

USC Armenian Graduate Students' Association Donates \$5,000 to Glendale-Ghapan Sister City Association

Glendale, CA--At their 2006 Annual Gala & Live Auction in February, the University of Southern California Armenian Graduate Students' Association (USC AGSA) raised nearly \$25,000 for charity projects in Armenia. As a non-profit organization working to enhance the lives of the people in Ghapan and surrounding villages, the Glendale-Ghapan Sister City Association received \$5,000 to renovate a youth center in the Village of Dantsaver.

“Our collaboration with the Glendale-Ghapan Sister City Association developed naturally since we share the common vision—to strategically preserve and fortify our homeland,” said Armen Margarian, President of the USC Graduate Students' Association. “The Dantsaver Village Youth Center project was especially near and dear to us as young Armenians living in the US since we feel that an integral part of our duty is to reach out to our fellow siblings in Armenia and develop professional relationships that will aid in their success in the international academic and professional arena,” continued Margarian.

“We are thrilled and so grateful not only that the USC AGSA students are globally aware, but are actively involved in nation-building by hosting events that assist the not-so-privileged in Armenia prosper and thrive,” said Artin Manoukian, president of the Glendale-Ghapan Sister City Association. “We encourage other like-minded organizations to come forward as it is through the collaborative efforts of community members and organizations such as the USC AGSA that our mission of cultivating economic cooperation and cultural exchanges can be realized, all the while enhancing the standard of living for our brethren in Armenia” added Manoukian.

Since its inception in 2002, the GGSCA has been actively working to fulfill its mission by concentrating its efforts on improving the conditions in the pre-schools, the healthcare system in Ghapan and the surrounding villages. In 2005 a much-needed paramedic donated by the City of Glendale Fire Department was delivered to Ghapan along with 30 hospital beds donated by Dr. Vartkes and Mrs. Mary Najarian. For the pre-school, the GGSCA with proceeds from an event held at Hoover High School in Glendale delivered bedding for 1200 students which included sheets, pillow cases, blankets as well as uniforms for staff. This project served a dual purpose by providing needed goods, and also by contributing to the local economy by employing the local Blind and Handicapped Association in Ghapan to sew the items.

Coinciding with the Easter holiday, the Glendale-Ghapan Sister City Association last year delivered gifts including backpacks, school supplies and lunch sets to 1200 Ghapan preschoolers. For this Easter, the GGSCA is preparing its shipment of similar items to be sent to 1200 preschoolers in Ghapan and 300 others in surrounding villages.

In addition to the renovation of youth center in Dantsaver village due to USC AGSA's generous support, some of GGSCA's upcoming projects include the opening of the completely renovated school in Norashenik village by the Armenian Educational Foundation and a section of Pre-School Number 8 by Mr. and Mrs. Kahren Beniassians. Also scheduled for autumn 2006 is a trip to Ghapan with a medical delegation from Glendale Adventist Medical Center.

GGSCA is a non-profit organization that aims to foster goodwill and understanding through cultural, educational, economic cooperation between the people of Glendale and Ghapan. The GGSCA was established through the joint effort of the Armenian National Committee of Glendale, the City of Glendale, and the City of Ghapan, to help cultivate economic cooperation and cultural exchanges between the two cities. Glendale City Council passed a resolution recognizing Ghapan as a Sister City in December of 2002. GGSCA has identified three areas of focus in Ghapan: schools, healthcare and community infrastructure. For more information or to contribute to GGSCA, please contact (818) 828-8882 or email at info@glendale-ghapan.org