



OVER 2,500
NEW DONORS
AND COUNTING

ARMENIAN BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTRY 2015

Newsletter



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Two thousand fourteen was a true milestone, marking 15 years of hope and help for those suffering from life-threatening blood-related diseases. In the course of the year, we recruited over 2,500 more potential donors (and counting) across the globe, sought matches for 482 patients, and celebrated our crystal anniversary at our Match for Life Gala. And in Yerevan, we shared our cutting-edge work with scientists from 15 countries as we hosted, for the second time, the prestigious EFI Training and Educational Meeting. It truly was a crystal year, one which sparkled with light and amazement. We embark on our 16th year without a symbol as compelling as a crystal, but rather with the most basic elements that bode for success: hard work, determination, and the support of dedicated people around the world. The foundation of our efforts this year will be the continued recruitment of more potential donors (30,000 by the end of the year). To all of our volunteers, donors, and supporters who dedicate your time and resources, we ask you to continue to walk with us on this journey of hope and help. We are so grateful!

Frieda Jordan, PhD, President



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The year 2015 is a significant one for the Armenian people, as we reflect on the horrors our ancestors endured 100 years ago. We are reminded that every Armenian life is precious. I am honored to be a part of an organization that is focused on bringing hope and healing to the descendants of those who lived and died before us. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I thank ABMDR for all the work our staff and volunteers do for our people's precious lives worldwide.

Mark Geragos, Esq.

Chairman of the Board of Directors



MESSAGE FROM THE HONORARY CHAIR

I have been a proud advocate of ABMDR since its earliest days, and I couldn't be more proud of all it has accomplished in its short 15 years. In Yerevan, we see the incredible medical advances the laboratory is making in our region: stem cell harvesting, autotransplantation procedures, and now molecular diagnostics. This past year I was privileged to also see the organization's impressive cadre of volunteers in action on my trip to the US. We owe so much to so many. Please accept my deepest gratitude.

Bella Kocharian, MD

Honorary Chair, former First Lady of Armenia

ABMDR hosts EFI Educational conference for second time



[see page 3]

Los Angeles City Resolution commends ABMDR



[see page 5]

ABMDR crystal anniversary celebrated at Gala



[see page 26]

Thank you, our sponsors, for your generous contributions



MISSION
WINE
& SPIRITS





Interview with ABMDR Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan

Q: The ABMDR has been expanding its scope of operations into some exciting new areas over the last few years: stem cell harvesting, auto-transplantation procedures, immunophenotyping. Any new developments?

A: Well, yes. We're actually quite enthusiastic about the launch of our cord blood banking initiative. It is another important way we fulfill our mission to help patients with life-threatening blood diseases.

Q: How does it work exactly?

A: Cord blood is collected from the umbilical cord right after a baby is born and then preserved so that, if necessary, the family may retrieve it later. It might someday be needed by the donor baby, or it could be used by a relative who is a close enough match to receive a transplant from the donor, typically a sibling. The blood contains stem cells that can be used to treat blood and immune system-related genetic diseases, cancers, and blood disorders.

Q: It sounds like a very responsible action for a parent to take—like being in the ABMDR registry, another “insurance policy” to anticipate helping ourselves and others when the time of need comes. Has anyone “banked” the cord blood of their baby?

A: Yes! In September 2015, we collected cord blood for the very first time, from a beloved celebrity no less, namely Mrs. Irina Tovmasyan, who was the 2001 Miss Armenia! Months later, in January 2015, we collected cord blood from a second young Armenian mother, Mrs. Karine Mehrabyan.

Q: Very interesting. Is the laboratory working on anything else like this?

A: Actually, we do have future plans for adipose tissue extraction, which is a way to utilize the adult body's healthy stem cells for therapeutic applications. We'll have more to say about this as it develops.

Q: So let's talk about your progress on donor recruitment. I know you have had a campaign to add 5,000 new donors to the Registry. What is the status?

A: The push to significantly expand the ranks of our registry will greatly improve the statistical odds of finding matches and increasing transplant rates for the Armenian population. The Match for Life Campaign consists of about 40 recruitment drives that have been scheduled in the US, Armenia, and Iran. We hope to reach our goal by the end of 2015. As of this interview, we have registered over 2,500 potential bone marrow donors (and counting).

Q: And what about the fundraising goal that goes along with it? What's the current figure?

A: The total budget for tissue-typing 5,000 new potential donors is \$250,000. The Match for Life Campaign has received support from two US-based hospitals and one business, and two Armenia-based companies which have contributed a total of \$90,000 thus far to the campaign. During its 15th-anniversary year, ABMDR also hosted a number of fundraisers including the Wine-tasting event, Laughter for Life Comedy Night, Casino Night, two walkathons, as well as a golf tournament. To date, these events have garnered an additional \$75,000. Therefore, added to the above, we've achieved a total of \$165,000 toward our goal of \$250,000. We still have a ways to go to fill the funding gap, and are hopeful we will find that support. It's all about increasing the odds of finding matches for the many patients who need them right now.

The push to expand the ranks of our registry will greatly improve the odds of finding matches and increasing transplant rates for the Armenian population.



Cord blood from two young moms preserved at ABMDR Stem Cell Harvesting Center

2001 Miss Armenia Irina Tovmasyan (left) and Karine Mehrabyan became the first women to have our Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan collect and preserve their cord blood. As ABMDR Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan explains above, cord blood is collected from the umbilical cord immediately after a baby is born and preserved so that, if needed in the future, the family can retrieve it. The cord blood might someday be needed by the donor baby, or it could be used by a relative who is a close enough match to receive a transplant from the donor.



FOR THE SECOND TIME SINCE 2011, ABMDR HOSTS PRESTIGIOUS EFI EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE IN YEREVAN

For the second time since 2011, ABMDR hosted the Educational Meeting and Workshop of the European Federation of Immunogenetics and Histocompatibility (EFI). The conference, which took place at the Ani Plaza Hotel in Yerevan during October 3 and 4, was attended by close to 200 participants. They included scientists and doctors from Armenia, neighboring countries, and the Armenian diaspora, as well as representatives of national bone marrow transplant centers and registries from the Caucasus, the Middle East, Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. In all, 14 countries participated in the event.

