still do not have matched bone marrow donors for all patients. With your help, more people will receive a transplant. And more families will have a future filled with hope. How can you help? By partnering with ABMDR, you can help save a life!**

# abmdr.am



# Artsakh army officer helps save the life of a cancer patient in Iran

ABMDR salutes young officer and celebrates 30th life saved through a transplant

On July 3, 2017, ABMDR facilitated its 30th bone marrow stem cell transplant, thanks to stem cells harvested from a young ABMDR matched donor. The stem cells of the donor, Sergey, who is a 24-year-old army officer serving on the frontline in Artsakh, were utilized to save the life of a cancer patient in Iran.

In 2012, Sergey had joined the ranks of ABMDR during a recruitment drive at the Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute, in Yerevan. Five years later, he was found to be a perfect match for a patient in Iran who was suffering from leukemia and whose only hope for survival was to receive a bone marrow stem cell transplant from a compatible donor. Subsequently Sergey was given a day off to leave the frontline to come to ABMDR's Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan to donate his stem cells and save a patient's life.

Accompanied by his young wife and six-month-old son, Sergey was greeted by ABMDR staff. The painless, non-invasive harvesting procedure, performed by Dr. Andranik Mshetsyan, lasted about four hours. Also present at the procedure were ABMDR Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan and Medical Director Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan. At the conclusion of the harvesting, as staff members performed quality-control analyses of the harvested cells and packed them for the special courier who was waiting to transport the precious gift of life to the patient in Iran, Sergey — a hero in the eyes of all, on the frontline as well as far away from them — joined his young family, while someone in Iran was about to get a second chance for life.

Clockwise from right: Sergey and his family with the special courier who transported the donor's stem cells to Iran for the life-saving transplantation; Sergey during the stem cell harvesting procedure, flanked by Dr. Sevak Avagyan and Dr. Andranik Mshetsyan; and with Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan and lab staff member Knarik Pashanyan.



## Dr. Frieda Jordan conducts accreditation inspection in Colombia



As an official inspector with the European Federation of Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility (EFI), Dr. Frieda Jordan conducted a technical inspection of the Valle del Lili Foundation lab, in Cali, Colombia, on June 30, 2017. Following a rigorous inspection, including interviews with staff, the lab was granted a recommendation by Dr.



Jordan for EFI accreditation. Dr. Jordan has been an official EFI inspector since 2012. Past laboratory inspections she has conducted include those at the Istanbul University Medical Faculty, in Turkey; the Hematology Department of Riuniti Hospital of Papardo-Piedmont, in Messina, Sicily; and the Karaiskaki Foundation, in Nicosia, Cyprus.

## ABMDR featured on Armenian TV, named top Shant TV Partner



Clockwise from top left: Dr. Sevak Avagyan, Dr. Frieda Jordan, main producer and host Dr. Vahe Ter-Minasyan, and Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan on the set of Shant TV's "Buzh Info" medical program; Dr. Jordan and Dr. Vicken Sepilian on Armenia TV's "Bari Luys Hayer" program, hosted by Lusine Tovmasyan and Avo Khalatyan; in December 2017, ABMDR was named Top Shant TV Partner and rewarded a Certificate of Recognition; the AB-



MDR representatives with Sergey, an Armenian-army officer, and his wife, on the "Buzh Info" set. In 2017, Sergey helped save the life of a cancer patient in Iran by donating his stem cells. The subsequent transplant that saved the patient's life, facilitated by ABMDR, was the Registry's 30th. The ABMDR representatives' appearances on both "Buzh Info" and "Bari Luys Hayer" took place in September 2017.



This page is sponsored by Dr. Evelyn Barkhoudarian, in memory of Gemma Ohanian, Vahik Ohanian, Mehrdad Ohanian, Hovsep Baghdasarian, and Mariana Kazarians.

## Supporters visit ABMDR's HLA Typing Lab, become familiarized with its activities



ABMDR's HLA Typing Lab in Yerevan received visitors, including supporters, friends, and university students, throughout 2017. Clockwise from top left: Hratch and Annette Postik and their sons Armen and Alek with lab supervisor Armine Hyusyan; Dr. Minas Arseenian (second from left) flanked by ABMDR's Dr. Sevak Avagyan, Armine Hyusyan, and Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan; students from the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University's Faculty of Bioinformatics; and Hagop and Tamara Papazian with daughters Tania and Liana.



## ABMDR Lab staff completes Prometheus training, enhances IT infrastructure

In 2017, the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry's HLA Typing Lab in Yerevan significantly expanded its IT infrastructure by adopting the Prometheus platform, which provides up-to-the-minute access to global registry databases and streamlines donor-match searches. A core aspect of our adoption of the Prometheus platform

was our lab staff's extensive training in the utilization of the system, provided by Albert Mustafin. The training of Armine Hyusyan, our lab supervisor, and Alina Sirunyan, our senior lab technician and database manager, concluded in mid-2017. Armine and Alina have also received Prometheus certification. We thank OGMA, Inc. and its president and CEO, Harmik Baghdasarian, for implementing our data conversion and its transfer to the Prometheus system. By enabling unprecedented donor visibility, patient access to donors, and communication with other registries across the world, the Prometheus system vastly enhances the process of finding bone marrow matches from a global pool of donors.



The Prometheus-platform trainings were provided by Albert Mustafin to Senior Lab Technician and Database Manager Alina Sirunyan and Lab Supervisor Armine Hyusyan.





