



ARMENIAN
VOLUNTEER
CORPS

ALUMNI

NEWSLETTER

2025



From Volunteers to Nation Builders

Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. News & Highlights | 4-5 |
| 2. Alumni Highlights | 6-11 |
| 3. Authors in the House | 12-13 |
| 4. Future Volunteers | 14 |
| 5. Microgrant Highlights 2025 | 15-16 |
| 6. Leadership Awards 2025 | 17 |
| 7. Alumni Events - Year in Review | 18-19 |
| 8. Get Involved | 20 |

In This Edition:

We bring together the stories and achievements that shaped our community in 2025. Across Armenia and around the world, alumni continued to lead, create, build, and inspire. This edition highlights the moments, milestones, and contributions that defined the year and the people who made them possible.

Welcome Message

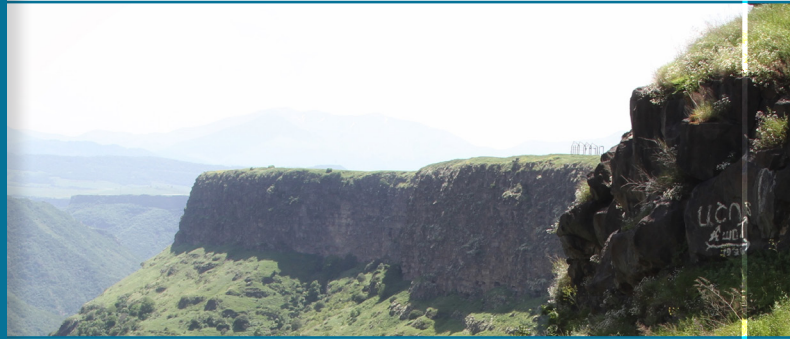
Dear Alumni,

We are happy to share the 2025 Birthright Armenia Depi Hayk and Armenian Volunteer Corps Alumni Newsletter with you. This edition highlights new achievements from across our global community, recent program developments, and the growing impact of our volunteers and alumni in Armenia.

Armenia continues to face serious challenges, and these times remind us how important it is to stay engaged, informed, and connected. Your contributions, wherever you are, continue to strengthen our communities and support Armenia's future.

As we begin 2026, we invite you to stay active in our network, explore new ways to participate, and reach out whenever you need guidance or support. Together, we move forward with purpose and commitment.

**- BIRTHRIGHT ARMENIA DEPI HAYK
ARMENIAN VOLUNTEER CORPS**



1. News & Updates

Program Expansions

Big Change Coming: Transforming the BR/AVC Office into a New Space

Next year, the H. Hovnanian Family Foundation will begin transforming the second floor of the BR/AVC office into a vibrant, multifunctional hub for volunteers and alumni. The redesigned space will offer areas for coworking, quiet study, meetings, language classes, recordings, and community activities. With dedicated zones for collaboration and creativity, the new floor will serve as a welcoming home where volunteers can learn, work, and connect. This project marks an important step in strengthening engagement and building a true community space for all.



New Initiatives

Helping Alumni Move to Armenia

The Pathway to Armenia program continues to serve as an essential bridge for alumni who choose to return and begin a new chapter in Armenia. With the renovation planned for early 2026, our redesigned Yerevan apartment will accommodate up to seven volunteers per month, offering critical support during their first three months as they complete paperwork, look for jobs, and establish themselves in the city.

This year brought a significant rise in alumni using Pathway as their entry point to repatriation, with many choosing Yerevan and Gyumri as their new homes. Our Gyumri apartment also hosted a record number of participants, seven of whom successfully transitioned into long-term life in Armenia.

These developments highlight the growing impact of the Pathway Program and its role in helping alumni build stable, meaningful futures in the homeland.

Special Note: A Forest for Leigha

A forest of 20,000 trees was made possible through the generous donations of Leigha's friends, family, and Birthright Armenia where Leigha completed a volunteer service program. Leigha, a bright, compassionate girl who loved her newly discovered country, tragically passed away in spring of 2025, in the USA. To honor her memory, Leigha's friends and loved ones have decided to plant a forest in her memory with us. An online fundraiser helped collect close to 16,000 trees, and Birthright Armenia filled the gap to reach 20,000 trees. This November, 40 volunteers from the organization came to Lernajur, to help plant, in a touching initiative, the forest in memory of their friend.

During her volunteer service here, Leigha made plans to make this country her home. Leigha was the great-granddaughter of Karoon Vartabedian and Kevork Khatchadourian of Van, both survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915.



