



SOCIETY FOR ORPHANED ARMENIAN RELIEF (SOAR)

150 N. Radnor Chester Rd., Suite F200, Radnor, PA 19087

Office: 610.213.3452 Fax: 610.229.5168

Email: info@soar-us.org Web: www.soar-us.org

**2024 Report to the Harold and Josephine
Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund**

Harold and Josephine
Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund





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Creation and Management

George S. Yacoubian, Jr. began the adoption process in Armenia in 2005. Throughout the spring and summer, he went through home study and various levels of domestic governmental approval. While in Armenia during the summer of 2005, George saw Liliana for the first time. He submitted Liliana's adoption dossier to the Armenian government in the fall of 2005, received preliminary approval in December 2005, and obtained final adoption approval in March 2006. Liliana Sara Yacoubian, the inspiration for SOAR's work, arrived in the United States on April 23, 2006.

George S. Yacoubian, Jr. founded the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) in the fall of 2005 as a charitable organization that provides humanitarian relief to orphaned children living in Armenia. Dr. Yacoubian has served as SOAR's Executive Board Chairman since 2005 and provides oversight and guidance to all SOAR operations worldwide. In early 2006, an experienced and talented Board of Directors was assembled, a network of Partners in Armenia was recruited to assist with distributions, and the web site was launched. Between 2006 and 2008, SOAR established itself as the only charitable organization whose singular mission is to provide humanitarian assistance to orphaned Armenians around the world.

In late 2007 and early 2008, SOAR launched its first two Chapters – in Los Angeles and Washington, DC. In 2009, a National Board of Trustees was created to annually review



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SOAR's fiscal operations and distributions. In 2010, SOAR launched its Sponsorship Fund, which today is the primary mechanism through which individual and familial needs are addressed. Since 2005, SOAR's work has impacted thousands of children across a multitude of constructs, with the penultimate goal to provide institutionalized and otherwise marginalized children with the same educational, emotional, medical, and social support as their non-institutionalized counterparts.

Represented by 140 Chapters, 4 Junior groups, and more than 600 volunteers worldwide, SOAR supports 35 institutions – orphanages, special boarding schools, day centers, transitional centers, and summer camps – in Armenia, Javakh, and Lebanon. Chapters contribute to SOAR's mission in a variety of ways, from traditional fundraising to Program development to professional expertise. The common bond among members of the SOAR family is the unwavering belief that orphaned children and orphaned adults with disabilities represent the most vulnerable population of Armenian society.

SOAR prides itself on creativity, cross-cultural respect, fiscal responsibility, and transparency. During the past 18 years, SOAR's reach has expanded considerably. In 2006, distributions totaled approximately \$60,000.00. Since 2015, SOAR distributions have exceeded \$1M annually. Our efforts not only address the major humanitarian constructs of education, emotional and psychological support, nutrition, health and hygiene, dental and



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vision care, and fundamental human rights, but our Programs offer curricula on a multitude of topics that stimulate intellectual curiosity, empowerment, and enrichment.

SOAR is blessed with a dedicated and selfless cadre of supporters who share our short-term aspirations and long-term vision. We are faced with an enormous responsibility. Our greatest trepidation is not inadequacy or a belief that we are ill-equipped to assist the children and families we have embraced as our own, but rather that we have influence beyond measure. Our approach is grounded in a compulsive desire to assist the abandoned, the sick, the impoverished, the abused, and the forgotten. As SOAR's light shines, we hope that we are giving the orphaned Armenian population the will to do the same.



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Quality Control

SOAR has a strict quality control protocol to assure that all donations, in their entirety, reach the intended recipients. This protocol has nine primary elements:

1. SOAR rarely makes cash distributions directly to the institutions. Rather, goods and services that can be procured in Armenia are purchased by SOAR staff and distributed directly to the orphanages.
2. SOAR uses Microsoft Planner to retain receipts, pictures, and internal documents.
3. All purchases are memorialized with a receipt or invoice.
4. SOAR implements chain-of-custody procedures for all distributed goods or services to assure that items have been received in the exact quantity intended. The recipient provides written documentation to indicate that the goods and services received are the quantity indicated, after which this documentation is sent to SOAR National and retained in Microsoft Planner.
5. SOAR staff, Chapter members, and other volunteers who visit Armenia make random inspections of the institutions. Discrepancies are to be reported immediately to SOAR's Executive Board Chairman.
6. When possible, donations provided by SOAR are engraved and/or stamped with a corporate seal.
7. Capital projects are acknowledged with a plaque and/or dedication ceremony.
8. SOAR never allocates or transfers funds to other organizations to distribute on our behalf.
9. A zero-tolerance policy for fraud, theft, and/or deception is imposed. Malfeasance would result in the termination of assistance.



