

warm hearth

FOREVER
HOMES



Musings from our Founder

When I was in Armenia this year, I traveled with the residents and staff to the town of Kapan, which is where some of our first group of residents were living before we opened.

We went to remember, to behold our beginnings in our hands, and to celebrate what has come to pass. And there was so much to celebrate that we were not even on the lookout for anything else.

But while we were there, we went to the orphanage where some of our residents had lived. We thought it would be a simple visit, but while we were there, something happened.

We gathered around to share chocolates, skits and songs with the orphans who live there. We learned that they were destined for the institutions and had outgrown the orphanage. We saw the need in their eyes, which has less to do with four walls and a

roof over one's head and more to do with love and peace and a forever home.

And it happened.

One of our staff members walked up to me and said, "We have to open another home. Do you see these people? We have so much to give them."

We have so much to give them, yes, and we have just as much to receive. How profound it was to be invited by one of our staff into the next season of this work, to be the one who supports rather than initiates a second home. This is what I have longed for—to see this movement take root in Armenian soil so that it lasts and lives beyond its humble beginnings.

We have been planning and saving for the opening of our second home for some time, and when we saw these people face-to-face, we passed the point of no return. You don't plan for love. You don't even plan for the possibility of love. It just happens. And

then Love takes you by its hand and urges your forward surely and quickly.

Sincerely Yours,

Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri

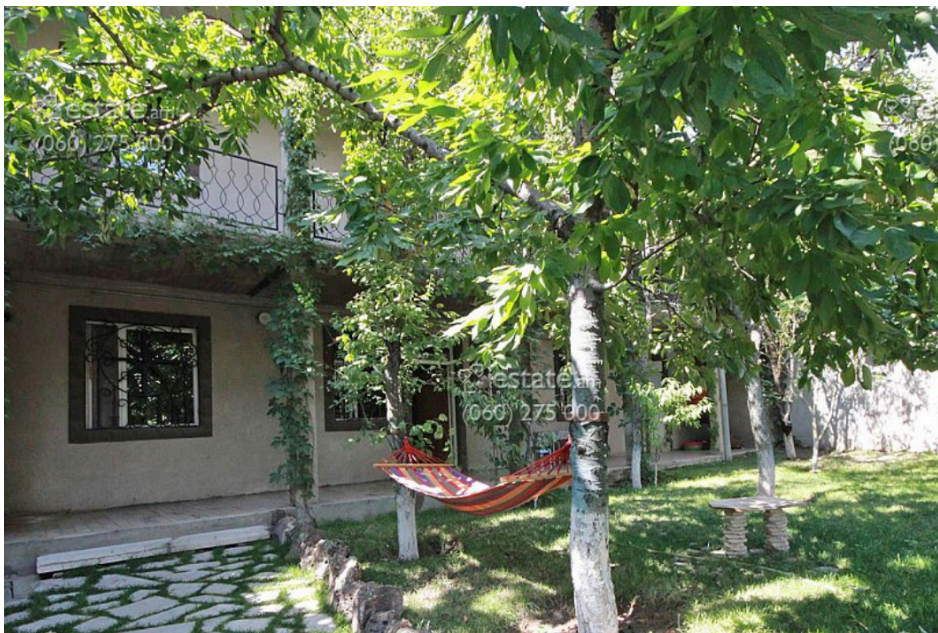
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Annual Report 2017

VISION: To initiate a movement toward holistic, integrated and forever homes for Armenian orphans with diverse abilities and mental illness throughout the nation of Armenia and to foster mutually transforming relationships between resident, staff, neighbor and fellow citizen.

MISSION: To prevent orphaned adults with diverse abilities from being forced to spend their lives homeless or in psychiatric institutions. To provide our residents with individualized care in a group-home setting that mimics family life to the extent possible and that empowers our residents to live as independently and confidently as possible.



The Birth of Another Forever Home

Our second home (pictured above) will open in May. Initially, we will become a forever home to eight individuals from Kapan. Thanks to the generous gifts of Gogian Family Foundation, Kieckhefer Foundation and many of you, we have recently purchased a home in the village of Arinj, which is around 40 minutes from the capital of Yerevan and 30 minutes from our current home in 3rd Village.

We are in the midst of finding furniture for our home and determining which individuals to bring from Kapan (the need exceeds what we have available). We are hiring staff and inviting them into a paradigm wherein they have the opportunity to experience a mutually transformative relationship, a give and take. We are sending out invitations for the opening ceremony. We are all pouring ourselves out. We are gathering resources together. No matter how we grow and change, this is still a labor of love.