Speakers featured at the conference comprised 12 internationally renowned experts in immunogenetics and bone marrow transplantation from Europe, the United States, and the Middle East.

The conference was also attended by members of the ABMDR Board of Directors, whose activities in Yerevan included a visit to the Registry's Stem Cell Harvesting Center. Strong youth participation was once again a hallmark of the EFI conference. The event was attended by numerous local medical students, including Indian and Iranian youths studying in institutions of higher education in Yerevan.

Lectures and presentations in the course of the conference encompassed a broad range of topics including illnesses related to HLA antigens and the latest developments in immunogenetics, bone marrow transplantation, cord-blood banking and transplantation, stem-cell harvesting and preservation, and stem-cell applications in the treatment of blood-related illnesses. The concluding part of the conference comprised lectures on EFI standards, accreditation, and licensing, as well as EFI's continuing-education program. Conference participants received certification from the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education. EFI's approval to partner with ABMDR and have it host the Second EFI Educational Meeting and Workshop in Yerevan was based once more on the extraordinary achievements of ABMDR. Among

these are its research and development of new therapeutic technologies at its Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, its track record in facilitating bone marrow transplants and autotransplantation procedures, and its global impact as a national bone marrow donor registry working in Armenia, Artsakh, and the diaspora.

At the opening ceremony of the conference, as she addressed the EFI conference attendees, Dr. Jordan said, "Collectively, as participants of this conference, you represent the forefront of

immunogenetics. Your professional but also humanitarian commitment to this field, as scientists, healthcare professionals, and community-outreach specialists, speaks volumes about the viability of our ultimate goal, which is saving lives. Thank you all."



Scenes from the EFI Educational conference, which included a kickoff cocktail reception and a festive closing celebration



Among the lecturers of the EFI Educational Meeting and Workshop in Yerevan was Dr. Neena Kapoor, director of the Blood and Marrow Transplantation Program at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. During her visit in Armenia, Dr. Kapoor gave another lecture at the Mkhitar Heratsi Yerevan State Medical University, where she spoke about recent advances in the treatment of leukemia patients and the role that ABMDR can play in helping them find compatible matches for stem cell transplantation.



CITY OF LOS ANGELES ADOPTS RESOLUTION COMMENDING LIFE-SAVING MISSION OF ABMDR

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry, the Los Angeles City Council honored the organization by adopting a Resolution commending its life-saving mission.

Councilmember Paul Krekorian presented the Resolution to ABMDR president Dr. Frieda Jordan and other representatives of the Registry during a ceremony held

honor the organization on its 15th anniversary and thank the dedicated volunteers who bring hope and care to patients worldwide."

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Jordan spoke briefly of the major achievements and goals of the Registry. "ABMDR ensures that a patient with a life-threatening blood disease—now or in the future—will have a much better chance of survival," she said. "But the benefits don't stop there. ABMDR also presents the citizens of this great city with the opportunity to actually save a life by registering as potential donors, or lending their support as volunteers and contributors."

She concluded by stating, "Today, as we celebrate our 15th anniversary, we salute the dedicated members of the Los Angeles City Council, and thank you all for your gracious recognition of our mission, which helps save lives in Los Angeles and beyond, in communities throughout the world."

Also delivering remarks were Arpine Zohrabian, who has saved the life of a child



Councilmember Paul Krekorian presents the special commendation plaque to Dr. Frieda Jordan during the ceremony in the Council Chambers.

in Council Chambers on August 12, 2014. The ceremony was attended by the Los Angeles City Council. The ABMDR team accepting the honor included, in addition to Dr. Jordan, ABMDR Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan, Honorary Chair Dr. Bella Kocharian, Arpine Zohrabian, Alique Topalian, and Mr. and Mrs. Mourad and Arpi Topalian. Also present was Carmen Libaridian.

As he presented the Resolution plaque to Dr. Jordan, Councilmember Krekorian said, "The Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry Charitable Trust has made tremendous strides for patients suffering from life-threatening illnesses. The Registry's work has been a great help to thousands of Armenians around the world. I was proud to

by donating her bone marrow, and Alique Topalian, a childhood cancer survivor who 15 years ago inspired the establishment of ABMDR.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, which was televised live, several members of the City Council approached the ABMDR representatives to convey their congratulations and appreciation of the Registry's work.

"This has been a wonderful and deeply moving event," Dr. Jordan commented afterwards. "I can't say enough about Councilmember Paul Krekorian for his absolute dedication to the well-being of our community, and the Los Angeles City Council as a whole for its beautiful gesture in recognizing our work."

**This page is sponsored by Armond and Caroline Mehdikhani.
In loving memory of our parents: Jani and Hayganoush Mehdikhani and Tatevos Moradi.**

ABMDR Board members familiarized with latest achievements of lab



Scenes from the visits of the ABMDR Board members, including Amy Boyadjian, together with her daughter (photos below), to the Stem Cell Harvesting Center.



This page is sponsored by Diana Artunian, in memory of Robert Artunian, commemorating the 20th anniversary of his passing. We miss you and will always love you. Your legacy will continue through your loving wife, Diana, children, and grandchildren.

Board members, volunteers, and supporters at Stem Cell Harvesting Center



From left: Dr. Marine Kevorkian and Martik Kazarians flanking Dr. Frieda Jordan; Teresa Hacopian (center); and Ani Azar during their visits to the Stem Cell Harvesting Center.



Greco-Roman wrestling champion Arthur Aleksanyan (above right); and FIDEC Armenia medical director Pablo Elmassian of Argentina with Dr. Jordan and Dr. Avagyan.

Iranian Ambassador visits Stem Cell Harvesting Center, becomes donor



Dr. Neena Kapoor of Children's Hospital Los Angeles visits lab



Dr. Neena Kapoor with Dr. Frieda Jordan and Dr. Sevak Avagyan, Dr. Andranik Mshetsyan (center photo), and head lab nurse Knarik Pashanyan and Dr. Mshetsyan.