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*Whether you need to **buy** a new house, or **sell** your current properties,  
please do not hesitate to contact me for a free consultation.*

*I'm here to help you with all your Real Estate needs.*

*I am also a proud member of ABMDR's Board of Advisors, organizing the Walkathon and the  
Comedy Night. After donating my Bone Marrow to a young boy overseas,  
three years ago, I decided to encourage others by telling my story.*

*Paulette*

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Recruitment for patient Arsen Kshtoyan at Armenian Relief Society, Glendale, California



Jasik Jerahian and Fimi Mekhitarian.



Our heartfelt thanks to the Armenian Relief Society (ARS), and Jasik Jerahian in particular, as well as ABMDR West Coast Recruitment Officer Fimi Mekhitarian and our entire recruitment team, for organizing the recruitment drive for patient Arsen Kshtoyan. The event took place on May 24, 2017, at the ARS headquarters in Glendale, California. More than 20 donors were recruited. Currently the patient is seeking a matched donor in order to receive a life-saving transplant.



## Recruitment for patient Constantin Malek Andrasians, Saint Gregory Church, Glendale

ABMDR DONOR RECRUITMENT DRIVE



### CONSTANTIN MALEK ANDRASIAN

AGE 65, IS SUFFERING FROM AML (ACUTE MYELOID LEUKEMIA), A LIFE THREATENING ILLNESS. HE NEEDS A BONE MARROW STEM CELL TRANSPLANT, AND FOR THAT, HE NEEDS A BONE MARROW STEM CELL DONOR -- A CARING ARMENIAN LIKE YOU -- TO SAVE HIS LIFE

TO HELP CONSTANTIN, WE ARE ENCOURAGING EVERY ARMENIAN IN GOOD HEALTH, BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-50 TO REGISTER AND BECOME A STEM CELL DONOR.

BEING A STEM-CELL DONOR IS AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR AN ORDINARY INDIVIDUAL TO BE A **HERO** - AND SAVE THE LIFE OF SOMEONE THEY HAVE NEVER MET. **YOU** COULD BE THE ONE WHO SAVES CONSTANTIN OR ANY ONE OF THE MANY ARMENIANS WAITING FOR A MATCH.



We treat each family as our own, sharing their concerns at every step of the way, and supporting and assisting them in their hour of need.

On December 6, 2017, we held a donor-recruitment drive at St. Gregory Armenian Church in Glendale, California, in support of an Armenian patient in Los Angeles, Constantin Malek Andrasians, as well as other patients across the world. Malek Andrasians, 65, is suffering from a life-threatening blood-related illness. His only chance of survival is to have a bone marrow stem-cell transplant, which would be possible only if he

is matched with a stem-cell donor. The recruitment drive was organized jointly with members of Malek Andrasians' family. The family was also instrumental in raising public awareness of their loved one's plight. With ABMDR volunteers on hand to answer questions, give out vital information, and administer a simple swab test, a total of 72 supporters joined the ranks of ABMDR as potential bone marrow donors.



Patient recruitment in Tehran, February 2018



ARMENIAN BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTRY

# Match For Life



19<sup>th</sup> Annual **GALA**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2018**

Live Entertainment

**TAGLYAN CULTURAL CENTER**

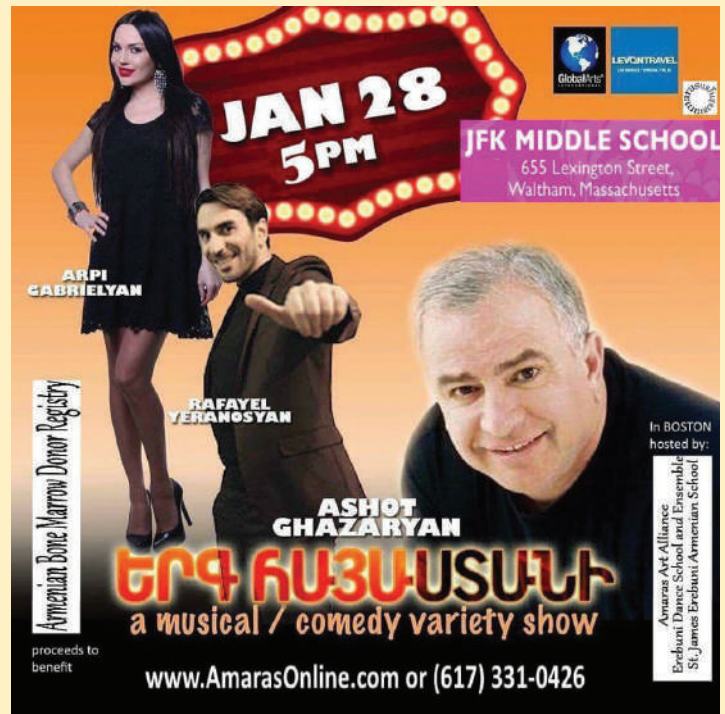
1201 N. VINE ST., LOS ANGELES CA  
5:00 PM COCKTAIL 6:00 PM DINNER

DONATION \$ 150.00

SAVE  
THE DATE

## Waltham, Massachusetts, variety show held in support of ABMDR mission

On January 28, 2018, *Yerg Hayastani*, a musical/comedy variety show featuring acclaimed entertainer Ashot Ghazaryan; Arpi Gabrielyan, star of the television series *Full House*; and renowned comedian Rafael Yeranossyan was held at the hall of JFK Middle School in Waltham, Massachusetts. Proceeds from the show benefited the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. We convey our heartfelt gratitude to the Amaras Art Alliance, Erebuni Armenian School, and Erebuni Dance School for hosting the event, as well as all the members of the ABMDR New England Support Group for their tireless dedication to the ABMDR cause.