2. Alumni Highlights

International



Leading Digital Transformation in Canadian Banking

Tony Kababejian
BR 2009 / AVC 2016

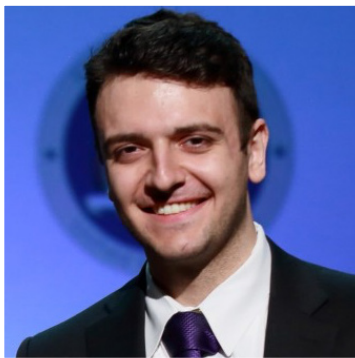
After more than fifteen years of progressive roles at the National Bank of Canada, Tony Kababejian was recently appointed Chief Data Analyst, where he now leads key initiatives in automation, analytics, and digital transformation. His work in data engineering, process optimization, and hyperautomation has helped strengthen systems across the Bank and improve decision-making. Tony's leadership and commitment to innovation highlight how alumni continue to make meaningful impact within major institutions and across their professional fields.



Shaping Economic Growth in Montreal

Vana Nazarian
AVC 2010

We are delighted to share that Vana Nazarian has been appointed Associate Councillor for Attractiveness and Economic Development on Montreal's newly formed Executive Committee. Following the city's recent municipal elections, Mayor Soraya Martinez Ferrada selected Vana to support key priorities including economic growth, city performance, and community development. In this influential role, Vana will help shape policies that strengthen Montreal's global appeal and long-term strategic vision. We proudly congratulate her on this outstanding achievement and celebrate her continued dedication to public service.



Honored as a Leading Young Armenian Lawyer

Harut Minasian
BR 2019

We are proud to share that Harut Minasian, Associate at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP has been honored by the Armenian Bar Association as one of its "20 Under 40" Rising Stars for 2025. This recognition celebrates exceptional young Armenian professionals who demonstrate leadership, excellence in the legal field, and meaningful service to their communities. Harut's achievement reflects his ongoing dedication to both his profession and the Armenian community.



Transitioning Into Machine Learning Leadership

Shahan Nercessian
BR 2009

Shahan experienced a meaningful period of transition this year. After 7.5 years with iZotope and Native Instruments, he closed an important chapter in his career and began a new one as a Senior Applied ML Researcher at Splice. In his first 90 days, Shahan has found renewed purpose through new challenges, supportive colleagues, and opportunities for growth. He remains grateful for the encouragement he has received and looks forward to continuing his journey in ML and AI with fresh energy and optimism.

Armenia

Sisian Boghossian

BR 2019

Bringing Armenian Stories to the Global Screen

Sisian is making waves in Armenia's creative landscape as an Associate Producer of *A Winter's Song* — a romantic holiday film described as a blend of “American flair and Armenian soul.” Now playing in theaters across Armenia, the movie beautifully showcases the country's winter charm, culture, and spirit. What makes this especially meaningful for us is that Sisian, a proud Birthright Armenia alum, helped bring this story to life through her passion for storytelling, marketing, and Armenian identity. Her work demonstrates how diaspora Armenians can elevate Armenia's cultural presence globally, using creativity to inspire and connect audiences. Stories like Sisian's perfectly reflect our mission: empowering diaspora professionals to contribute their talents, amplify Armenia's voice, and shape meaningful cultural impact at home and abroad.



Marina Epremyan

BR 2023

Leading Global Partnerships in Armenian Media

Marina joined Birthright Armenia with a clear goal: to repatriate, integrate into Armenian society, and build a career in the media sector. Inspired by her family's deep connection to Armenia and strengthened by years of spending every summer in Yerevan, Marina saw Birthright as the ideal bridge to professional and cultural integration. Today, Marina continues to thrive in Armenia's media landscape as the International Sales Manager at Public TV of Armenia, where she leads global partnerships and expands the international reach of Armenian television content. Her journey reflects a strong commitment to contributing to Armenia's cultural and creative presence on the world stage.



Garin Bedian

BR 2016

Diaspora Entrepreneurship Bringing New Life to Meghri

Pokr Tagh Pizza is celebrated as a unique gem in Meghri — a restaurant created with genuine passion for local community, culture, and cuisine. What makes this story especially meaningful for us is that one of its founders is Garin Bedian, a proud 2016 Birthright Armenia alum. Garin's initiative reflects the powerful impact diaspora Armenians can have when they return and invest in Armenia's regions. Through entrepreneurship, cultural heritage, and community spirit, Pokr Tagh Pizza has become more than just a place to eat; it has become a gathering spot that brings people together and energizes the local neighborhood. Stories like this resonate deeply with our mission: strengthening ties between the diaspora and Armenia, supporting grassroots initiatives, and celebrating alumni who contribute to Armenia's cultural and economic growth.



