



Winter 2011, Issue 7  
Thanking and Inviting Volunteers

## Blood Is Calling... / by Melanie Broussalian, 17 years old, CA, USA/

I have always been told that our homeland is Armenia, but for me home has always meant Southern California. From my perspec-

*I know it is important to keep the Armenian spirit and legacy alive, and I can achieve this by educating myself and sharing my knowledge with others.*



tive, Armenia is a remote place where my ancestors have lived for more than 3,000 years, in times of growth and prosperity as well as suffering and ruin. In Sunday and Armenian School, I have learned that my people are strong and unyielding in their faith, Apostolic Christianity. I have heard the stories, read the books, and felt the pain of the Armenian Genocide through the experiences of my great grandparents. But still, Armenia and its people have been a vague and

distant notion. I never felt completely connected to the nationality that supposedly defines me, until this past summer when my mother and I traveled to Armenia as volunteers with the Fuller Center for Housing.

Our trip was separated into workdays, when we would help complete a partially-built house, and tour days, when we would explore the Armenian countryside. The house we worked on was in a remote village called Dasht, about 30 minutes from Yerevan. All five of the family members had been living in one cramped room for nearly 20 years without indoor plumbing or basic living necessities. Unlike in affluent Yerevan, in the villages we saw terrible poverty. Our group of 15 volunteers came ready to work and was happy to play a small, but significant part in completing this family's home.

About midway through our trip, my role as an Armenian living in today's society began to take shape. I know that my ancestors have suffered and been martyred to preserve our culture and faith. It's a privilege to carry this torch in honor of those who came before me. Now more than ever, I am proud to be Armenian.

## Making Difference /Quotes from Volunteers/

By volunteering in "Fuller Center for Housing Armenia" NGO you get to accomplish something truly wonderful, changing the world into a better place, experiencing another culture, acquiring lifelong friends and

truly making a difference. You will have an opportunity to build something with your own hands, and to transform the life of a family by turning love into action. The experience has shown that our volunteers not only help greatly, but also get pleasure from it, something changes in their lives.

**Mark & Christine Badaches  
NJ, USA**

"It was a beautiful thing. Jeremy, being a low key, laid back individual, demonstrated an exuberance and vitality that I never saw before. He ate and drank with gusto. He was outgoing and welcomed new adventures. He arose from bed early and went to sleep late, after working or touring a

full day. Finally, just before leaving Yerevan, I asked him the reason for his complete change. Jeremy responded, **"Dad, since arriving in Armenia I feel as though I'm home."**

**Karen Mahakian, IN, USA**

"It truly was a trip that affected all of us in many ways. It has been interesting to hear Jack as he talks to friends and family about the trip. He was anxious about going but has told us many times how much it meant to him. He came home truly identifying himself as an Armenian and very proud of his heritage. I think being able to work together with the families made an impact of seeing how hard working and generous these families were but also how similar."



## IREX Partnership /by Edmond Ghulyan/

Volunteerism is highly impor-



tant in today's world and if one is thinking of making a change then volunteering in your local community is the best way to start.

As a fellow of the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Eurasia and Central Asia, I spent almost one year in Wisconsin where I experienced the American soul of volunteerism.

I can say for sure that it is the most effective way to help others and enable them to act.

Recently, as an ECA alumnus, I participated in the construction of a house in Mayakovsky village. I have to men-



tion that a lot of the work had to do with cooperation and

collaboration with the team members. We were all working in a way that one would think we have been working together for years, though it was the first time I met most of the people in the group. We did our best to coordinate our actions and to make the best use of our limited time. We got done with the work earlier than we expected due to our dedication and strong commitment to help that family.

These kinds of events have a huge impact on people and change their way of looking

at life. Now these families that built their houses with the Fuller Centre know that there is always someone out there who is ready to help with their problems. Most importantly, children growing up in these families now know what "volunteerism" is and what it means to make a change. They are going to be the future leaders of their times.

*Edmond Ghulyan: ECA alumnus of the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program (2009-2010, Fox Valley Technical College, Economics)*

## Now It's Your Turn to Make One More Family's Dream Come True



USA Embassy in Armenia, Birthright Armenia, AVC (Armenian Volunteer Corps), FLEX (Future Leaders Exchange), AGBU Iran, AGBU Europe.

...they have already made their contribution.

**Join us** giving one more family

**HOPE FOR LIFE.**

HOPE that one day they will wake up under a secure roof, HOPE that their lives are protected, HOPE that one day their children will have a shelter.

**Available Dates:**

**Yerevan** June 25 - July 9, July 14 - 26, July 26-August 9  
**Vanadzor** May 15 - 29, July 9 - 23

To support our programs:

Make an online donation through our website:

[www.fullercenterarmenia.org/get-involved/donate](http://www.fullercenterarmenia.org/get-involved/donate)

Or send a check to: The Fuller Center for Housing  
PO Box 523,  
Americus, GA 31709, USA

Please add "Armenia" in the memo line.

Donations are tax-deductible. **THANK YOU!**



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