We look forward to this new season in our work, where this second home develops its own culture and harmony. We look forward to getting to know our new residents—and learning their histories, dreams, idiosyncrasies, and their joys. We look forward to filling their bellies with delicious food and inviting them into the kitchen to knead and break bread together. We look forward to providing a place where they can begin to heal and tend to all the places in them that have been broken. We look forward to watching them discover joy in creating art and music and making beautiful things with their own hands.

Each time we bring in someone new, we witness this unfolding. We witness and hold what was previously unholdable. Of course, sometimes it is painful all around. Sometimes it is exhausting and difficult, but together we can bear witness. Together we can bear the stories of our new residents and breathe new life into the corners of their hearts that have been locked up. Perhaps that is what we look forward to most of all.

Warm Hearth has a life of its own, apart from each of us as individuals. It is like an outdoor fire, one we have lovingly tended for the last twelve years. When it started, we had only a handful of dried grass and we needed a lot of friction. When it started out, a few of us had to shield it with our bodies; the wind kept threatening the small new flames.

But today, it is a roaring fire. And we no longer shield it; we are warmed by it. We invite more and more people to gather around, and we swap stories. We all (resident, donor, volunteer and staff member alike) throw a new log on every now and again, and even when it is snowing, it is still enough to keep us warm.

Therefore, it is now strong and robust enough now that we can take an ember from the flame and start another fire nearby. And that is what this second home, Warm Hearth-Arinj, is to all of us. It is a second fire born from our original passion. It will take on a life of its own and we will gather round and watch it grow, watch it falter at times, and watch the new keepers tend lovingly to the flames. We don't know the new keepers' names yet, but will share them as soon as we do.

We look forward to the stories that will be told and the songs that will be sung as we gather around these warm flames. We will look forward to sharing them with you, as best we can.

Celebrations:

Join us in looking at what has transpired for Warm Hearth in 2017.

Neuropsychologist, Adrienne Witol (Canada) and Psychologist, Lousine Stepanian (USA) met together with Armenian staff on a regular basis over Skype to strengthen our care.

Lee Ann Williams (board member) represented Warm Hearth at San Francisco Bay Area bazaars in the autumn.

We hired a Development & Advocacy Officer in Armenia to assist us in this next season of expansion and operations. Welcome, Hasmik.

We won the lawsuit that began in 2012 and threatened our land and home in 3rd Village. Thanks to Suren Petrosyan for representing us.

Juliet Setian (USA), Tigran Avagyan (Canada) and Lilit Makunts (Armenia) donated their time and energy to translate documents for our organization and residents. Their donated services are valued at over \$2,500.

Justin Lifflander (Russia) donated airline tickets so two of our staff members could witness and learn from a different model of art therapy at Maria's Children in Moscow.

Networks of Kindness

Board member, Lee Ann Williams, traveled to Armenia with Lindsey Stammerjohn (of Gogian Family Foundation) to visit Warm Hearth. Their warmth and kindness were a gift to our residents. Our residents, in turn, showered them with love and attention. While in Armenia, they celebrated the opening of a Young Life camp that will host our residents on an annual basis, providing a place of rest, retreat and fun.

Sustainability
is another
word for
justice.

We strive to
provide
forever homes
to our
residents but
could not do
so without
you.

here

wisdom

In 2017, we were in need of a steady hand to hold ours as we walked through some difficult times as we struggled to find and hire a Development & Advocacy Officer to move forward our own efforts of sustainability. Gary Kilmer, a long time careerist in international economic development, reached out and offered us ideas, hope and sound consultation. We are grateful for his perspective, his common-sense approach and his values. He writes a blog titled "Economic Development as if People Mattered" at www.developmentcowboy.co.uk. Thank you, Gary and to many of you who have given of your time and talents to help us in a time of need.

we

art

Maria Stepanyan and Charlie Hickman are fierce and passionate friends of our residents. For a decade, they have found creative, grassroots ways in which to offer support. In 2017, Marira and Charlie celebrated their birthdays with friends and family. Charlie sold his art work at their small gathering and donated over \$800 to our home. There are so many ways to give to Warm Hearth and it is a joy to watch people find their own creative and glorious ways. When people give according to their own unique passions, it nurtures the giver as well as the receiver. May we always be the kind of place that has room for people to be exactly who they are.

stand

wakefulness

When we, as members of a community, devalue any segment of ourselves, we all suffer. The one who has been cut off is isolated, denigrated, lonely. And the one who does the devaluing loses a part of her own humanity. When the awareness surfaces that this has happened and people begin to work toward change, at first the awareness is painful —like a limb that is waking up after being fast asleep. But in time, there is movement and wholeness and hope, and the whole body moves in greater harmony and with grace. We see this waking up taking place in our own hearts and in the hearts of our staff, neighbors, visitors and our residents. Even our residents can exclude others and work toward this healing and peace.