Antranig Khachkhechyan

BR 2012

Building a New Chapter in Armenia

Antranig repatriated to Armenia this year with his family, marking a meaningful new chapter built on the roots he formed during his Birthright Armenia experience more than a decade ago. His 2012 volunteer placement at TUMO left a lasting impact, shaping his sense of belonging and deepening his connection to Armenia. Today, Antranig and his family have settled in Yerevan, where he is actively expanding his business operations while embracing the safety, community, and opportunities that life in Armenia offers. His journey reflects how early volunteer experiences can inspire long-term commitment and a return home years later.



2025 Israelyan Western Armenian Translation Grant recipient

Rupen Janbazian BR/AVC 2011

Writer, translator, and TorontoHye Editor-in-Chief Rupen Janbazian has been awarded the 2025 Israelyan Western Armenian Translation Grant by the International Armenian Literary Alliance (IALA). Since 2022, he has been at the helm of TorontoHye, a bilingual Armenian-English community print newspaper in Toronto. Writing in both English and Western Armenian, his work often explores questions of homeland and diaspora, identity, and community life between Canada and Armenia. The grant recognizes his translation of Souren Chekijian's Half-Drawn («Անաւարտ դիմանկար») into Western Armenian, honoring his continued commitment to advancing Western Armenian literature.



Competing for Armenia at the Pickleball World Cup

Isabelle Papazyan BR 2025

Isabelle Papazyan joined Birthright Armenia in June 2025 from Melbourne, Australia, bringing her background in marketing and branding, along with a strong athletic career. A professional pickleball athlete, Isabelle came to Armenia to obtain her Armenian citizenship, change her country of representation, and compete under the Armenian flag. During her service, Isabelle represented Team Armenia at the Pickleball World Cup, proudly competing on the international stage with the support of the H. Hovnanian Family Foundation. Her journey reflects both her commitment to her Armenian heritage and her drive to elevate Armenia in global sports.



Award-Winning PhD Researcher in Armenia's Tech Sector

Armen Sardaryan BR 2021

Armen was born in the small Russian city of Zlatoust, in the Chelyabinsk region. He earned his bachelor's degree at Saint Petersburg State University. In 2021, he moved to Armenia through the Birthright Armenia program and volunteered at organizations such as Armbionics, FAST, the Hidden Road Initiative, and others. After the program, he decided to stay in Armenia, completing a master's degree and later starting a PhD at the Russian-Armenian University. He is currently an AI researcher at the Center of Advanced Software Technologies (CAST) and teaches at the RAU Department of Applied Mathematics. This year, he received the annual Synopsys–Government of Armenia award in the IT field as the best PhD student.



Advancing Environmental Research and Education in Armenia

Taleen Mahseredjian BR 2023

Taleen joined Birthright Armenia with a lifelong passion for Armenia and a strong academic background in geology and neuroscience. After years of community service, including her experience as a Youth Corps counselor in Vanadzor, Taleen committed herself to using science to support Armenia's environment. Taleen has moved to Armenia to teach and continue her research with the American University of Armenia's Acopian Center for the Environment. In addition to working with students, she is involved in green energy transition projects aimed at ensuring Armenia's energy security and protecting Armenia's natural resources to contribute to environmental sustainability for future generations.



Building Her Future in Armenia's Tech Sector

Florencia Nerguizian BR 2020

Florencia moved from Uruguay to Armenia during the pandemic, fulfilling a lifelong dream to live in the homeland she always felt connected to through culture, family, and dance. After volunteering in human rights and community projects, she fully repatriated and built an impressive career at Digitain, where she now serves as the LATAM Region Development and Operations Manager. Florencia's journey reflects both professional achievement and the realization of a personal dream to build her life and future in Armenia.





podcast

Nyree Abrahamian BR / AVC 2007

Jeremy Dalmas BR / AVC 2008

Sharing Armenia's Stories With the World

Jeremy and Nyree, along with former Birthright Armenia staff member, Gohar Khachatryan, are the trio behind Country of Dust, a podcast that tells the story of life in a changing Armenia. "We created this podcast because there are so many human stories in Armenia, beyond the headlines, that we think are worth telling," says Nyree.