Plasma exchange procedure at lab



ABMDR at Yerevan Health Expo



Natasha Aljalian speaking at the ABMDR volunteer-appreciation evening in Boston, February 2015.

ABMDR's life-saving impact

"ABMDR is a crucial life-saving organization. Its work is so important—for Armenian children like our son Gabriel, who at the age of 3 began his battle against leukemia, and also for all Armenians fighting other blood cancers or disorders. We never expected leukemia to knock on our door. Sadly it will knock on other doors, including Armenian ones. Thankfully, Gabriel, now 6, is in remission and has completed his years of treatment. But for so many—and frankly for our own child should he relapse—ABMDR is the primary hope to save their lives. I only wish people would truly understand the scope, and importance, of supporting its remarkable work."

Yeretskeen Natasha Aljalian

St. James Armenian Church, Watertown, Massachusetts

ABMDR passes European accreditation inspection with flying colors

For the fourth time in the last seven years, the European Federation of Immunogenetics (EFI) renewed the accreditation of the ABMDR HLA DNA molecular-typing laboratory in Yerevan. The relicensing of the laboratory, the only facility of its type in Armenia and the entire Caucasus region, was granted by EFI after a thorough onsite inspection held on March 16. The inspection was carried out by two EFI-designated inspectors, Prof. Svetlana Vojovodic of Serbia and Prof. Zorana Grubic of Croatia.

At the start of the inspection, Prof. Grubic submitted her own blood samples for testing at the lab, as part of the inspection process. Professors Grubic and Vojovodic went on to implement an extensive review of the facility. They examined the operations, specific methodologies, and technical documents of all lab departments with regard to a broad range of scientific research and medical procedures. These include HLA typing for patients as well as related and unrelated donors; and its applications in the treatment of blood-related illnesses. The EFI inspectors also examined the integrity and effectiveness of lab equipment and instruments utilized at the facility.

Later, when the results of Prof. Grubic's blood test were submitted and the inspectors reviewed them, they determined that all protocols and standards were followed with utmost accuracy. As the EFI representatives completed their thorough inspection of the facility and surveyed the results, they unreservedly approved EFI's renewal of the lab's license.

"Once again, the ABMDR HLA DNA molecular-typing laboratory passed the EFI inspection with flying colors," Prof. Vojovodic said. "This is a world-class, highly professional lab. Its well-trained staff not only excels at the skills required to run such a specialized institution, but is also confident, friendly, and accommodating."

During their concluding meeting with lab staff and ABMDR executives, professors Grubic and Vojovodic praised their high level of expertise, thanked them for their hospitality, and said they wished to return to Armenia in the future for a chance to further explore the country.

The renewal of the ABMDR HLA DNA molecular-typing lab's EFI license will enable it to continue its collaboration with laboratories and transplant centers worldwide and help save the lives of patients struck by life-threatening blood-related illnesses.

"It is immensely gratifying to be granted EFI renewal of our lab's license," stated ABMDR president Dr. Frieda Jordan, who had traveled to Yerevan in order to be on hand during the EFI inspection process. "The approval of our work by a global and prestigious regulatory body such as EFI makes our life-saving mission all the more worthwhile."



Scenes from the EFI inspection, which took place with the participation of Dr. Frieda Jordan, Dr. Sevak Avagyan, and Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan, and the staff of the Stem Cell Harvesting Center. In the left photo above, EFI inspector Prof. Zorana Grubic submits blood samples for testing at the lab, as part of the inspection process, as fellow EFI inspector Svetlana Vojovodic looks on. At the conclusion of the inspection, professors Grubic and Vojovodic had high praise for the lab's professionalism and technical capabilities alike.

FINDING A BONE MARROW DONOR: MATCHES AND MISSES

An Interview with ABMDR Outreach Officer Dr. Vergine Madelian

Q: Bone marrow registries worldwide use terms like “Be the Match,” “Find the Match,” “Match for Life” when they describe their focus. Shouldn’t the focus really be on the ultimate outcome: “Getting the Transplant,” or “Being the Cure?”

A: We could all say, “Be the Cure,” but within a patient’s team of healthcare providers there are very specific roles we each play. When it is determined that a stem cell transplant is the best hope for the patient, there is a process and a sequence of events that need to happen: first determining if a family member is a match (sibling transplantation), then searching registries to find potential matches from unrelated donors (allogeneic transplantation).

Q: How are these searches initiated?

A: Both types of searches are initiated at the request of the patient’s physician and the transplant center. In the case of the family, siblings and close blood relatives are tested. To start a search for unrelated donors, a registry has to get an official Search Request from the patient’s doctor and/or transplant center.

Q: Can the family ask for a search request from a registry?

A: No. The family may ask their doctor or transplant center coordinator to do so, but international rules that regulate registries require that registries work through the transplant centers and doctors, and not patients and families directly. Having said that, families can play an important role in expediting things by asking their doctor or transplant center to do so without delay, and thus act as advocates for their patient.

Q: What happens when an official Search Request goes out to a registry?

A: Once the preliminary search request goes out, the registry checks its database to find potential matches for the patient, and sends its search report to the transplant center. At this point, the transplant center can proceed in one of two ways: it can either take no further action, or request additional tests on one or more of the potential matches found by the registry.

Q: What types of additional tests?

A: This could be a request for High Resolution (HR) typing, which involves taking an additional sample from the donor and performing the HLA tissue typing at a higher level than the original typing, or it could be for a Confirmatory Test (CT), which involves taking a blood sample from the potential match, and running a battery of infectious disease tests on it.

Q: What’s the next step?

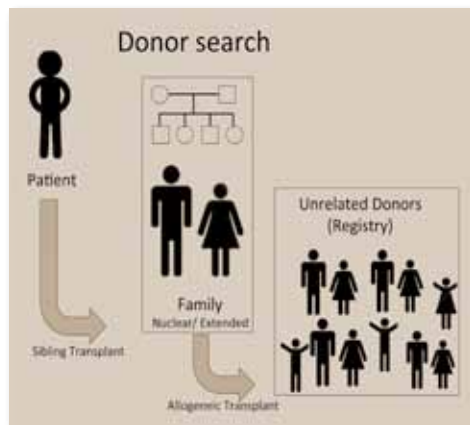
A: As soon as the registry receives a request for HR or CT samples, it performs the required tests and sends the report to the transplant center. At this point, once



again, the transplant center can proceed in one of two ways: it can either take no further action; or select a donor, request a full physical, and ask that stem cells be harvested from the donor and delivered to the transplant center.