Societal Change: What Government Funding Means

How a society treats its most vulnerable is always the measure of its humanity.
—Ambassador Matthew Rycroft

In 2017, we received a three-year contract from the Armenian government (specifically the Ministry of Labor and Social Issues) that promised us \$38,000 per year. This is close to 50% of the local operating budget for our first home. At the same time, we celebrated that another long-term group home in Spitak, Armenia was presented with a contract. The solution to the problem we address lies not in our single organization but in the collective. The government is making multiple strides in caring well for and attributing well-deserved value to people like our residents.

We take this as a sign of hope that the government and people of Armenia are valuing people who previously have been seen as invaluable. Government money can be a complicated thing in any country, but we are committed to not compromising our deeply held values about family-like care, individualized care, and creating a home of peace and healing.

This particular government contract is a tangible expression of Armenia taking responsibility for its own vulnerable people. This speaks volumes on a philosophical level and reaches down into the hearts and souls of the people we care for. Over time, our hope is that it will reach into the hearts and souls of all people in Armenia.

This is a huge victory for people with diverse abilities and mental illnesses in Armenia, for the people who are bound for psychiatric institutions, for our beloved residents. One day this could positively impact those who are already contained unnecessarily in psychiatric institutions. This is a huge victory for the nation of Armenia, which will experience through time the blessings and gifts of caring for its most vulnerable. This is a huge victory for humanity.

The movement away from psychiatric institutions towards community-based homes is underway. It is no longer just Warm Hearth doing this work in Armenia. Now there is a second home in Spitak, and we will open our home in Arinj. The hope is spreading. May it continue.



We must recognize
our brother in a
stranger.

(Simone Weil)

Pragmatic Idealism

Our work is first
and foremost to
provide longterm
loving homes to
our residents. In
doing that work,
we also heed the
call to *transform
society* and to
be a *catalyst
for change*.

heart

Davit (resident): I perform my duties, help the residents, prepare food with the help of staff and hang up laundry. I weave rugs and bracelets, paint, draw and do pottery. I love weaving rugs the most.

Gayane (resident) has started volunteering at a local orphanage once a month. She loves working with the children. She also organizes trips to the bookstore. She continues to embroider, work with clay, paint and weave rugs.

Agappy (resident): With great pleasure I knit hot pads, phone covers and gift them to people, which makes me feel good. I would like to learn English and get married.

and

Rita (caregiver): Because I am devoted to my work and love the residents very much, each one's pain and sadness impacts me, as well as the entire staff.

[The residents] pain and sadness makes us sad; and their happiness makes us happy. (Rita)

Rita: Almost every night after cleaning the kitchen, we have intimate conversations and share interesting stories. A close, harmonious, peaceful atmosphere is created for all.

soul

Arsen (resident): I am learning the letters and numbers. I am writing and learning poems. I want to be more calm and live peacefully.

Stepan (psychologist): Working with the residents individually and as a group gives me life and joy. Group therapy gives them the opportunity to strengthen their relationships. Individual work allows us to go deeper and work on conflicts.

Sergey (caregiver): When Sassoon is uncomfortable, I talk to him, joke with him and try to distract him. I'm nearly always successful. I do everything with love.

Community Recovery

At Warm Hearth, we reach for and believe in mutually transforming relationships, where the harsh divides between resident and staff, insider and outsider, healthy and ill, can fall away.

We believe that our residents have just as much (or more) to give our staff, supporters and friends as they receive. Whether at Warm Hearth or otherwise, it is in the crucible of daily life that we are transformed. It is in the daily acts of giving and receiving, doing the dishes, hanging the laundry, writing a letter, and bathing or being bathed.

As we learn to accept ourselves and those around us, we open up to the possibility of integration.

What we want most for our residents is to be welcomed into the daily life and fabric of their community. We want them to function with grace in their neighborhood and city according to the gifts they have been given.