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SOAR-Supported Institutions

SOAR supports 36 institutions in three countries: 33 orphanages, special boarding schools, day centers, transitional centers, and summer camps in Armenia; one summer camp in Javakh (Georgia); and two Armenian orphanages in Lebanon.

Ada Keshishyants Day Center for Children with Disabilities is the first of its kind in Vanadzor. The Center serves as a non-residential facility for children with developmental, emotional, intellectual, physical, and psychological disabilities in Vanadzor, Armenia.

Armenian Evangelical Boarding School (AEBS) in Ainjar, Lebanon, is home to approximately 75 healthy, social orphans.

Birds' Nest Orphanage (BN) in Byblos, Lebanon, opened shortly after the 1915 Armenian Genocide and has been home to thousands of Armenian children for more than 90 years. Today, BN houses approximately 20 healthy, social orphans.

Children's Home of Gyumri (CHG), a state orphanage in Gyumri, Armenia, houses approximately 85 children with special needs ages 6 years and younger.

Community Development and Social Support Center (CDSSC) in Gyumri, Armenia, is a non-residential, state center that offers alternative care and material assistance to special needs children and their families. The Center started its activities in 2012.



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Dzorak Care Center in Yerevan, Armenia, served as an orphanage for 400 children during the 1940s. In 1959, it became a boarding school for children from underprivileged families. Today, Dzorak is a state care facility for adults with severe physical and psychological disabilities who have outgrown the traditional orphanage.

Gavar Orphanage, a state orphanage in Gavar, Armenia, houses approximately 45 healthy children under the age of 18.

The Holy Cross Armenian Church of Javakh Summer Day Camp in Akhakalak, Georgia, serves social orphans living in poverty from the nearby villages. The Camp provides the children with a safe, clean, fun, and spiritual environment during the summer.

Kharberd Orphanage is a state orphanage in Yerevan, Armenia that houses approximately 200 children and young adults with severe disabilities.

Mari Izmirlyan (MI) Orphanage is a state orphanage in Yerevan, Armenia that houses approximately 100 children with special needs between the ages of 6 and 18.

Naghasyan Children's Support Center (formerly Mer Hooys) is a private home in the Arapkir district of Yerevan for approximately 25 teenage girls. The girls receive language and job skills training, computer instruction, life skills training, and psychological support.

Orran, “haven” in Armenian, was established in Yerevan as a non-residential Center in April 2000. In 2009, a second Orran center was established in Vanadzor. Today, Orran supports approximately 95 seniors and 200 children across Armenia.



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Our Lady of Armenia (OLA) Annie Bezikian Youth Center in Kanaker, Armenia, houses girls between the ages of 16 and 22 who have outgrown the traditional orphanage and are transitioning to independent living. The Center is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order of nuns established in 1847.

Our Lady of Armenia (OLA) Center in Gyumri, Armenia, houses approximately 28 healthy children between the ages of 6 and 18. The Center is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, a religious order of nuns established in 1847.

Our Lady of Armenia (OLA) Center Summer Camp (Tsaghgadzor, Armenia) hosts approximately 800 children throughout the summer, in four 16-day sessions. The Camp provides nutritious food, physical rest, recreational activities, and religious-educational experiences both to orphan and otherwise needy children throughout Armenia.

Our Lady of Armenia (OLA) Educational Center in Tashir, Armenia, is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and provides meals and after-school activities to approximately 30 orphaned and otherwise needy children.



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Our Lady of Armenia (OLA) Educational Center Summer Camp in Tashir, Armenia, hosts approximately 50 children ages 7-15 for four weeks throughout the summer. The Camp provides nutritious food, physical rest, recreational activities, educational opportunities, and religious experiences to children from the Tashir community.

Prkutyun in Yerevan, Armenia, is a day center that offers food, educational, and therapeutic services to approximately 55 children and young adults with disabilities.

Saint Gregory of Narek Students' Home (SGNSH) opened in the fall of 2024 in Yerevan and is a residential center for up to 30 young Armenian boys from socially and economically vulnerable families from across Armenia. All living expenses, including university tuition, are provided by SGNSH. Residents are accepted based on family situation, recommendation from their parish priest, and academic achievements.

Shirak Marz Child and Family Support Center located in Gyumri, is a merger of two childcare centers: Gyumri Social Childcare Center and the Orphanage of Fridtjof Nansen. The new Center is a hybrid facility that provides day services to families whose children are at risk for institutionalization while serving as a residential setting for children without permanent familial care.