## CONGRATULATIONS, 2017 ABMDR LOTTERY WINNERS!



First  
Prize  
Winner

**Elise Yaghoubian**

Two round-trip tickets  
donated by Sidon Travel



Second  
Prize  
Winner

**Patty Samarge**

iPad  
donated by  
Amalia Kiureghlian



Third  
Prize  
Winner

**Armen Der Sahakian**

Bose Wireless Speakers

# LATEST ABMDR STATS

- Registered more than 29,000 donors worldwide
- Identified over 4,341 patients
- Facilitated 30 bone marrow transplants
- Active in 29 countries across four continents

## OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT EVENTS, JANUARY 2017 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2018

### ARGENTINA

**June 2, 2017:** outreach and recruitment at Armenian Community Center of Buenos Aires, organized by the Armenian Relief Society (ARS) of Argentina

### ARMENIA

**January 26, 2017:** National Commission on Television and Radio of the Republic of Armenia, Yerevan

**March 17, 2017:** Insurance CJSC Ingo Armenia headquarters, Yerevan

**Throughout April 2017:** Gazprom Armenia: Yerevan headquarters and other offices in the capital, as well as branches in the regions of Kotayk, Armavir, Lori, and Shirak

**June 5, 2017:** PicsArt Armenia, Yerevan headquarters

**September 25, 2017:** World Marrow Donor Day outreach and recruitment, Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute, Yerevan

**October 7, 2017,** outreach and recruitment drive in Gavar, Gegharkunik Region

### BELGIUM AND NETHERLANDS

Ongoing, since February 2018: Brussels and Amsterdam

### IRAN

**September 16, 2017:** World Marrow Donor Day recruitment during the annual Pan-Armenian (Hamahaykakan) Games, Ararat Sports Complex, Tehran

**February 2018:** recruitment for Constantin Malek Andrasians and other ABMDR patients, Tehran

### JAVAKHK, GEORGIA

**March 3-4, 2017:** recruitments throughout Javakhk (Akhaltskha, Akhalkalak, and Ninotsminda)

### UNITED STATES, WEST COAST

**April 24, 2017:** outreach and recruitment at Armenian Martyrs' Monument rally, Montebello, California

**May 24, 2017:** recruitment drive for patient Arsen Kshtoyan, ARS headquarters, Glendale, California

**November 4, 2017:** outreach and recruitment at eighth annual Glendale Health Festival, Glendale, California

**December 6, 2017:** recruitment at St. Gregory Armenian Church in Glendale, California, in support of patient Constantin Malek Andrasians, as well as other patients across the world

### UNITED STATES, EAST COAST

**May 18, 2017:** outreach at second annual Zumba of Life event, St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Watertown, Massachusetts



## PicsArt headquarters

On June 5, 2017, the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry held a major recruitment at the Yerevan headquarters of PicsArt Armenia. The event, which was organized within the framework of the #PicsArtCitizen program, drew the enthusiastic support of PicsArt's Yerevan team, with 72 young men and women joining the ranks of ABMDR as potential bone marrow stem cell donors. A team from ABMDR's Yerevan Lab, led by Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan, the Registry's medical director, was on hand to answer questions and collect a very small blood sample from each volunteer, as part of the recruitment process. PicsArt is behind the global phenomenon of the PicsArt App, which lets users edit photos and videos, and create drawings, paintings, and collages on their smartphones. #PicsArtCitizen is the company's initiative to encourage its employees to be engaged in civic activism and become involved in worthy causes.



# World Marrow Donor Day, Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute

On September 25, 2017, ABMDR celebrated World Marrow Donor Day by holding a recruitment drive at the Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute, in Yerevan. Prior to the recruitment, ABMDR Medical Director Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan made a presentation on the life-saving mission of the Registry, speaking in the auditorium of the Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute. During the subsequent recruitment, administered by a team from ABMDR's Yerevan Lab, a total of 60 soldiers and Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute staff members registered as potential bone marrow donors. The Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute is a longtime supporter of the ABMDR cause. ABMDR also held a recruitment in Tehran in honor of World Marrow Donor Day (see page 19).





## Recruitment in Gavar, Gegharkunik Region

On October 7, 2017, a grassroots recruitment drive was held in the town of Gavar, the administrative center of Armenia's Gegharkunik Region. The event included a presentation by ABMDR Medical Director Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan. Subsequently 25 potential bone marrow stem cell donors joined the ranks of the Registry.



# ARGENTINA

## Recruitment and outreach



On June 2, 2017, a delegation of ABMDR Board members made a series of presentations and held a donor recruitment at the Armenian Community Center of Buenos Aires, organized by the Armenian Relief Society (ARS) of Argentina. The ABMDR delegation included Dr. Frieda Jordan, President; Dr. Sevak Avagyan, Executive Director; Dr. Vergine Madelian, Outreach and Education Officer; Fimi Mekhitarian, West Coast Recruitment Officer; and Dr. Nani Oskanian. The delegation was in Argentina to participate in the 12th Armenian Medical World Congress, which took place from May 31 through June 2 in Buenos Aires.