Q: What’s involved in harvesting stem cells from the donor?

A: Depending on the location of the donor, the Registry or the transplant center prepares the selected donor by giving him/her a booster shot to increase the number of stem cells circulating in his/her blood. The donor is then hooked up to an apheresis machine through an IV,



and peripheral blood stem cells—stem cells circulating in the blood—are collected by this machine while the rest of the blood is returned to the donor. The process of “harvesting” takes a few hours and is done with no anesthesia.

Q: Does the patient have to be present at the same

location to receive the just-harvested stem cells?

A: No. Donor and patient need not be in the same location. Once collected, the stem cells are packed following well-established international protocols and transported to the transplant center via international courier companies specialized in these types of transports. The patient can be half a world away and still receive this precious gift of life. ABMDR has prepared and transported cells harvested in Armenia to patients in Greece, Italy, Germany, and Belgium on many occasions.

Q: Does the patient know who the donor is?

A: In the case of sibling transplantations, the answer is obviously yes. But unrelated donors are kept anonymous. In some cases, if both donor and patient consent, they can be brought together with the help of the Registry, but only several years after the transplant, and only if both parties consent.

Q: Twice you mentioned that the transplant center might choose to take no further action. What happens to the search and transplantation process in those instances?

A: When the transplant center chooses to take no further action, the search process comes to an end.

Q: Why would the transplant center make that choice?

A: There may be several reasons. In some cases, the patient recovers and no longer needs a transplant. Sometimes a match is found, but the patient has a relapse and is not able to have the transplant. Other times the patient dies. Tragically, in some instances, donors become unavailable due to a number of reasons, including pregnancy or change in health of donor, or even unfounded fear on his or her part.

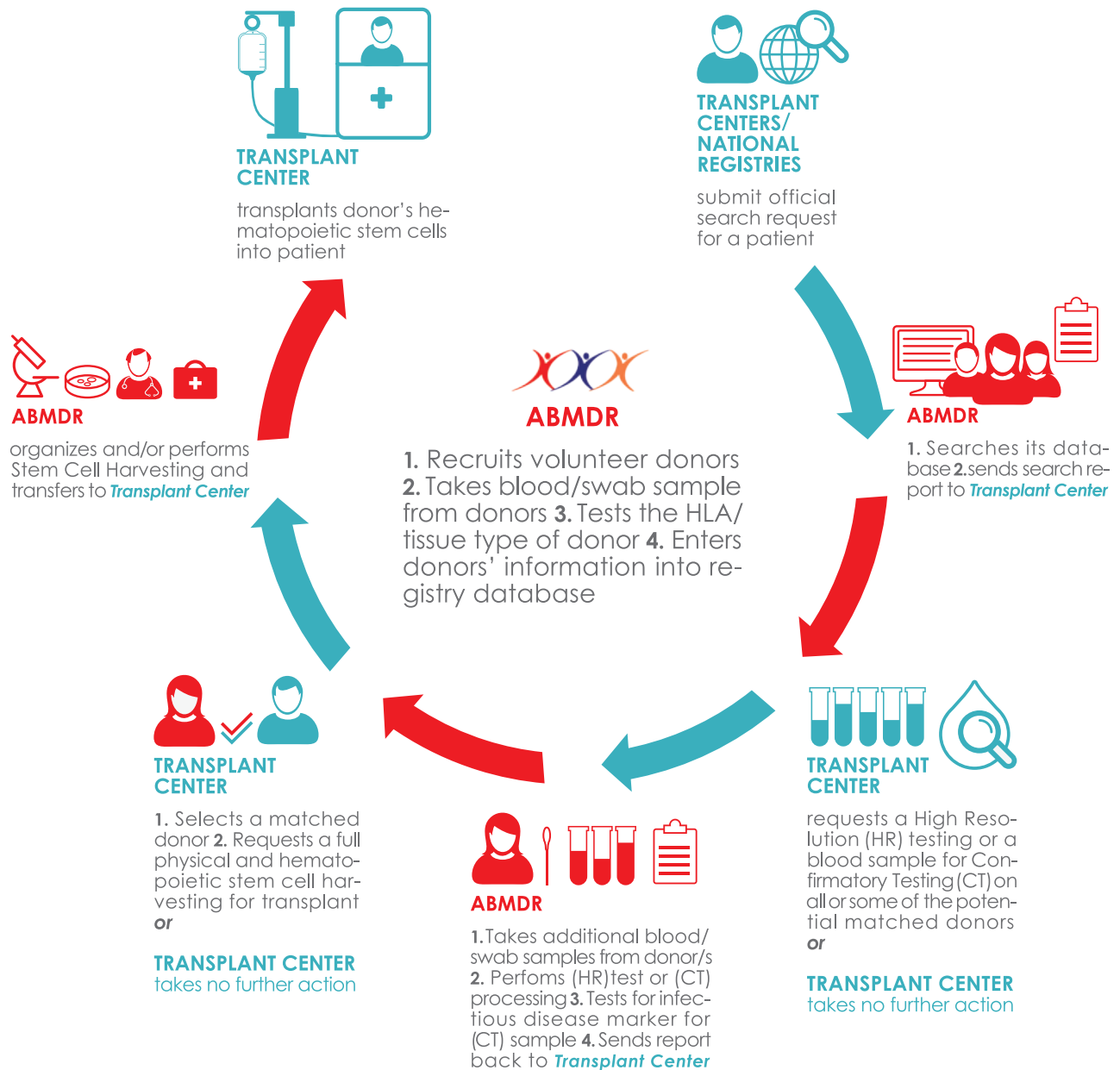
Q: How often does this happen?