Country of Dust's long-awaited second season is out now, including a special video episode, and has received much acclaim. The podcast has been featured on CBC Radio, KQED, and in the Guardian Best Podcasts of the Week. It has won a Press Gazette Future of Media Award and has been shortlisted for an International Women's Podcast Award and a One World Media Award. It is also an official selection at this year's Aesthetica Short Film Festival. You can listen to both seasons of Country of Dust wherever you get your podcasts.



From Toronto to Armenia's Tech Sector

Krikor Ayntabli BR 2023

Krikor, a Software Engineer from Toronto, credits his Birthright Armenia experience for inspiring his decision to stay and build his life in Armenia. With a strong technical background—including roles in backend development, computer vision, GIS, and QA—Krikor found new purpose through his placement and community involvement. He now continues his career in Armenia's tech sector as a Back-End Developer at Digital Pomegranate, applying his skills in Python, FastAPI, MySQL, and DevOps while contributing to the growth of Armenia's technology ecosystem.



Advancing Armenia's Public Health on the Global Stage

Araz Chiloyan BR 2016

Araz recently returned from the EHMA 2025 Conference in Rennes, France, where she presented Armenia's progress in expanding HIV care through decentralized service models. Her team's pilot in Shirak is already showing strong results in improving treatment access for underserved communities. Her participation was made possible with the support of the H. Hovnanian Family Foundation, whose ongoing commitment empowers Armenian professionals to engage in global health dialogue. Araz currently serves as Lead Project Coordinator at the National Center for Infectious Diseases and brings extensive experience from her roles at the Ministry of Health, the Council of Europe, and Boston Children's Hospital. She continues to play an important role in strengthening Armenia's public health system.



Building a Career in Armenia’s Public Health System

Henrik Manukyan AVC 2025 – iGorts

Henrik Manukyan, a registered nurse with experience in hospital management and public health, joined AVC’s Professional Corps after moving from Spain to explore repatriation. During his service, he supported digital content projects for several cultural institutions and later contributed to AVC’s communications and Spanish-language outreach. Henrik describes his AVC experience as pivotal in building a strong network and finding his place in Armenia. He is now in the hiring process with the Ministry of Health through the iGorts program, marking an exciting next step in his goal to serve Armenia’s health sector.



From AVC Volunteer to Full-Time Teacher in Armenia

Seyhan Bostan AVC 2021, 2024

Returning to Armenia for her second AVC service through the Service Civique program, Seyhan Bostan brought her expertise in language teaching and digital learning design to a wide range of impactful placements. She contributed to translation and VR-based educational projects at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, developed a full soft-skills course at the Armenian Code Academy, and later rediscovered her passion for early childhood education while assisting Year 1 classes at DreamBridgeman International School. Seyhan’s AVC experience reaffirmed her commitment to Armenia, and she has now accepted a full-time teaching position at DreamBridgeman, where she will continue building her career in education through July 2026.



Strengthening Armenia’s NGO Sector Through Leadership

Tsoleen Sarian AVC 2021

We are excited to highlight Tsoleen Sarian, who has joined the FAR Armenia team as the Projects Development and Evaluation Coordinator. Since repatriating to Armenia in 2021 through the AVC Professional Corps, Tsoleen has brought her extensive U.S. and Armenia-based nonprofit experience to support civil society, program development, strategic planning, and diaspora engagement. Her leadership roles—including serving as Managing Director at DiasporArm—reflect her commitment to building bridges between Armenia and the global Armenian community. In her new position at FAR, Tsoleen will help strengthen collaboration across NGOs, advance impactful projects, and contribute to a thriving, resilient Armenia. We warmly welcome her to the FAR family and look forward to the meaningful work ahead.



Driving Cultural Heritage Revival Through The Rug Code

Kyle Khandikian BR 2015

Kyle continues to make a significant impact in Armenia’s academic and cultural landscape. As the Director of Alumni Relations at the American University of Armenia (AUA), he leads engagement efforts and strengthens relationships with graduates across the world. Alongside his role at AUA, Kyle is the Founding Director of The Rug Code, an initiative dedicated to reviving Armenia’s traditional rug-making heritage by connecting village weavers with global audiences. His career has also included award-winning storytelling and impactful fundraising work at ONEArmenia and 2492 Travel, where he helped bring Armenian culture, artisanship, and rural communities to the world stage. Kyle’s work reflects his dedication to community-building, cultural preservation, and creating meaningful opportunities within Armenia.

Advanced Degrees & Appointments



Talia Lieberman

BR 2021

Talia Lieberman has begun her PhD in Economics at UCLA, building on her past research experience at CRRG in Armenia and the Berggruen Institute, at the intersection of economics, innovation, creativity, and public policy.



