

# The Manooagian Voice

Heritage • Achievement • Excellence

PROMOTING THE APPRECIATION OF LIFELONG LEARNING WITHIN AN ENVIRONMENT OF EXCELLENCE



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## Welcome, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson visited the Manooagian School on Wednesday, May 24, invited by Manooagian School Board member Steve Grigorian, President and CEO of the Detroit Economic Club. Secretary Benson shared her respect for the Manooagian School, its cultural preservation, and its commitment to academic innovation, especially in the STEAM center. Through an interview with Senior Antonina Velychko and Junior Victoria Togmajyan, Secretary Benson emphasized the importance of civic responsibility to students in grades 8-12. She reminded students that voting is both a gift and a responsibility that we share as members of a democracy. For “young people under the age of 25 in particular,” voting is particularly important because their demographic is both radically underrepresented and longitudinally affected; policies created today will affect this group for years to come. She concluded by advising students that regardless of what profession they choose, they should consider what they want to accomplish and why it is important to them; with those foundational directives, they will create an impact in any field. After the interview, Dr. Torossian and Mrs. Kalfayan gifted Secretary Benson a book from the St. John Armenian Church Museum, reinforcing the presence of the Armenian community in Michigan’s diverse community.



Hats Off to Seniors!

Mock Trip to Armenia

Armenian Genocide Remembrance

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Have fun, be safe and enjoy the summer!

# Hats Off to Seniors!

On June 6, at the St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall, the AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian School will bid a fond farewell to the 32 graduating Seniors in the 2023 Commencement Ceremony. The graduates join the ranks of other distinguished Manoogian alumni in leaving a rich legacy behind them. This class has been noted for being the “last class” to experience a “normal school year” before COVID-19 struck. As a result, they were deprived certain Manoogian School hallmarks, like the trips to Armenia or Washington, DC. Nonetheless, their academic performance and scholastic accomplishments have remained impressive. On top of fundraising over \$8,000 for their Senior Class activities, students have been awarded nearly \$3 million in scholarships to universities and colleges around the country. This class has been marked with many honors: Fadi Yatooma is the first Manoogian student to receive a 5 (the highest score) on the AP Language and Composition test; Katrina Azar, Isaac Yeldo, Fadi Yatooma, and Antonina Velychko received full-ride financial aid packages to University of Michigan-Ann Arbor; Annmarie Kirma was offered over \$1 million in scholarships alone; and Katrina Azar has been accepted to Yale University on a full scholarship. Five students were accepted to University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, and seven are taking advantage of scholarships to study at University of Detroit Mercy; twelve completed the Career Readiness



*Valedictorians: Katrina Azar, Isaac Yeldo, and Zachary Garabedian; also Salutatorian: Fadi Yatooma.*

Academy program through the Detroit Economic Club. While COVID-19 interrupted the most formative high school years for this class, their incredible recovery in its wake proves that the graduates of 2023 have the grit and experience to continue their trajectory of success. The Manoogian School community is proud to celebrate these students and wishes them blessings and good luck as they begin this next step.



# Preschool “Travels” to Armenia

In April, the preschool 3 and 4 classes participated in a mock trip to Armenia, coordinated and hosted by the elementary classes. Principal Sonia Kalfayan dreamed of an engaging, interactive, cross-curricular activity, allowing each class to demonstrate a different aspect of a tour to Armenia. Without ever leaving the school, the preschoolers experienced the typical elements of an international trip: Passports, boarding passes, a TSA security check, and an international flight, featuring Mrs. Armig as a stewardess and Mrs. Tamar as their friendly pilot.

From there, the preschoolers “traveled” to different Armenian cultural activities and landmarks on wall-sized bulletin boards, hosted by each elementary classroom. The little tourists started at 3rd grade, who produced the Armenian alphabet in bold Armenian colors; then they visited Mt. Ararat at 2nd grade, who shared historical facts about the famous mountain. Next the tourists visited Lake Sevan, where the 1st graders dressed up in shorts and beach clothing and enjoyed a fun day at the lake. At Dzidzernagapert, drawn and painted by Kindergarten, each preschool visitor laid a carnation at the display while the Kindergarteners sang “Hayer Miatzek” and “Kedashen.” Then 4th graders welcomed their guests to Garni Temple,



which they drew and painted from scratch, and danced the Pampouri for the tourists; then 5th grade gave a presentation on the history and culture of Artsakh and shared djengelov hatz, baked by Mrs. Movsesyan.

Finally, since traveling works up an appetite, the preschoolers concluded at Djasharan Mayrig, hosted by teacher Tamiza Dakissian, a glamorous “restaurant” where guests were fed Armenian favorites like lahmajoon, lavash, cucumbers, and cheese. After lunch, when asked about their favorite part of their whirlwind trip to Armenia, the tired-but-satisfied tourists all replied, “The restaurant!” Every elementary and middle school student left the tour with a copy of *Armenia: The Hidden Track*, a beautiful infographic book from the Ministry of Economy of Armenia.



# “I am Armenian at heart” – Manoogian Students Remember the Armenian Genocide



On April 24, students commemorated the 108th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. In addition to the mock-trip to Armenia, elementary students visited St. John Armenian Church’s Dzidzernagapert memorial to lay flowers, followed by a special service in the church sanctuary by Father Aren Jebejian. After lunch, the Senior class traveled downtown to lay Armenian flags at the monument to Gomidas Vartabed. In the high school, Baron Sebouh Avedikian coordinated a memorial program of Armenian dance, music, and arts. One of the highlights featured 2nd graders escorted by Seniors; Isaac Yeldo describes the moment of passing an Armenian flag from his hand to the 2nd graders as a “symbolic passing of the torch,” which touched him deeply. Programs like these commemorate the Armenian Genocide not only through respectful remembrance of its victims, but also through intentional observation by both Armenians and non-Armenians of Armenia’s living culture. As Yeldo says, “I can without a doubt say that I am Armenian at heart, and I proudly celebrate the victory of the Armenian people as I pass the flag onto the next generation of students.”