A: I’m glad to say that the ABMDR drop rate is low compared to other registries, all of which face the issue of donors withdrawing their candidacy. This is a common human problem: some donors are scared to go ahead with the bone marrow-donation process, as they falsely think that it would harm them. This is why we concentrate a good deal of our efforts on outreach and educational programs, seeking to emphasize the non-invasive nature of the bone marrow-donation process.

Q: Approximately how many transplant requests does ABMDR receive in a year, and where from?

A: In 2014, we received 482 requests for preliminary searches, that is, for new patients identified as needing a transplant. The requests originated from 43 registries all over the world. During the same period, we also received 272 requests for HR typing and 34 requests for CT samples from 22 international registries and transplant centers.

ABMDR VS TRANSPLANT CENTER



ABMDR follows strict international standard protocols and guidelines during each and every step of the process

ARPI NEEDS OUR URGENT HELP!



Seven-year-old Arpi Kakosyan was diagnosed with aplastic anemia, a deficiency of blood cells caused by failure of bone marrow development. Unfortunately she doesn't have a potential donor match. She has a brother, but he, too, is not a match. Recently Arpi's family visited our Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, and her parents became donors, wishing to help anyone in need.



Recruitment for patient Manuk

In May 2014, we held a donor-recruitment drive for patient Manuk in Glendale, California. Large numbers of young Armenians from throughout Los Angeles answered our call to join the ranks of ABMDR as potential bone marrow stem cell donors. The event took place at the Palladio Banquet Hall in Glendale. A big Thank You to everyone who participated as well as our tireless organizers and volunteers.



OVER 2,500 NEW DONORS

(and counting)

RECRUITED IN THE US, SWEDEN, ARMENIA, AND IRAN

2015 ABMDR STATS

- Registered over 26,000 potential donors worldwide
- Identified 2,482 patients
- Facilitated 20 bone marrow transplants
- Active in 24 countries across four continents

In the course of 2014 and early 2015, we held a total of 40 recruitments, outreach events, and presentations throughout the world, welcoming over 2,500 potential bone marrow stem cell donors (and counting) to the ranks of ABMDR.

ARMENIA

We held numerous recruitments and outreach events throughout the republic, with the support of the Ministries of Health, Education, and Defense, Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute, National Democratic Institute of Armenia, Yerevan State Medical University, Flex Alumni, Police Academy of RA, and Art-Lar Finance and Accounting. Standout recruitments included events at centers of the Ministry of Emergency Situations in every single region of Armenia, with over 1,000 emergency responders joining our ranks.

LOS ANGELES

March 23, 2014: Prayer Day, Western Diocese, Burbank.

April 6, 2014: Prayer Day, St. Mary's Church, Glendale.

April 24, 2014: Armenian Martyrs Monument, Montebello.

May 3, 2014: Walk of Life, Glendale.

LOS ANGELES

May 28, 2014: recruitment for patient Manuk Tagvoryan, Palladio Banquet, Hall Glendale.

June 28, 2014: AYF Health Fair, Pasadena Armenian Center.

September 22, 2014: Armenian Independence Festival, Verdugo Park, Glendale.

November 2, 2014: Annual Glendale Health Festival.

NEW ENGLAND

September 27, 2014: Walk of Life, Watertown.

SWEDEN

June 28, 2014: Armenian Community Center of Stockholm, with the support of the Armenian Embassy.

IRAN

September 2014: recruitment during annual Pan Armenian Games at Ararat Sport Club, Tehran.

Photos on this page: During two recruitments at the Police Academy of the Republic of Armenia, on March 17 and 24, 2015, a total of 233 cadets joined the ranks of ABMDR. The cadet recruitments at the Academy will become an annual tradition.



From left: Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan; Lieutenant-general Hovanes Varyan, head of the Police Academy of the Republic of Armenia; and Dr. Sevak Avagyan.



Over 1,000 emergency responders in Armenia join the ranks of ABMDR



Over the course of 2014, ABMDR Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan and Medical Director Dr. Mihran Nazaretyan led outreach and recruitments at emergency-response centers in every single region of Armenia. This unprecedented series of events was met with heartwarming interest and enthusiasm, with the result that more than 1,000 first responders joined the ranks of ABMDR as potential bone marrow stem cell donors.



OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENTS THROUGHOUT ARMENIA

- AYB High school
- Flex (American Councils)
- Art-Lar Finance and Accounting
- NDI Yerevan Office
- Yeghegnadzor branch of State Economic University,
- State College
- Areni Rural Ambulatory (Vayots Dzor)
- Yerevan State Medical University
- Police Academy of the Republic of Armenia

THE EVENTS WERE MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Defense
- Ministry of Interior
- Vazgen Sargsyan Military Institute
- National Democratic Institute of Armenia
- Yerevan State Medical University
- Flex (American Councils)





Thank you, NDI! In 2014, the National Democratic Institute of Armenia once again helped ABMDR organize recruitments and outreach events in the homeland, drawing the enthusiastic participation of supporters.



Presentation and recruitment drive in Stockholm



Numerous members of Stockholm's Armenian community enthusiastically attended the June 28, 2014 presentation and recruitment, organized with the support of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Sweden. Over 300 donors were recruited. The presentation and recruitment were also attended by a representative of the Armenian Embassy.

Meeting with the ARS London Executive Committee



ABMDR President Dr. Frieda Jordan and Executive Director Dr. Sevak Avagyan meet with the Armenian Relief Society Great Britain's Executive Committee in London, May 2014.

12th annual live Laugh for life

On November 16, 2014, hundreds of ABMDR supporters attended Laughter for Life, our 12th annual comedy night. Featuring an outstanding lineup of local comedians, the event took place at the world-famous Comedy Store in Hollywood. As in previous years, the ABMDR Comedy Night Committee, including longtime members Sam Tripoli and Lara Yeretsian, was instrumental in the success of the highly popular and worthwhile event.

Clockwise from top right: Comedy Night Committee members and comedians; a scene from the event; committee members; Hratch Manuelian and Lara Yeretsian.