During the outreach and recruitment drive at the Armenian Community Center, Doctors Jordan and Avagyan delivered talks about the genesis of ABMDR and its work worldwide, while Dr. Madelian made a comprehensive presentation on donor recruitment and stem cell transplantation. Moreover, the ABMDR Board members discussed future prospects for further collaboration and recruitment opportunities in South America, particularly in Brazil and Uruguay, both of which have sizeable Armenian communities.



# IRAN

## World Marrow Donor Day recruitment

Thank you, Mariet Toumians, our recruitment officer in Iran, and her wonderful team, for organizing the recruitment events.



On September 16, 2017, during the annual Pan-Armenian (Hamahaykakan) Games that took place at the Ararat Sports Complex in Tehran, 66 supporters joined the ranks of ABMDR as potential bone marrow stem cell donors. The festive recruitment event, which carried the theme "Thank you, donor," was organized by ABMDR's Tehran team on the occasion of World Marrow Donor Day.



### April 24 commemoration, Montebello, CA



### ARS Western Region Annual Banquet



### Adventist Health Glendale's Be Our Valentine Guild luncheon



### Glendale Health Festival



ABMDR participated in the eighth annual Glendale Health Festival, which took place on November 4, 2017, in Glendale, California. Throughout the daylong festival, ABMDR volunteers provided visitors with information regarding the mission of the Registry and recruited potential bone marrow stem cell donors. The Glendale Health Festival is a community service of the Armenian American Medical Society in collaboration with the City of Glendale, Glendale Community Services and Parks Department, Office of State Senator Anthony J. Portantino, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Northwest Glendale Lions Club, the Armenian American Nurses Association, Armenian-American Mental Health Association, Glendale Healthy Kids, Anekant Community Center, Adventist Health Glendale, Dignity Health Glendale Memorial Hospital, and USC Verdugo Hills Hospital.



## ABMDR New England: second annual Zumba of Life benefits life-saving mission



On May 18, 2017, ABMDR New England held its second annual Zumba of Life at the St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, in Watertown, Massachusetts. The event was led once again by Armine Hovhannissian, who teaches Zumba in Watertown; and Arsen Aminov, a popular Zumba instructor from New York. Attendees enjoyed a fun evening of Zumba dancing to international music, exciting raffle prizes and giveaways, and light refreshments, all in support of an important cause. The annual Zumba of Life event seeks to gather local Armenians in support of ABMDR's life-saving work while raising awareness about the importance of registering as potential bone marrow stem cell donors.

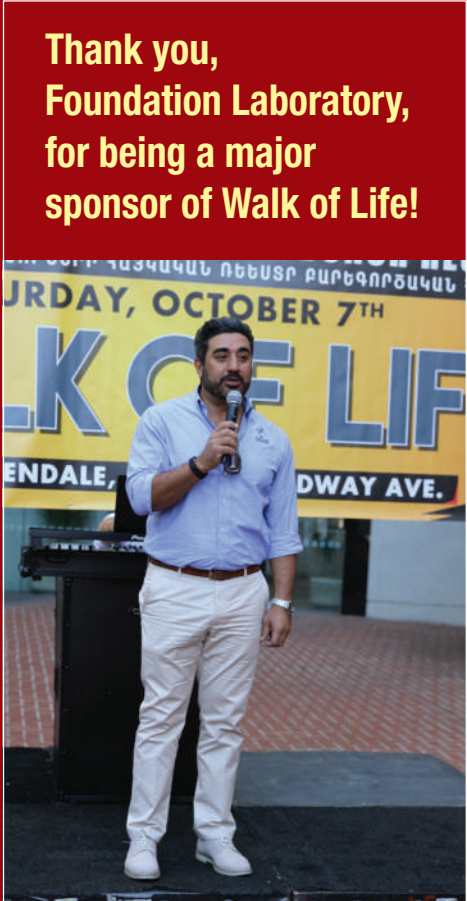




# Walk of Life Los Angeles

On October 7, 2017, over 300 enthusiastic participants converged in Glendale, California, for Walk of Life, our 12th annual Los Angeles walkathon, in strong support of ABMDR's life-saving mission. The festive community event, which also featured music and food, kicked off in the plaza of Glendale City Hall. Participants included elected officials and community leaders, and numerous teams representing schools, universities, community organizations, and individual supporters.





Martin and Candice Titizian, and Armen and Lara Titizian.