Sisters of Charity (SOC) (Bethlehem and Spitak, Armenia) is a Catholic religious order established by Mother Teresa to tend to “the poorest of the poor.” SOC-Bethlehem is a private orphanage outside of Yerevan that houses approximately 25 young children with



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severe physical and mental disabilities. SOC-Spitak is a private orphanage that houses approximately 15 teenagers and adults with severe physical and mental disabilities.

SOAR's Transitional Centers (one in Gyumri and two in Yerevan) are residential settings for older teenagers who have outgrown the traditional orphanage but who are not yet ready for independent living. The residents go to college; assist with SOAR's online business; are enriched by SOAR's academic programs; appreciate volunteerism; learn essential life skills, including home and money management; build self-confidence; and prepare themselves for emotional, fiscal, and professional independence.

SOS Children's Villages' (Idjevan and Kotayk) provides care for children without suitable parental care. In 1990, SOS Children's Village in Kotayk opened its doors for children who had lost their parents in the earthquake. SOS Children's Village in Idjevan was founded in 2009. Presently, SOS in Armenia operates a wide range of childcare and family strengthening community and educational activities.

Vardashen is a state boarding school in Yerevan, Armenia, that houses approximately 53 children who exhibit socially dangerous behavior between the ages of 6 and 18.

The Voice of the Armenian Church Summer Day Camp is held in Tsaghgadzor, Armenia, and hosts orphaned children between the ages of 10 and 16. The Camp, held in July, offers the children comfort, love, compassion, and care, while simultaneously instilling in them the love of Christ and the history of the Armenian Church.



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Warm Hearth (WH) (3rd Village, Arinj, and Jermik Ankyun Geghanist) offers residential living to adults with disabilities who have outgrown the traditional orphanages.

Yerevan Children Home (Nork) is a state orphanage in Yerevan, Armenia, that houses approximately 60 children under the age of 6.

Yerevan Special School Number 11 (Nubarashen) is a state boarding school in Yerevan housing approximately 48 children with special needs.

Yerevan State Day Center was founded in July 2005 to support special needs children aged 6-18 years and to facilitate their integration into society. The Center provides educational and professional orientation services; psychological services, including play therapy, art therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy; primary health care and medical consulting; and rights protection and advocacy.

Zadik Yerevan Child Assistance Center is a state orphanage in Yerevan, Armenia, that houses approximately 45 children between the ages of 6 and 18.



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The Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund

Originally from Van (Armenia), Harold Gulamerian was born to immigrant parents in 1924. Harold joined the army in 1943, and, after the war, went to City College to earn a degree in science and business administration and then a law degree. When Norman, Harold's brother, returned from the service, he apprenticed himself to artist Frederick Taubes (1900-1981). He primed his canvasses and grounded his paint. Norman, an artist himself, was having trouble finding unprimed linen. Harold suggested they import it from Belgium. That was the start of Utrecht Art Supply.

Harold and Norman sold linen out of their basement in Brooklyn. The two brothers dedicated themselves to supplying artists with the "highest quality art materials and supplies for the best value." In 1951, they rented an office at 119 West 57th street. The Gulamerian brothers' art supply business grew quickly. In 1957, they developed their revolutionary acrylic gesso for priming canvas. In 1958, they rented factory space at Bush Terminal in Brooklyn. By the end of the early 1960s, they had expanded the Utrecht line to include professional-grade oil paints, acrylics, and watercolor supplies. In 1968, they opened their first retail store at 32 Third Avenue in New York City. They then opened locations in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Washington DC, Berkeley, and San



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Francisco. By the time they sold their business in 1997, they had grown from a small space in Bush terminal to 50,000 square feet and an additional 50,000 square feet of retail space.



Mr. and Mrs. Harold and Josephine Gulamerian visited Armenia in 1998 at the invitation of Catholicos Karekin I. The Gulamerians were very moved by this visit, especially by the orphaned children they met. Established in 2013, The Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund (GAOF) is dedicated to improving the lives of orphaned Armenians throughout the world. Through a cooperative agreement with SOAR, the Foundation provides support to orphaned Armenians in Armenia, Artsakh, Javakh, and Lebanon.



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In CY2022, SOAR received \$350,000 from GAOF to support personnel, programs, and projects. A breakdown of these funds is provided in Table 1. As shown, approximately \$269,000 was for the salaried positions of SOAR’s Chairman, who oversees all operations worldwide; Susan Snavelly (SOAR Management Assistant); Kim Yacoubian (Development Consultant); and Hripsime Muradyan (SOAR’s Executive Director in Armenia).