Connecting donors, volunteers, and patients from all walks of life to the world of ABMDR



By Alina Aghajanian

Interning at the Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan was as gratifying an experience as it was educational. From working with the geneticists on tissue samples to traveling with the team all over the Shirak Region to give talks and help with recruitments in villages, I was no longer hearing of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry's strides and accomplishments, but rather felt as though I were a part of those changes. Fully immersed in their work, I had the opportunity to share with others the discoveries made in the lab, straight from the source through social media, which play an important role in the advancement of ABMDR's mission. Through exposure, raising awareness, and disseminating information about what this organization does, we're not only able to reach more people and ultimately expand our database to help Armenians suffering from life-threatening blood-related illnesses worldwide, but also connect donors, volunteers, and patients from all walks of life to the world of ABMDR.



pre-Walkathon activities, Los Angeles

St. Gregory Annual Fashion Show



ABMDR team members familiarized attendees with the work of the Registry at the St. Gregory Ladies' Society of Pasadena's 49th Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show, which was held at the Universal City Hilton, in Los Angeles, on April 5, 2014.

At Armenian Mesrobian School



Just before Easter vacation in 2014, upper-level students at Armenian Mesrobian School in Montebello, California, were given a presentation by ABMDR's Christina Ashjian about the work and mission of the Registry.

Glendale Unified District April 24 commemoration, Glendale High School



April 24 commemoration, Armenian Martyrs Monument, Montebello



Walk of Life Los Angeles



Dignity Health Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center president Jack Ivie (in blue shirt) at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Our ninth annual Walk of Life took place on May 3, 2014, in Glendale, California, with the enthusiastic participation of over 500 supporters, including elected officials, representatives of various churches, and community leaders. The walkathon was once again marked by strong youth participation, with teams representing several local Armenian schools, organizations, student associations, and youth clubs. The 5-K walk-run started at the plaza of Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center, looped through central Glendale, passing in front of the Consulate of the Republic of Armenia, and concluded at the starting point, where community festivities continued and new donors joined the ranks of ABMDR.



**Thank you, major sponsors
Dignity Health Glendale
Memorial Hospital and Health
Center; Foundation Laboratory;
and an anonymous sponsor
who made a donation
in honor of Cynthia Bussey.**



The star of Walk of Life: Grace Kesablak of Los Angeles is an 11-year-old cancer survivor.







Our next Walk of Life is on Saturday, October 3, 2015
CELEBRATING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WALKATHON!



Walk of Life New England



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

ABMDR's third annual New England Walk of Life was held on September 27, 2014, in Watertown. The festive walkathon garnered broad community support and strong youth participation, with over 250 supporters and 22 local and national organizations taking part.

Walk of Life followed a 2.2-mile route starting at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center and ending at Watertown Square, where participants went on to enjoy great music, dancing, and food, along with thousands of people attending the annual Faire on the Square festival.

This year's walkathon was dedicated to six-year-old leukemia patient Gabriel, the son of Fr. Arakel and Yn. Natasha Aljalian of St. James Armenian Church of Watertown and a kindergartener at St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School.

Walk of Life once again received major corporate sponsorship from the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Other sponsors of the walk included the Armenian-American Pharmacists' Association and Watertown Savings Bank.



Celebrating with the ABMDR New England Support Group

Dr. Frieda Jordan visited Boston during March 14-17, 2014, to help kick off the 15th anniversary of the Registry. The occasion was marked by a number of meetings with supporters and community leaders, a radio interview with Dr. Jordan, and a celebration dinner with the ABMDR New England Support Group.

On March 14, Dr. Jordan met with ABMDR Board member, mentor, and longtime supporter Dr. Carolann Najarian. One of the highlights of Dr. Jordan's visit was an interview she gave on Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston. The interview was conducted by Yevgine Gharibian.

On March 15, ABMDR's crystal anniversary was celebrated with a dinner hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Kegham and Rubina Varjabedian at their residence. The jubilant event was attended by the New England Support Group and the New England Walkathon Committee, including ABMDR Board member and longtime supporter Alvert Badalian, and numerous volunteers and supporters from various age groups. Dr. Jordan also gave a presentation, which was followed by a discussion of the ongoing efforts of the New England Support Group to increase marketing and outreach initiatives.



The ABMDR
New England
Support Group.



Yevgine Gharibian, director and producer of Armenian Independent Broadcasting.



Dr. Jordan with event hosts Mr. and Mrs. Kegham and Rubina Varjabedian.

Pre-Gala celebrations with supporters in L.A.

There was much excitement in the air during the run-up to our crystal-anniversary Gala in August 2014. As we held various celebrations and meetings with supporters, Board members, and volunteers in Los Angeles, we were delighted to be joined by ABMDR

Honorary Chairperson and former First Lady of the Republic of Armenia Dr. Bella Kocharian as well as ABMDR Executive Director Sevak Avagyan. During their visit in Los Angeles, Dr. Kocharian and Dr. Avagyan met with major ABMDR supporters, including members of the

Vartanian family at the Foundation Laboratory, which serves as the Registry's operational hub in the Los Angeles area. Our gratitude goes to Dr. and Mrs. Norik and Ramella Markarian for hosting a wonderful crystal-anniversary dinner reception at their residence.



Dr. and Mrs. Norik and Ramella Markarian hosted a reception for ABMDR Board members and supporters. Photo below right: dinner with Board members and supporters.



Dr. Bella Kocharian's visit to the Foundation Laboratory. Left photo: Dr. Kocharian flanked by Dr. Sevak Avagyan and Dr. Frieda Jordan. Right: with the Vartanian family.

Crystal Anniversary Gala



Our 2014 Match for Life Gala was a pan-national celebration of ABMDR's 15th anniversary. Over 400 supporters, reflecting a cross section of the Los Angeles Armenian community and including several guests of honor, attended the jubilant event, which was held on August 10, 2014, at the Glendale Hilton, in Glendale, California. Featuring a distinguished roster of speakers, the Gala also honored numerous individuals and organizations for their extraordinary support of ABMDR. The Gala was made possible by the major sponsorship of Glendale Adventist Medical Center, one of our longtime supporters, as well as the patronage of Mr. Michael Sarian of Prime Health Care and the St. James Armenian Church—Robert Barsam, President, and the Church Committee.



Thank you, Glendale Adventist Medical Center and Mike Sarian of Prime Health Care for your major support!