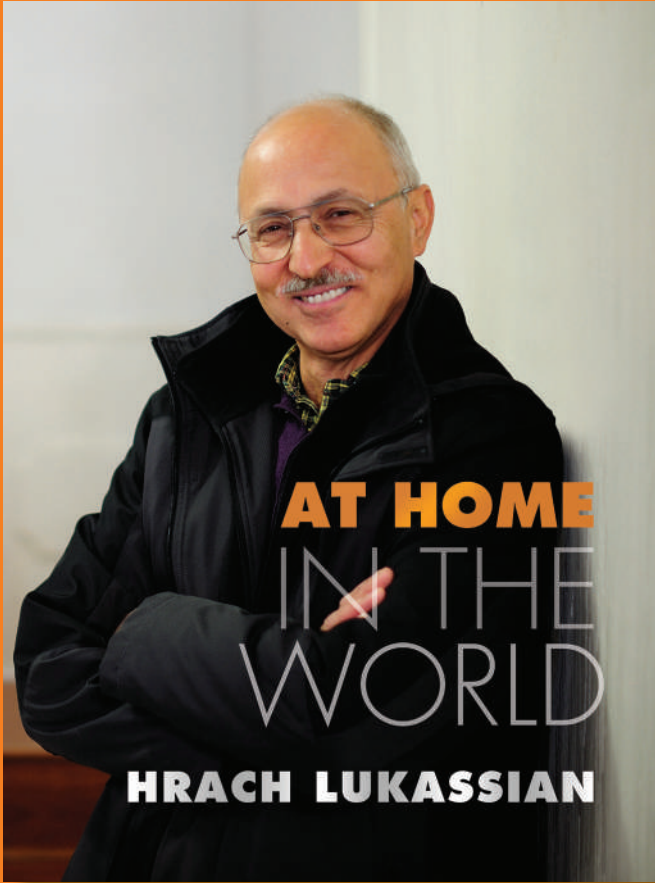


# The next Walk of Life will take place on October 6, 2018





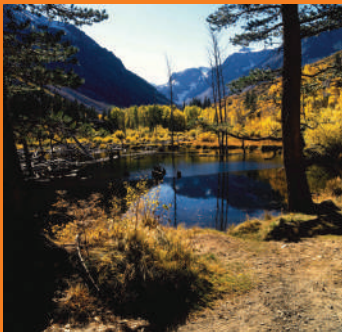
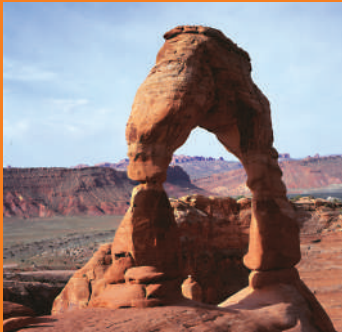
# Own an extraordinary volume while supporting our mission



*At Home in the World* is a wonderful volume of photographs, artworks, and memories, published in celebration of Hrach Lukassian's life and multifaceted achievements. In addition to being a highly accomplished photographer, painter, craftsman, and mountain climber, Lukassian was a lifelong supporter of ABMDR, always generous with his talent and time for the advancement of the Registry's mission.

A large-format, full-color book printed on high-quality stock, *At Home in the World* includes a dazzling selection of Lukassian's photographs and paintings, as well as reproductions of his hand-made backgammon sets and other wood creations. The book also includes chapters devoted to Lukassian's mountain-climbing expeditions and travels across the globe.

Order your copy today with a tax-deductible donation of \$50 (plus \$7 for shipping). Please send your check to:  
ABMDR  
347 West Stocker Street, #208,  
Glendale, CA 91202.  
All proceeds will benefit ABMDR's life-saving mission.



# Walk of Life New England



ABMDR New England held its sixth annual Walk of Life on September 23, 2017, garnering enthusiastic community support. The eagerly anticipated walkathon, which took place in Watertown, drew the participation of numerous community organizations and a large number of young people, including students from local schools and universities.

As in previous years, Walk of Life received major corporate sponsorship from the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Other sponsors and supporters included the Armenian American Pharmacists' Association, PROMETRIKA LLC of Cambridge, Watertown Savings Bank, several other local businesses, the Armenian Tree Project, and the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC).

During the walkathon's opening ceremony, held at ACEC, lead marshal Alex Antounian delivered the opening remarks and introduced the event's guest speaker, Dr. David Weinstock. An Associate Professor of Medicine in the Medical Oncology Department at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and an attending physician on Bone Marrow Transplant inpatient service at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Dr. Weinstock commended the walkers for their very important contribution in raising awareness and funds to help save lives.

The 2.2-mile walk concluded at Watertown Square, where participants enjoyed great music, dancing, and food, along with thousands of people attending the annual Faire on the Square festival.

During the event's closing ceremony, Shant Der Torossian of the New England Walk of Life Committee announced the walkathon winners: the Armenian American Pharmacists' Association was recognized as the team to have raised the most funds; for the fourth year, Nairi Krafian, who received the Volunteer of the Year award at the ABMDR Gala in Los Angeles in August 2017, won for having individually raised the most funds; and the combined St. James, Erebuni Saturday School, and ACYOA team was recognized for highest number of participants.



**Thank you, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, for being a major sponsor of Walk of Life New England**



On August 27, 2017, over 300 supporters, including elected officials and community leaders, attended ABMDR's 18th annual Match for Life Gala, held at the Taglyan Cultural Center, in Los Angeles. Dignitaries in attendance included US Congressman Adam Schiff, California State Senator Anthony Portantino, State Assemblymember Laura Friedman, Glendale City Council members Vartan Gharpetian (Mayor) and Vrej Aghajanian, and Arch. Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese. The Gala was made possible by the major sponsorship of Adventist Health Glendale.