Dr. Johannes Michaelian

BR 2016

Dr. Johannes Michaelian has been appointed to the Board of Directors at Alzheimer's Care Armenia, bringing internationally recognized expertise in dementia diagnostics, healthy brain ageing, and equitable care innovation.



Emily B. Frazier

BR 2022

Emily B. Frazier has completed her double master's degrees in Economic Policy and Economics through the University of Antwerp and Maastricht University and continues to serve as a Research Fellow at the Regional Studies Center in Yerevan. She is based in Brussels and consults in the domains of economic development, peacebuilding, and economic connectivity.



Lalai Manjikian, PhD

BR 2005

Lalai Manjikian, a specialist in Sociology and Migration Studies, celebrates receiving tenure at Vanier College, marking a major milestone in her career dedicated to teaching, mentorship, and community building.



3. Authors in the House

Momma, May I?

Written by Kathleen Moriarty AVC 2024

Illustrated by Anahit Grogoryan

Momma, May I? is a gentle and beautifully illustrated children's story that follows a family of chestnut-backed chickadees as they discover a rare arbutus forest and help their displaced friends find new homes. Filled with warmth, compassion, and messages about community and care for nature, the book offers young readers a heartfelt reminder of the power of helping one another.



NEW
Children's
Book!

Let's Learn How to Brush Our Teeth

Written by Meghri Ashekian BR 2025

Illustrated by Lizet Bertizlian BR 2025

Let's Learn How to Brush Our Teeth is a fun, bright, and engaging children's book that helps little ones build healthy habits with confidence. With simple steps, friendly characters, and joyful illustrations, Meghri Ashekian and Lizet Bertizlian guide young readers through the daily routine of brushing their teeth. A perfect read for parents, educators, and anyone teaching good hygiene in a playful and positive way.



NEW
Children's
Book!

Spania

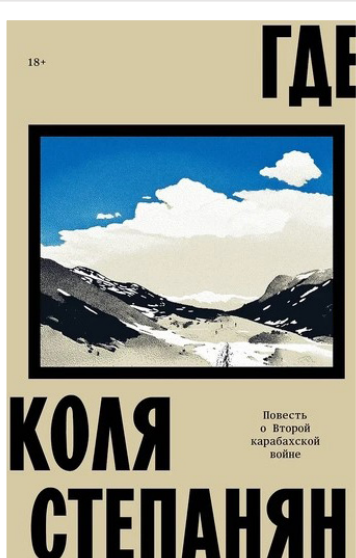
New French Translation by Achod

Papasian BR 2011-2012

We are proud to share that Achod Papasian has published his first book translation: the French edition of Spania by Kostan Zarian, released by Éditions Thaddée. Considered one of Zarian's most original works, Spania explores the soul of exile and weaves powerful connections between Armenia and Spain. Achod's translation brings this literary classic to a new audience and represents an important contribution to Armenian cultural scholarship.



[Find the link
to the book
here !](#)



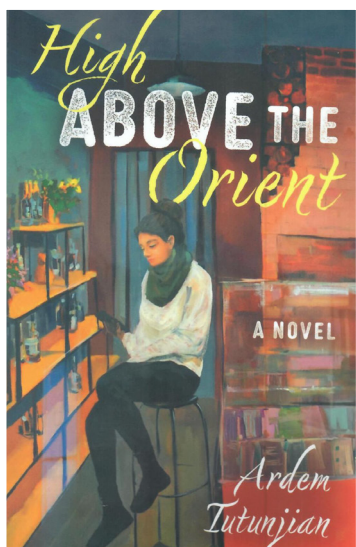
War Memoir: Where

Written by Nikolay Stepanyan BR 2019

In 2020, 22-year-old Moscow-born Armenian Kolya Stepanyan traveled to Armenia, where he secretly registered for military service without telling his parents. Soon after, he was sent to the frontlines of what became known as the Second Karabakh War. After just two weeks of fighting, Kolya went missing in action—and remained missing for 70 days.

Where he was during that time, what he witnessed, and how he and several fellow soldiers managed to escape became the basis of his book *Where*: a terrifying, funny, often uncomfortable, and brutally honest account of survival and truth.