WINE-TASTING EVENT

Hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Vicken and Salpi Mankerian of Mission Wine and Spirits at their residence in Sierra Madre, California, June 20, 2014



This page is sponsored by
Vicken and Salpi Mankerian and family.



MISSION
WINE
& SPIRITS

CASINO NIGHT

Hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Amy Boyadjian of the
Tri-Tech company in Glendale, California, September 19, 2014



CHRISTMAS PARTY

Hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Norik and Ramella Markarian at their residence in Glendale, California, December 19, 2014



ARMENIAN OPEN GOLF TOURNAMENT

Organized by the Los Angeles Chapter Trex Fraternity and longtime ABMDR supporter and Board member George Titizian, June 27, 2014



Prayer Day at the Western Diocese



Armenian Diocese and Prelacy churches across Southern California offered special prayers for patients of ABMDR in March and April 2014. The prayers were requested by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian of the Western Diocese and Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian of the Western Prelacy, both longtime supporters of the Registry. The Prayer Days, which included recruitment drives, were held on the grounds of St. Leon Church, in Burbank; Saint Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church, in Glendale; and other churches.

Prayer Day at St. Mary's Church



Dr. Vergine Madelian speaks at North Valley Community Town Hall Meeting



Dr. Vergine Madelian spoke at the "Armenian Social Services Organizations in our Community" Town Hall Meeting at the Titizian Hall on March 28, 2014.

Dr. Frieda Jordan honored with AAMS Lifetime Achievement Award



Scenes from the Annual Celebratory Gala of the Armenian American Medical Society, held on May 3, 2014, when Dr. Jordan received the AAMS Lifetime Achievement Award.

Visiting Arch. Derderian at the Diocese



Visiting Arch. Mardirossian at the Prelacy



Glendale Health Festival



AYF Health Fair



Chamlan Science Fair



Armenia Fund Telethon



Prelacy Christmas



KNB Contribution



From left: ABMDR representatives at the 2014 Armenia Fund Telethon, in Los Angeles; Western Prelacy-organized Christmas celebration at the Bagramian Hall in Montebello, Cal.; and Ara Gebechian, vice chair of the Alumni of KNB (Kalousdian, Nubarian, and Boghosian School of Egypt) presenting a donation to ABMDR on behalf of the KNB Alumni.

Dr. Frieda Jordan makes special presentation at Western Diocese in Burbank



Armenian Independence Day outreach and recruitment event in Glendale



Boston lecture on ABMDR Lab and newly applied molecular technologies



Dr. Frieda Jordan's much-anticipated lecture and presentation on the ABMDR Stem Cell Harvesting Center and its newly applied cutting-edge molecular technologies was delivered on February 27, 2015, at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC) in Watertown. The event was organized by the Armenian American Medical Association (AAMA) and the Armenian Biotech Group of the Greater Boston Area, and sponsored

by ACEC and the ABMDR New England Support Group. In the photos: Dr. Jordan during her presentation; Dr. Jordan with event organizers and supporters, including ACEC president George Bashirians, PhD (fifth from left), ABMDR Board member Alvar Badian (third from right), Armenian Biotech Group of Greater Boston Area president Ashot Papoyan, PhD (second from right), and AAMA president Armen Arslanian, MD (far right).

A big Thank You to ACA for supporting ABMDR through the 2014 Cycle for Life, in honor of patient Grace Kesablak



In 2014, the Armenian Cycling Association (ACA) once again partnered with the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry to turn its popular 145-mile bicycle ride from Glendale to San Diego, California, into a fundraising event. The ride, Cycle for Life, was dedicated to Grace Kesablak, an 11-year-old student at the Vahan and Anoush Chamlian School in La Crescenta, California, who is fighting cancer. Every dollar raised through Cycle for Life was donated directly to ABMDR in honor of Grace.

Seventeen dedicated cyclists participated in the ride and raised over \$9,000, with Andrew Nazarian spearheading the fundraising efforts. The Glendale-San Diego ride was led by ACA founders Jacques Merdckhanian, Armen Hagobian, and Artin Shaverdian, along with Missak Terzian, who was the en-route van pilot and the person in charge of meals and first-aid support for the riders. ACA was proud to have former Glendale City Councilman and Mayor Rafi Manoukian join the cyclists on the ride.



As they reached San Diego, the Cycle for Life riders were cheerfully welcomed by an ABMDR team. Afterwards the riders were honored with ABMDR Medals of Achievement.

EFI International Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden



EFI Region 8 Meeting in Istanbul, Turkey



WMDA International Meeting in London



lifetime supporters and loyal contributors

The Boyadjian family

In 2014, Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Amy Boyadjian of the Tri-Tech company continued to support ABMDR by hosting the annual Casino Night. In addition, as a member of the ABMDR Board, Amy Boyadjian brings her unique touch and tireless dedication to our community events. Thank you both for your utmost devotion to our cause.



The Mankerian family

In 2014, Mr. and Mrs. Vicken and Salpi Mankerian of Mission Wine and Spirits have once again graciously hosted the annual ABMDR Wine-tasting event. Moreover, as a member of the ABMDR Board, Salpi Mankerian continues to provide wonderful support for all of our community events, helping ensure their success.



Dignity Health Glendale Memorial Hospital and Health Center



Dignity Health Glendale Memorial Hospital truly believes that humanity holds the power to heal. Supporting ABMDR, where our community joins together to increase access globally to health and wellness, is healing indeed. We are delighted to collaborate with ABMDR: supporting patient access to life-saving treatment for blood-related illnesses worldwide.

Jack Ivie, president,
Dignity Health Glendale Memorial
Hospital and Health Center



Stepan and Linda Vartanian, Foundation Laboratory, California



Stepan and Linda Vartanian are among the most avid supporters of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. For the past 16 years, the Vartanians have graciously donated to ABMDR the use of their Foundation Laboratory, in California, enabling us to base our US operational hub at the site. The Vartanians and their

children, Lala, Taleen, and Ara, as well as sons-in-law Dr. Zareh Baghoomian and Areg Boyamyan, also continue to support all ABMDR events. A big Thank You to the entire Vartanian family! In the photo above, Stepan and Linda Vartanian with Dr. Bella Kocharian (center) at the lab during her special visit to Los Angeles in 2014.