# 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

ՀԱՄԱՐՈՒՄԻ ՊՈՒՐՈՒՄԵՐԻ ԳՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՅԵՏՈՐ ԲԱՐԵՔՆՈՐՈՍԱՆ ԿՐԻՍՏՈՐ  
 ARMENIAN BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTRY CHARITABLE TRUST

## MATCH FOR LIFE GALA





# THANK YOU, ADVENTIST HEALTH GLENDALE, FOR YOUR MAJOR SUPPORT OF OUR 2017 GALA!



## CONGRATULATIONS, OUR 2017 AWARD RECIPIENTS!



**The strength of our organization comes from two sources: the work of our volunteers, and the wonderful solidarity of our supporters.**

Clockwise from top left: Woman of the Year Ramella Markarian, Vice President at Adventist Health Glendale and a member of the ABMDR Board; Man of the Year Robert Barsam, an avid ABMDR supporter, Chairman of the St. James Armenian Church Memorial Fund, and former Grand Commander of the Knights of Vartan; Providence High School Principal Allison Castro accepting the Organization of the Year Award; (next three photos:) Volunteers of the Year Nairi Krafian, Aleko Boghoskhanian, and Arpine Zohrabyan; Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Amalia Kiureghlian; and American Tire Depot CEO Ara Tchaghlasian accepting the Business of the Year Award. Photo below: Gala Committee members and supporters.



## ABMDR participates in Armenian Medical World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina



From May 31 through June 2, 2017, ABMDR participated in the 12th Armenian Medical World Congress, which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The event was organized by the Armenian Medical International Committee (AMIC).

Representing ABMDR at the conference were Dr. Frieda Jordan, President of the Registry; Dr. Sevak Avagyan, Executive Director; and Dr. Vergine Madelian, Outreach and Education Officer. The ABMDR delegation also included Board members Dr. Nani Oskanian from Armenia and West Coast Recruitment Officer Fimi Mekhitarian. In the papers they submitted at the conference, Doctors Jordan, Avagyan, and Madelian discussed all aspects of ABMDR's global operations, including the pioneering work of the organization's HLA Typing Laboratory in Yerevan and its collaboration with Armenia's first-ever Bone Marrow Transplantation Center.

In addition to functioning as a critically important platform for connecting Armenian healthcare professionals and improving Armenian healthcare, the conference in Buenos Aires provided participants with the opportunity to meet new colleagues and renew old bonds.



## WMDA Meeting, Minneapolis, Nov. 2017



## Region 8 Meeting, January 2018, Athens



Representing the Republic of Armenia, a delegation of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry headed by ABMDR Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan and including ABMDR Lab Supervisor Armine Hyusyan, participated in the annual EFI Region 8 and Balkan EPT Meeting on January 27, 2018, held at the Evangelismos Hospital in Athens, Greece. The meeting was attended by more than 150 participants representing 20 countries from Europe, the Middle East, the United States, and elsewhere.



## EFI Conference, Mannheim, Germany, May 30 - June 2, 2017





EVENTS FOR A WONDERFUL CAUSE

# Casino Night

Hosted by Mr. and Mrs.  
Michael and Amy Boyadjian  
October 13, 2017, Phoenicia Restaurant,  
Glendale, California



# Christmas party

December 21, 2017,  
Alegro Restaurant, Glendale





## YOUTH POWER

# 15th-anniversary Laughter for Life celebrates hope

More than 350 supporters attended the 15th annual Laughter for Life, held on November 12, 2017, at the world-famous Comedy Store in West Hollywood. The sold-out event, which benefited ABMDR's life-saving mission, featured performances by an outstanding lineup of comics.

In her opening remarks, Lara Yeretsian, Chairwoman of the ABMDR Comedy Night Committee, spoke about the work of ABMDR and the organization's founding in 1999. That year, she explained, the parents of a four-year-old girl in Ohio, Alique Topalian, were desperately seeking a matched bone marrow donor to help save her life through a transplant. Alique became the inspiration for the launch of ABMDR, Yeretsian said.

Next, Yeretsian invited acclaimed comedian and fellow Comedy Night Committee member and co-founder Sam Tripoli to the stage, and surprised him by announcing that his cousin, Alique Topalian, had flown from Cleveland to attend the show and was actually among the audience — as were her parents. What followed was an emotional reunion of Tripoli and Topalian, as she got on stage to the jubilation of the audience.

Comedians performing at Laughter for Life included Maz Jobrani, Mary Basmadjian, Russell Peters, Michael Gregorian, Tamer Kattan, and Kira Soltanovich. Also performing was Sam Tripoli himself, as he has done every year since the inception of Laughter for Life.



**Thank you, Lara Yeretsian, Sam Tripoli, and the entire Comedy Night Committee, for an extraordinary event!**



### Prayer Day at Western Diocese



On August 20, 2017, during Holy Mass at Saint Leon Cathedral in Burbank, California, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese, offered special prayers for all patients of ABMDR. As in previous years, the Prayer Day was observed at St. Leon Cathedral as well as Western Diocese churches across Southern California. Following the church service, a team of ABMDR Board members further familiarized parishioners about the process of becoming Registry donors.

### Meeting with Defense Minister Sargsyan



Photo by Shateh Melelian / Arka Photography

On November 13, 2017, ABMDR Board members including Sona Ashjian and Dr. Frieda Jordan met with Vigen Sargsyan, Minister of Defense of the Republic of Armenia, at the Western Diocese in Burbank. The meeting was hosted by Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian. Armenia's Ministry of Defense is a staunch supporter of ABMDR, and regularly organizes donor-recruitment drives for the organization.