[Find the link to the book here !](#)

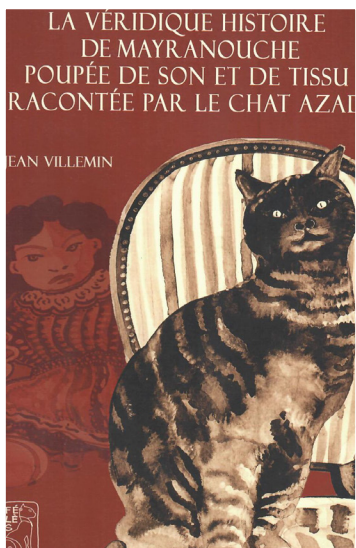


Novel: High Above the Orient

Written by Artem Tutunjian AVC 2018

High Above the Orient is a sweeping novel that follows Andre and Sabina from Yerevan to the mystical landscapes of Tibet. Blending romance, adventure, and spiritual mystery, Tutunjian creates an immersive story where ancient myths meet modern struggles. Through vivid settings and poetic storytelling, the novel explores love, sacrifice, and the secrets that shape us. A captivating and heartfelt read.

[Find the link to the book here !](#)



La véridique histoire de MAYRANOUCHE poupée de son et de tissu racontée par le chat Azad

Written by Jean Villemain AVC 2025

In this evocative illustrated tale, Azad the cat recounts the tragic fate of Mayranouche—a small straw-and-cloth doll crafted by a tailor for his daughter—against the backdrop of the 1915 Armenian Genocide near Lake Van. Told from the perspective of a witness at the end of his seventh life, the story explores memory, loss, and the enduring impact of violence. With ink-wash illustrations by Jean Villemain, the book offers a gentle yet powerful way to approach one of history's darkest chapters.

[Find the link to the book here !](#)

Noushig Hovhannesian Reardon

AVC 2010



Noushig and her family welcomed Frederick D. Reardon III (“Freddie”) on February 1, 2025. Now 10 months old, Freddie recently enjoyed meeting Santa and celebrated his baptism at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church in Philadelphia, where he happily tried kufte — his new favorite food! We wish the Reardon family joy, health, and many future visits to Hayastan.

Serena Hajar

BR 2021



“Starting my family in Armenia after completing Birthright is the realization of a dream I long harbored within me. Together with my husband, who is from Artsakh/Syunik, I am able to explore all that Armenia has to offer, from multiple roles and perspectives. While we both consider Armenia our “adoptive homeland” for different reasons, I hope that our children will be able to embrace it fully as their own.”

Three Generations - One Homeland



We were delighted to welcome back AVC alumnus Rod Greig AVC 2024 who returned to Armenia this year for another round of volunteering—this time with two very special guests: his daughter Eleanor, a Birthright Armenia alumna, and his granddaughter, a future volunteer in the making. Their visit beautifully captured what our mission is all about: the way one generation’s connection to Armenia can inspire the next, creating a lasting legacy of service, belonging, and love for the homeland. Rod’s continued commitment shows that once you experience the spirit of giving back in Armenia, it’s hard to stay away—and one day, we hope to see his granddaughter walk the same volunteer path too.

4. Future Volunteers

Leo Zakarian

BR 2019



“We are delighted to share the arrival of baby Ellie Zakarian, born on December 1st. Weighing 3.3 kg and already full of character, Ellie is welcomed with endless love by her parents, Leo and Sara. We wish this beautiful family health, happiness, and many future trips to Hayastan.”

Christina Nerguizian

AVC 2012



“On July 29th, we welcomed baby Lara Boyadjian Nerguizian. Her big brother Manuk and the whole family are delighted with her arrival — proof that love is not divided but multiplied! We wish that she, just like her parents, will grow up to know and fall in love with beautiful Hayastan.”

Nieri Avanesian Hakhverdian

AVC 2011



Mesrop Victor and Avedis Martin joined the Hakhverdyan family last week, making them a family of six. The twin boys, already full of personality, have brought so much joy to their siblings and parents — who can just about tell them apart!

5. Microgrant Highlights 2025

The Micro Grants Program made a strong impact this year through alumni-led initiatives that created meaningful change across Armenia—from women’s economic empowerment in Gyumri, to 3D-printed assistive devices, to environmental education in villages, and the publication of Armenia’s first study on adolescents with Type 1 diabetes. Each project highlights the power of alumni ideas and the program’s ability to turn them into practical, community-focused results.



A Landmark Study on Type 1 Diabetes in Armenia

Alec Ohanian BR 2017 & Varak Ghazarian BR 2017

Alec Ohanian and Varak Ghazarian completed and published Armenia’s first comprehensive study on Type 1 diabetes, bringing national attention to the needs of adolescents living with the condition. Their research highlights key gaps in care and offers practical, evidence-based recommendations for improving treatment and support. The study is now being shared with policymakers and health institutions, marking an important step toward stronger, more equitable diabetes care in Armenia.