Table 1. CY2023 Budget

GAOF Budget: CY2023	Description	USD	\$ Paid	\$ Available
Unrestricted Grant		\$304,398.88	\$0.00	\$304,398.88
EB Chairman	George Yacoubian	\$150,000.00	\$0.00	\$150,000.00
Management assistant	Susan Burdette	\$50,000.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00
Development consultant	Ripsime Biyazyan	\$62,000.00	\$0.00	\$62,000.00
UHC	Health insurance	\$24,398.88	\$0.00	\$24,398.88
Executive Director	Hripsime Muradyan	\$18,000.00	\$0.00	\$18,000.00
TC Gyumri Program Coordinator	Marina Muradyan	\$1,680.00	\$0.00	\$1,680.00
Projects and Programs		\$45,601.12	\$0.00	\$45,601.12
Mobile Eye Care Clinic	Staff and supplies	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
Dental Clinic	Staff and supplies	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
Global Hosting Program		\$5,000.00	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Transitional Centers (Gyumri and Yerevan)	Operational expenses	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
Human Rights Program	TC research	\$1,350.00	\$0.00	\$1,350.00
Miscellaneous		\$13,251.12	\$0.00	\$13,251.12
Total CY2023 Budget		\$350,000.00	\$0.00	\$350,000.00

The investment in Dr. Yacoubian was made beginning in 2019 with the hope that additional revenue would be generated, the projects and programs from which would be attributed in part to the Gulamerian legacy. We are happy to report that this full-time, grant-funded position yielded significant revenue increases. Revenue from SOAR’s Sponsorship Fund, which is the primary mechanisms through which SOAR provides support to specific



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orphaned Armenian children, has increased significantly: from approximately \$206,000 in 2018 to nearly \$400,000 in CY2023. External funds, which Dr. Yacoubian has made a priority since 2020, were received by the Albert Tamberchi Foundation (\$42,847.74) and the Jirair and Elizabeth Hovnanian Foundation (\$150,000.00). These awards, and SOAR's overall increase in distributions since 2018, would not have been possible without the trust of the GAOF Directors,¹ who generously support SOAR's salaried personnel.

¹ Mr. and Mrs. Louis and Yolanda Mazzola.



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GAOF-Fund Supported Projects

Dental Fund/Clinic





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A new dental chair and cabinets for the clinic





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SOAR's Transitional Centers

The Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Transitional Center for Young Men (Yerevan)

More furnishings for the Center





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Artur Aleksanyan, a resident of the Center, is participating in the **SMM Architecture: From Tools to Strategy** course at the Business Development Group Educational Center.



The Papken and Anahid Megerian Transitional Center (Yerevan)

The young ladies of the Center continue to attend classes, celebrate their birthdays, and have attended special events with the Transitional Center for Young Men, Yerevan residents.





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Monthly grocery shopping!





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Gyumri

The residents of the Transitional Center in Gyumri continue to operate *Gyumri So-Art*.



The residents held a summer camp for the children of displaced Artsakh families.





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Personal and professional development training



The Center had the honor of hosting Lusine Sanoyan, the First Deputy Head of Gyumri to present an overview of the Center and current and future projects.





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The residents of the Center have frequent guests



The “Healthy Lifestyle” course continues at the Center





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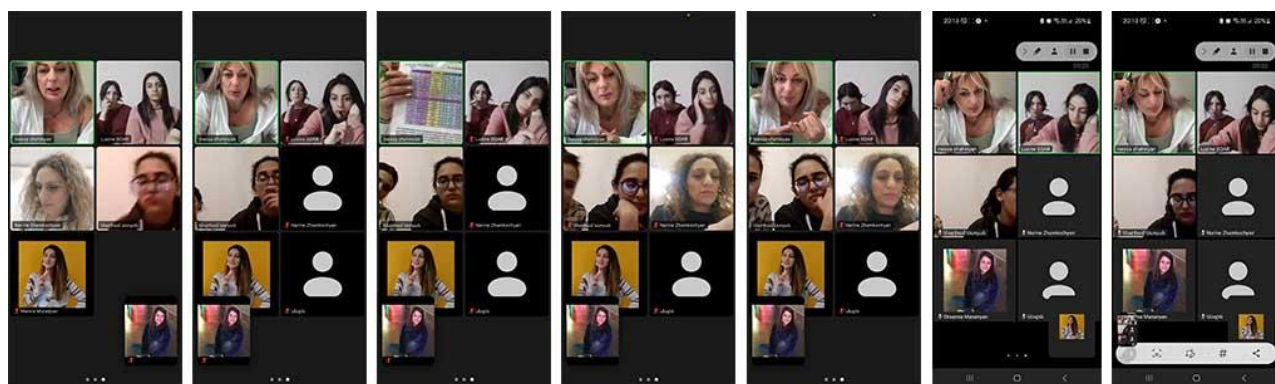
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All three Transitional Centers

The residents of all three Centers continue to take online classes with chapter board members



Mobile Eye Care Project





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Birthday Fund



Families of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund

The Gulamerian Fund continues to sponsor three fallen soldier families.