### Prayer Day at Western Prelacy



On April 30, 2017, special prayers were offered in all Western Prelacy churches of Southern California for patients and volunteers of ABMDR across the globe. Archbishop Mardirossian, Prelate, himself offered prayers at St. Mary's Church in Glendale, where he presided over the Divine Liturgy. Commending ABMDR's life-saving mission, Archbishop Mardirossian said, "This organization deserves the highest praise as well as utmost moral and financial support."

### Interview on Prelacy television program



In late September 2017, ABMDR Board members Dr. Vergine Madelian and Dr. Christina Ashjian were interviewed on the television program of the Western Prelacy. During the highly informative interview, Doctors Madelian and Ashjian discussed recent ABMDR accomplishments and future plans, and expressed praise for the Western Prelacy's ongoing support of the Registry's outreach and recruitment activities.

## In support of Congressman Adam Schiff



On April 30, 2017, Mark Geragos, Esq., Chairman of ABMDR's Board of Directors, hosted a fundraising event at his home in Los Angeles for US Congressman Adam Schiff's re-election campaign. Congressman Schiff is a longtime supporter of the Armenian Cause as well as the life-saving mission of ABMDR. The numerous supporters who attended the fundraising event included Dr. Frieda Jordan.

## Presentation at Glendale City Council meeting



An ABMDR team including Tatev Manukyan, Sona Ashjian, Dr. Christina Ashjian, and Paulette Malekian made an informative presentation at the September 26, 2017 meeting of the Glendale City Council. The ABMDR representatives spoke about the mission of the Registry and its current activities, answered questions by Council members, and thanked them for the City of Glendale's ongoing support of ABMDR.

## Dr. Frieda Jordan mentors two local students



In the summer of 2017, Dr. Frieda Jordan mentored two students from Providence High School by presenting them with an overview of molecular genetic typing. The two young men, Jordan Tibbs and Grigori Sahakyan, received Dr. Jordan's mentorship at Foundation Laboratory in Los Angeles, through Providence High School's Medical Focus Program. Dr. Jordan is the president of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and the DNA Molecular Typing Director at Foundation Laboratory.

## Congratulations, Araksya Karapetyan



Journalist and television anchorwoman Araksya Karapetyan was among community activists and leaders who were honored by the Burbank Chapter of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), at its ninth annual banquet, on May 21, 2017. Karapetyan, who is a supporter of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and a registered bone marrow stem cell donor, received the ANCA Burbank Chapter's prestigious Hrant Dink Award.

## Archbishops Derderian and Mardirossian reaffirm their strong support of ABMDR

In what has become a cherished annual tradition, members of the Board of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry visited His Eminence Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate, at the Western Prelacy; and His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate, at the Western Diocese, on January 23 and 25, 2018, respectively.

During the visits, members of the ABMDR delegation thanked both Archbishops for their outstanding leadership in supporting the life-saving mission of ABMDR. In particular, the delegation expressed gratitude to the Archbishops for boosting ABMDR's community-outreach efforts by featuring the organization on the television programs of the Diocese and the Prelacy, and for raising public awareness of ABMDR's work through annual prayer days.

As they met with Archbishops Mardirossian and Derderian on January 23 and 25, members of the ABMDR delegation presented to the Archbishops an overview of the Registry's activities and achievements in the course of the past year, and discussed plans and prospects for expanding the organization's work in and beyond California.

On their part, Archbishops Derderian and Mardirossian commended ABMDR's most recent accomplishments and reaffirmed their strong support of the ABMDR mission, and reiterated their commitment to helping ensure its continued success.

Commenting on the visits with the Primate and the Prelate, ABMDR president Dr. Frieda Jordan said, "Both Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian are true pillars of ABMDR. They care deeply about health issues affecting our community and support our mission, by helping raise public awareness of our work and contributing to the success of our outreach, recruitment, and fundraising events. We are blessed to have such leaders, and convey our profound gratitude to them."



## Christmas service at Glendale Memorial

On January 5, 2018, Christmas was celebrated at Glendale Memorial Hospital with a prayer service and the blessing of water. On behalf of Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate, Very Rev. Fr. Torkom Donoyan, Vicar General, conducted the service.

Among the guests in attendance were California State Senator Anthony Portantino, Glendale Mayor Vartan Gharpetian and Council members, Glendale Police Chief Robert Castro, Congressman Adam Schiff's representative, ABMDR West Coast Recruitment Officer Fimi Mekhitarian, and hospital administrators and staff, including Cassie McCarty, Director of Mission Integration and Spiritual Care Services at Dignity Health Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center.



**Boyadjian family, Tri-Tech Company**



Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Amy Boyadjian, of the Tri-Tech Company, for graciously hosting the ABMDR Casino Night and ensuring its success.

**Mankerian family, Mission Wine and Spirits**



Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Viken and Salpi Mankerian, of Mission Wine and Spirits, for your generosity and exemplary volunteerism in supporting our work.

**Vartanian family, Foundation Laboratory**



We convey our profound gratitude to the Vartanian family for their major sponsorship of the ABMDR Walk of Life in Los Angeles, for their selfless volunteer work to help ensure the success of our outreach and fundraising events, and for generously donating the use of the Foundation Laboratory to ABMDR, thereby enabling us to base our US operational hub at the facility.

**Alvart Badalian, ABMDR Boston**

Thank you, Alvart Badalian, for so capably and energetically leading the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry's New England Support Group. Thanks to your vision and infectious enthusiasm, and the dedication of your wonderful team of volunteers and advocates, ABMDR New England continues to make great strides, garnering broad community support for Boston's own Walk of Life as well as a diversity of outreach, recruitment, and fundraising events.