Promoting Environmental Education in Margahovit

Arya Jemal BR 2025

Arya Jemal successfully completed Project Հարեհաս/Harehaas (meaning “neighborhood”) at the Margahovit Youth Center in Lori Region, building 6 new raised garden beds and leading hands-on environmental lessons for village youth. Her project introduced more than 15 students from ages 12-17 to sustainable agriculture, climate change and climate adaptation, and the joy of growing their own vegetables—all while strengthening food security and experiential learning in Margahovit.



SheCan: A Path to Economic Independence for Women

Sarah Stites BR 2018 & Laura Boyajian BR 2022

Sarah Stites and Laura Boyadjian recently completed a full cycle of the SheCan Women’s Empowerment Program, supported through the BR/AVC Micro Grant program. In partnership with the Gyumri Information Technology Center (GITC), the project equipped single mothers and displaced women from Artsakh with essential business, marketing, finance, and tech skills to help them launch or expand their small enterprises. Many graduates have already begun applying their new knowledge—some starting their own businesses, others developing income-generating products—demonstrating the program’s real impact. SheCan marks a meaningful step in building long-term economic empowerment for women in one of Armenia’s most vulnerable regions.

Click Here!



From Prototype to Impact: The Azad 3D Project

Armineh Babikian BR 2017 & Kelsey Pepper BR 2022

Together, Armineh and Kelsey successfully completed the Azad 3D micro-grant project in partnership with the Lousé Rehabilitation Center Foundation. The micro-grant supported the research and development of Azad 3D, 3D-printed assistive devices made in Armenia to help children and adults with disabilities independently engage in daily tasks such as dressing and writing. Funding supported a needs assessment, prototype development, user testing, and design refinement. Grounded in strong collaboration with disability advocates, engineers, rehabilitation providers, and youth robotics students, the project strengthened inclusive innovation in Armenia and laid the foundation for launching Azad 3D’s assistive devices in the coming year.

TAP to Watch! Here

6. Leadership Awards 2025

With more than 3,400 alumni—and over 250 new volunteers each year—the Micro Grants Program remains a vital platform for supporting alumni leadership and impact. By giving alumni the tools and confidence to turn ideas into action, the program brings practical, community-focused projects to life across Armenia and showcases the strength of our global community.

Honoring Service: Krikor Balabanian Donates Award to Zinapah Full-Time Teacher in Armenia

Krikor Balabanian BR 2022 Mentorship Award

Mentorship Award recipient Krikor Balabanian shared his gratitude for the recognition, noting how his Birthright Armenia experience shaped his values and connections. Krikor has chosen to direct his award funds to the Zinapah National Foundation for Servicemen Insurance, supporting those who have served and strengthening community care for Armenian servicemen.

Investing in Education: Award Funds to Benefit Svarants Village School

Lusine Safaryan BR 2024 Young Philanthropist Award

Young Philanthropist Award recipient Lusine Safaryan is directing her award funds to the Tufenkian Foundation, supporting improvements to the school in the village of Svarants. Her thoughtful contribution will directly enhance educational conditions for local children. Banking details will be provided upon confirmation from the Foundation's accountant.

Championing Justice: Arya Jemal Donates Award to CTJ

Arya Jemal BR 2024 Civic Participation Award

Civic Participation Award recipient Arya Jemal has chosen to direct her award funds to the Center for Truth and Justice (CTJ) – Armenian branch, supporting its work on documentation, justice, and accountability. Her decision reflects a deep commitment to civic engagement and strengthening democratic culture in Armenia.

Celebrating Cultural Impact and Youth Empowerment

Eranyak Oganova BR 2018 Artistic/Cultural Achievement Award

This award recognizes Eranyak Oganova for her outstanding contribution to the cultural and creative life of the Youth Initiative Centre (YIC). Through her dedication, artistic talent, and commitment to youth empowerment, Eranyak has helped enrich YIC's educational and cultural programs, inspiring young people to express themselves, engage with their communities, and realize their potential. Her work embodies YIC's mission to support initiative-taking, responsible, and creative young individuals who generate value for their communities.

