

Yerevan, Armenia

Dates: July 13 to 27, 2010

About Armenia -

A land of rugged mountains, extinct volcanoes and fast-running rivers, Armenia is the smallest of the former Soviet republics. It gained independence in 1991 but has since been a nation occupied with social and economic reform. Despite ongoing economic hardship, in recent years the Armenian government has had some success cutting inflation and fostering the privatization of many enterprises. But income levels and unemployment remain critical issues, as nearly 50 percent of Armenians live in poverty. As a result, many Armenians cannot afford satisfactory housing and remain heavily dependent on remittances from relatives abroad to meet their basic needs.

Yerevan, with a population of 1.2 million, is the largest city and capital of Armenia. It is situated on the Hrazdan River and is the administrative, cultural, and industrial center of the country. The history of Yerevan dates back to the 8th century BC, with the founding of the Urartian fortress of Erebuni in 782 BC.

Yerevan is located in eastern Armenia in the northeastern part of the Ararat Valley. The upper part of the city is surrounded by mountains on three sides while to the south it descends to the banks of the river [Hrazdan](#), a tributary of the river [Arax](#), which divides the city in two, within a picturesque canyon.

Yerevan is a leading industrial, cultural, and scientific center in the Caucasus region. As a center of Armenian culture, Yerevan is the site of Yerevan State University (1919), the Armenian Academy of Sciences, a historical museum, an opera house, a music conservatory and several technical institutes. The [Matenadaran](#) archives hold a rich collection of valuable ancient Armenian, Greek, Syrian, Hebrew, Roman and Persian manuscripts. Yerevan has several large public libraries, a number of museums and theaters, botanical gardens and zoos.

The Fuller Center for Housing Armenia (FCHA) was founded in May, 2008 in Yerevan. Currently FCHA is working in five regions of Armenia and plans on further expansion. More than fifty percent of the families in FCHA's focus area live in deteriorated housing with cramped quarters and limited water and heat. Many families live in unfinished houses because they had to abandon construction due to the severe economic crisis. Other families live in "domiks", metal containers, brought to Armenia as temporary shelter following the devastating 1988 earthquake.

FCHA is using several approaches to helping families solve their housing problems and help complete construction on the unfinished homes. In an effort to keep building costs at a minimum, a readily available indigenous stone known as "doof" is used in house construction. Depending on the stage of construction, our team will work on a variety of tasks. No construction experience is required for global build participants.

Itinerary -

Team participants should arrive no sooner than July 15, 2010, and leave no later than July 27, 2010. Typically, of these thirteen days; two are for rest and acclimation (jet lag - team members are arriving at different times), six days are for work, and five days are for touring (one day is for independent touring). A more precise itinerary will be developed as the trip date approaches.

Accommodations -

Accommodations in Yerevan are double to triple occupancy rooms with private baths in a hotel. Breakfast will be served in the hotel. Lunches will be taken at the building site, and dinners at various local restaurants.

Cost -

The trip will cost approximately \$2,000 plus round-trip airfare. This price includes lodging, food, ground transportation, cultural tours, orientation materials, transfers to and from the Yerevan airport (EVN), and a donation to FCHA. Participants will need to arrange and pay for transportation from their point of departure to Armenia, passports, visas, exit fee (if applicable), and vaccinations.

Team Leader -

Leo Manuelian lives in New Jersey with his wife of 30 years (Sona) and two daughters (Ani & Lori). He is a civil engineer by profession, specializing in heavy construction (roads, bridges, water works, etc.). He participated in his first trip in 2002 and has been a team leader six times since. Leo has been involved in volunteer work in the Armenian community since his youth. And he is a member of the Knights of Vartan. For more information about this trip, Leo may be contacted at 201-746-0409 or Levonvi@yahoo.com .