**Ramella Markarian, Adventist Health Glendale**

For over ten years, I have had the pleasure of working with ABMDR, an organization that touches the lives of Armenians not only living in our community, but around the world. I have seen this organization grow and flourish, and I have the greatest confidence that ABMDR will continue to thrive and carry on with its life-saving mission for those with the greatest need. Thank you to all ABMDR volunteers, doctors, and, especially, thousands of donors worldwide, for making this work possible. Your gift is someone else's dream come true.

Ramella Markarian  
MS, MHA, Vice President



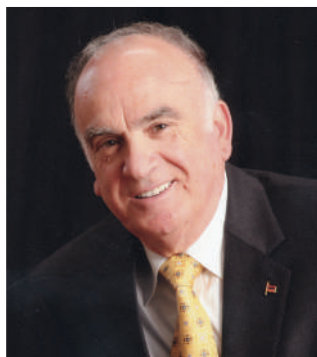
**Dr. Evgeni Sokurenko and Dr. Arpenik Avagyan**

Here's to another year of ABMDR's victorious advancement in its mission to help save lives. While this quest can be captured with just a few words, the organization comprises a veritable army of determined individuals who carry out continuous, far-reaching, and important work. The daily efforts of ABMDR's directors, Board members, and volunteers — often remaining invisible and unknown to the beneficiaries — yield the results that we celebrate at the end of each year. We are proud to be affiliated with ABMDR and have strong faith in the path that it has chosen.

Dr. Evgeni Sokurenko  
and Dr. Arpenik Avagyan



## Armenian Open Golf Tournament



Thank you, Los Angeles Chapter Trex Fraternity and George Titizian, a longtime supporter of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and a beloved member of our Board of Directors, for donating proceeds from the Armenian Open Golf Tournament to the Registry. The tournament is held annually in Pasadena, California.

## Dr. Karo Arzoo



Thank you, Dr. Karo Arzoo, for your thoughtful and generous support of the ABMDR mission. The solidarity of medical professionals such as yourself make our work all the more meaningful and worthwhile!

## Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Arpi Barsam, and Lily Balian



Mrs. and Mr. Arpi and Robert Barsam.

Lily Balian.

Robert Barsam is a beloved community leader. The Chairman of the Saint James Armenian Church Memorial Fund and former Grand Commander of the Knights of Vartan, he is also the 2017 ABMDR Man of the Year. We convey our gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Arpi Barsam, as well as St. James Armenian Church Parish Council Board member Lily Balian and the St. James Armenian Church family as a whole, for their longtime support of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry's life-saving mission.

## Carolann and George Najarian



Thank you, Dr. Carolann and George Najarian, for being true pillars of ABMDR.

## *Thank you for in lieu of flowers*

### In loving memory of:

- Mariana Kazarian
- Dr. Aida Shirinian Kaloostian
- Arlene Titizian
- Hrach Lukassian
- Aida Azadkhanian
- Gemma Aharonian-Ohanian
- Ripsime Geragosian
- Arnel Boghoskhanian
- Aznif Babaian
- Greg Nigoghossian



Mariana Kazarian



Dr. Aida Shirinian Kaloostian



Arlene Titizian



Hrach Lukassian



Aida Azadkhanian



Gemma Aharonian-Ohanian



Ripsime Geragosian



Arnel Boghoskhanian

## Anahit Janoyan



With her heartfelt support of ABMDR, Anahit Janoyan is a true inspiration to us all. We thank Mrs. Janoyan, who is a sponsor of a room at our Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, for her marvelous spirit of giving.



# Annual planning retreat

ABMDR's latest annual planning retreat took place on January 20, 2018, in Los Angeles. Following presentations of comprehensive reports by various Board members, the participants mapped out a schedule of activities for 2018, including walkathons, community outreach and education in several countries, and fundraising events. The attendees also discussed a broad range of measures to further enhance the impact of the ABMDR mission and expand its activities worldwide.





ABMDR Board of Directors meeting.



Walkathon Committee meeting.



ABMDR Honorary Chair and former First Lady of the Republic of Armenia Dr. Bella Kocharyan (center) met with Dr. Frieda Jordan and Dr. Sevak Avagyan at her office in Yerevan.

**Dr. Vergine Madelian honored by Congressman Brad Sherman**



On July 5, 2017, during a ceremony at his office in Sherman Oaks, California, US Congressman Brad Sherman honored ABMDR Outreach and Education Officer Dr. Vergine Madelian with a Special Congressional Recognition, in appreciation of her outstanding and invaluable service to her community. Congressman Sherman (D-CA) represents the San Fernando Valley in the US House of Representatives.

**“Women Achievers” awards conferred on Amy Boyadjian, Dr. Vergine Madelian, and Salpi Mankerian**



On October 13, 2017, at *Business Life Magazine's* 28th annual Women Achievers Celebration, ABMDR's Amy Boyadjian, Dr. Vergine Madelian, and Salpi Mankerian received the publication's "Women Achievers" awards, presented by Greg Krikorian, the magazine's publisher.



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**abmdr.am**

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ABMDR Newsletter designed and edited by Ishkhan Jinbashian

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Adventist Health Glendale is a proud sponsor of the  
Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry  
and its life saving mission.