Giving Back: Award Funds Help Bring Joy to Displaced Children

Ardem Tutunjian AVC 2018 Mentorship Award Recipient

This year's Mentorship Award was presented to Ardem Tutunjian in recognition of his dedication to guiding and inspiring fellow alumni. Ardem is using his award to support the Artsakh Artists' Union NGO, helping deliver toys to children from displaced families. On December 1st, he and the NGO's director will purchase and distribute toys in Yerevan, with the organization contributing \$1,000 toward the overall \$3,700 project budget. Ardem's generosity and commitment reflect the true spirit of community impact.

7. Alumni Events - Year in Review

From outdoor adventures to cultural experiences, our in-country gatherings brought together more than 80 alumni this year, sparking new connections and moments that brought us closer together.

Volunteers explored Armenia, reconnected with one another, and strengthened the sense of community that continues to define BR/AVC.

Yell Extreme Park Adventure

We opened the year with a thrilling day at Yell Extreme Park. Alumni soared across the trees, hiked through the forest, and ended the adventure with a warm visit to Hovk Farm, where a Birthright alumnus welcomed the group with tea, homemade sweets, and stories of returning to Armenia.



April

VER VAR Bouldering Challenge

In May, the alumni gathered at VER VAR Bouldering Gym for a fun and challenging climbing session hosted by alumnus Saro Yesayan. The group supported each other through the climbs and wrapped up the event with pizza and conversations that kept everyone smiling.



May

TAP to Watch Here

Horseback Riding and Picnic

June brought a peaceful outdoor morning of horseback riding. Alumni took turns riding through the fields and later enjoyed a relaxed picnic lunch together. The atmosphere was calm, refreshing, and a perfect way to spend time in nature.



June

Painting and Wine at Voskeni Winery

In August, we traveled to Voskeni Winery for a day that blended creativity and Armenian tradition. The group baked lavash, toured the vineyard, tasted local wines, and ended the day with an outdoor Sip and Paint session surrounded by beautiful scenery.

[TAP to Watch Here](#)



August

Lake Sevan Sailing Trip

We closed the summer season with a full-day trip to Lake Sevan. Alumni enjoyed a private sailing experience with Winds of Armenia Sailing Club, visited Hayravank Monastery, and finished the day with a lakeside dinner at Royal Fish Restaurant. It was one of the most memorable gatherings of the year.



September

8. Get Involved

Did You Know...

62% of our volunteers come from alumni recommendations.

Your story can inspire the next volunteer. If Birthright Armenia or AVC shaped your life, career, or connection to Armenia, consider sharing your experience with others. Host a small gathering at your home, church, workplace, or community center—or even online. Our Next Step and Communications teams will help you organize everything you need for a meaningful, engaging presentation.

Recommend a Future Volunteer

Help someone else discover Armenia the way you did. Know a friend, colleague, classmate, or family member who would thrive as a volunteer in Armenia? Share their email with us or send them our referral link. Every recommendation strengthens our mission and helps grow a new generation of globally minded Armenians.

Support Alumni Projects & Microgrants

Be part of community-led impact. Our Micro Grants will reopen in Spring 2025, offering alumni the chance to launch new initiatives that benefit communities across Armenia. Stay tuned for updates on how you can apply—or support fellow alumni as they bring innovative ideas to life.

Join Alumni Events Worldwide: Reunite, Reconnect, and Build New Memories

Local alumni gatherings are happening in cities around the world—from picnics and hikes to cultural outings and professional meet-ups. Join your local alumni group or help organize an event in your area to keep our community strong and active.

Connect With Us Online

Stay close to the BR/AVC community no matter where you are. Join our digital platforms to keep up with new opportunities, alumni stories, events, and important updates. Whether you're looking for career support, community activities, or ways to stay connected to Armenia, our online spaces bring our global family together.

[Birthright Armenia Facebook](#)

[AVC Facebook](#)



[Birthright Armenia LinkedIn](#)

[AVC LinkedIn](#)



[Birthright Armenia Instagram](#)

[AVC Instagram](#)



[Birthright Armenia Twitter](#)

[AVC Twitter](#)



[Birthright Armenia YouTube](#)

[AVC YouTube](#)



Visit Armenia & Stop By Our Office

Your home in Armenia is always open. If you're planning a trip to Yerevan, Vanadzor, or Gyumri, we'd love to see you. Email us ahead of time so we can add you to our mailing list, share upcoming events, and help you join excursions, language classes, or community gatherings. Reconnecting with returning alumni is one of our favorite parts of the year.



We are proud of our alumni—not only for what they accomplish, but for their continued commitment to community, connection, and Armenia. This newsletter itself is a reflection of that spirit, brought to life with the support of our volunteers. Special thanks to Meri Gukasian for designing this year's alumni newsletter.