**Family of Hayk
Hovsepyan**



Family of Vardan Sargsyan



**Family of
Kamo Baghshian**



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Summer retreats and camps

Children of displaced Artsakh families





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Summer retreat at Our Lady of Armenia Center Summer Camp (Tsaghgadzor) for the residents of Prkutyun.





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Hay Ler summer camp in Bulgaria for four residents of Nakashian Children's Support Center and the SOAR Transitional Centers.



Summer retreat for the disabled children of Children's Home of Gyumri





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Annual retreat for the young ladies at Nakashian Children's Support Center



Javakh Summer Camp – 2 sessions





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Six children from the AFIF and FFSRF sponsorship families attended camp in the Lori region.



Wheelchairs for Sisters of Charity, Bethlehem





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A graduation celebration for the students at Vardashen.





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Stomach tubes and tracheostomy for Children's Home of Gyumri



Refrigerator and laptop for Our Lady of Armenia Annie Bezikian Center





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Monthly Food Stipends for Prkutyun





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New shoes for the children of Our Lady of Armenia Educational Center,



New furnishings and appliances for the Warm hearth facilities to accommodate the new displaced Artsakh residents





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New 3- in- 1 printer for Prkutyun



New shelving for Our Lady of Armenia Center, Gyumri





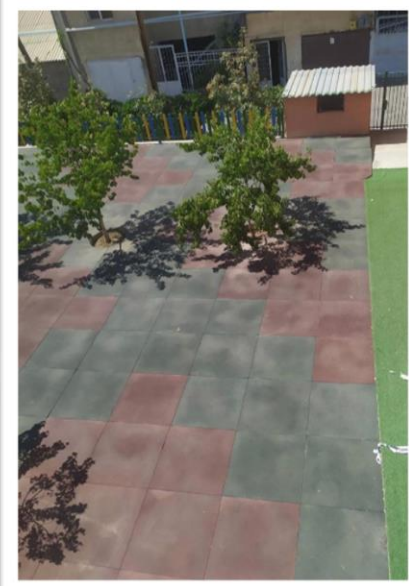
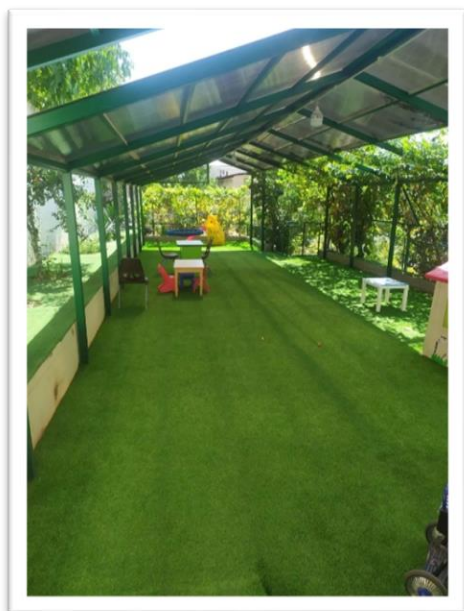
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Email: info@soar-us.org Web: soar-us.org

Garden Project, Sisters of Charity, Bethlehem



Renovations of 2nd building at the Transitional Center, Gyumri for the new Day Center, SOLENA





SOCIETY FOR ORPHANED ARMENIAN RELIEF (SOAR)

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Conclusion

The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) was established in the fall of 2005 to provide humanitarian relief to orphaned Armenian children and orphaned Armenian adults with disabilities. In CY2023, the Harold and Josephine Gulamerian Armenian Orphan Fund (GAOF) distributed \$350,000.00 to SOAR to support staff salaries/benefits; SOAR's Dental and Diaper Funds; SOAR's Mobile Eye Care Clinic; the Family of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund (FFSRF); renovations at SOAR's Transitional Centers; and a variety of other projects. SOAR extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Foundation and to Mr. and Mrs. Louis and Yoland Mazzola for their generosity in 2023. If you have any questions about the institutions we serve or this report, please contact George S. Yacoubian, Jr., at (610) 213-3452 or by email at gyacoubian@soar-us.org.