Drs. Sokurenko and Avagyan



These are great times for ABMDR! Not yet far from its first steps, it has developed into an organization with a solid history of successes. It has worked relentlessly to promote its vision, widen the circle of donors, create an impressive database, and coordinate the worldwide search and treatment of patients. It has obtained and consistently maintained accreditation by international bodies. It has hosted international meetings and workshops. It has gained respect for its capacities and flawless functionality, with its organizers now being delegated to advise and assist programs in many other countries. We wish ABMDR to continue its course to even higher grounds.

Dr. Arpenik Avagyan and Dr. Evgeni Sokurenko

Glendale Adventist Medical Center: Kevin Roberts and Ramella Markarian



Glendale Adventist Medical Center congratulates the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry for all its accomplishments and is proud to support its mission, to save and enhance lives in our community and around the globe.

Kevin A. Roberts, RN, FACHE
President and CEO,
Glendale Adventist Medical Center



Over the past 15 years, ABMDR has become a grassroots organization supported by a cross section of our community. I am honored to serve on ABMDR's Board of Directors and be able to contribute to its life-saving mission. Together we can make a difference.

Ramella Markarian MS, MHA
Vice President
Glendale Adventist Medical Center

Eduardo Eurnekian



An internationally renowned industrialist and benefactor who provides assistance to major Armenian causes, Eduardo Eurnekian of Argentina is a dedicated and generous Lifetime Supporter of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. We are honored to recognize him as one of the pillars of our life-saving mission.

4over, Inc.



A top publishing house based in Los Angeles, 4over, Inc. has supported the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry for the past several years by generously donating its professional services for the publication of our annual Newsletter. Thank you, Tina Hartounian, president of 4over; and Zarik Megerdichian, founder and CEO of this great company, for your continued support of our life-saving mission.

Dr. Carolann and George Najarian



As a member of the ABMDR Board since its inception, I have observed how from a nugget of an idea the ABMDR

became the highly respected registry it is today. Establishing the highly advanced technology-dependent and staff-dependent laboratories in Armenia was no small feat. Our laboratory facility, the staff, and procedures have year after year passed the stringent international scientific review needed for accreditation of a donor-tissue typing registry. This is thanks to Dr. Frieda Jordan's tenacious pursuit of excellence in training the technical staff, who are needed to carry out the complicated work of tissue typing and donor matching. In order to have the necessary pool of donors, drives have been conducted among Armenians in no less than 24 countries. Participation has been high. Armenians have understood the need for us to have our own donor registry from which to find matches. Armenians also have understood that any one of us could be a patient needing a bone marrow or stem cell transplant, and that any one of us could be that life-saving donor matched to a patient—even reaching across continents.

Carolann S. Najarian, MD

Ralph Yirikian, VivaCell-MTS



Ralph Yirikian, general manager of VivaCell-MTS, has been a staunch supporter of ABMDR. He has had an instrumental role in the launch of our Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, supported our various events, and helped raise public awareness of our cause.

The Kaloostian family: Dr. William, Carolyn, Paul, and Shane Kaloostian



The Kaloostian family has been a consistent advocate of our mission. In the footsteps of the late Aida Shirinian Kaloostian, Dr. William Kaloostian and his dedicated children, doctors Carolyn, Paul, and Shane, continue to help ensure the success of our community events.



Mrs. Artunian's thoughtful support



Mrs. Diana Artunian (center), one of our tireless Board members and longtime supporters, had a pleasant surprise for the ABMDR family: she requested that her birthday-party guests make donations to her beloved organization instead of bringing presents to her personally. We are all very touched, and convey our gratitude to Diana for this most thoughtful and exemplary gesture!

Always there for the Registry



Anahit Janoyan of Los Angeles exemplifies the humble and devoted grassroots supporter. Dedicated supporters like her make our work all the more worthwhile, year after year. In addition to having sponsored a room in her family's name at our Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, Anahit continues to regularly support our mission. Her altruism is as heartwarming as it is inspiring.

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Lucy Mahserejian



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Vazgen Mirzaian



Tatevos Moradi



Mariam Poladian



Arlene Titizian

ABMDR annual Planning Retreat, January 2015, Glendale Hilton, Glendale



ABMDR annual Recruiters' Workshop, February 2015, Los Angeles office



Board meeting, summer 2014



Volunteer appreciation, Boston



Gala Committee



On February 28, 2015, Dr. Frieda Jordan joined the ABMDR New England Support Group for a volunteer-appreciation event, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Kegham and Rubina Varjabedian at their home in Boston. Dr. Jordan answered questions regarding the current work and future goals of the Registry and members of the Support Group discussed upcoming activities in New England. Dr. Jordan also presented the ABMDR New England Volunteer of the Year Award to Marilyn Bazarian, who said, "I am honored to have been chosen as a Volunteer of the Year. However, this really is a team award. Without the new England Support Group and the Walkathon team members, I would not have been able to achieve one-tenth of what has been achieved. So to all of you, this is your award and I thank you all for your hard work and support."



Marilyn Bazarian receiving the Volunteer of the Year Award from Dr. Jordan.

Walkathon Committee



Yeretskeen. Natasha Aljalian speaking at the volunteer-appreciation evening.

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SAVE THE DATES

L.A. TREX GOLF TOURNAMENT
June 2, 2015

HOPE OF LIFE GALA
August 30, 2015

DANCE PARTY AT GIGGLES
September 25, 2015

WALK OF LIFE
October 3, 2015

CASINO NIGHT
October 16, 2015

LAUGHTER FOR LIFE
November 8, 2015

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Congratulations to the 2014 ABMDR Lottery winners!



GUIITA AMIRI

*won two roundtrip tickets to
Washington, DC, donated by Sidon Travel*



GRACE PINAJIAN

*won the latest iPad,
donated by Amalia Kiureghlian*

and

JANET MIRZAIAN

*won the third prize:
Noah's Ark by Michael Aram,
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