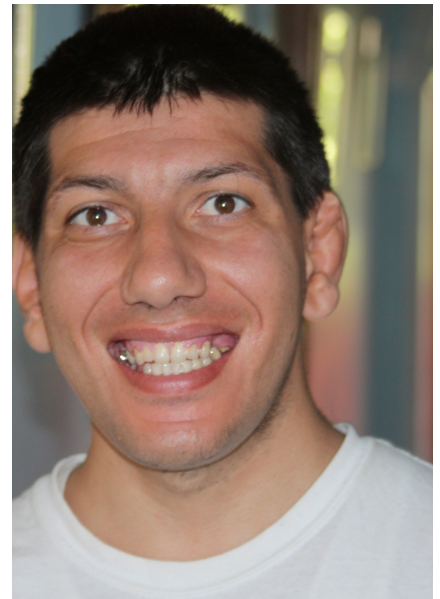
In order for this to happen, the community (and we are all a part of one) must strive to live with people of all bents and shapes, colors and abilities. And not only must we learn to live with, but we must put aside fear and commit ourselves to living with the reality of difference, of suffering, of forgiveness and grace.

At Warm Hearth, we do not just look for individual recovery whether that be from loneliness, mental illness, or a bout of disassociation. We look, simultaneously, and just as importantly, for community recovery.

Community recovery is hard work, but it is something we all can do, both here and there, both within and without. And it is a gift to all people – including our beloved residents who live in 3rd Village and have a hearth to call their own that is covered with art work, and coffee cups, embroidered handkerchiefs and little tiny houses (pictured right) that the residents have lovingly crafted out of clay.

Let us all attend to this work wherever we live. Let us speak out in defense of people all the world over who struggle with mental illnesses. Let us speak out in defense of people all the world over who have diverse abilities. Let us speak out in defense of people all the world over who are the minority, the oppressed, the confused. In this way, we uphold the values and work of Warm Hearth.

In this way, we uphold Davit, Hasmik, Susanna, Anna, Davo, Arsen, Roman, Alina, Gayane, Yulia, Anahit, Agappy, Armine and Sassoon. Their names are a part of a symphony that wants to be witnessed and celebrated. Their names want to be spoken and heard. Thank you for knowing their names. Thank you for speaking out.



You are part of our theory of change. All of our words and actions are for the ultimate purpose of putting radical acceptance and support on the hearts and minds of people in such a way that anything less is no longer acceptable.

May beauty,
 For this world has a meaning, in
 spite of death,
 Do the work of bringing together
 our mountains
 For the scant waters of summer
 And call them into the grasses,
 And take the water's hand across
 the roads
 And lead the water here, the narrow
 water, to the bright river.

-Yves Bonnefoy



Staff Development

In 2017, our staff was blessed to attend a training conducted by Adrienne Witol (pictured above with our resident, Agappy), a neuropsychologist from Canada. In her training, Adrienne balanced the needs of the residents and the needs of the staff with grace and insight. She focused on both the science of the brain and also applied the science to group home dynamics.

Throughout the year, our psychologist (Anush) and our Armenia-based Executive Director (Alya) were able to continue to meet regularly with Adrienne as she consulted with them on therapeutic practices for particular

residents. The longevity of this relationship has been so beneficial to the development of our staff and the services we can offer our residents.

Lousine Stepanian was also able to provide her services as a psychologist over regular Skype meetings in 2017, working with our staff to create a more therapeutic environment for the residents, going over behavior plans and problem-solving with our staff.

Lousine began working with us to design a comprehensive training for 2018, which will take place in April and May. Her long-term investment into Warm Hearth has been life-giving for all of us – creating an environment of trust and depth.



Clay Work

In 2017, our residents were able to start working with clay. SOAR-Wisconsin gave us a grant to create a clay art program at Warm Hearth. This photo above is an example of the work that our residents are doing, with the support of this grant. These colorful little houses are representations of what home is to the residents who create them.

Thank you, SOAR-Wisconsin, for your gift and opportunity to create beauty.

Board of Directors

Our USA-based board is comprised of five individuals who have been with Warm Hearth for the past twelve years. It is rare for an organization to have such committed and long-term board members. It is beautiful that each board member knows our residents by name.

In 2018, we are having our first board retreat and are meeting together in Los Angeles to discuss how we can best address the

needs of Warm Hearth. We look forward to gathering, to infusing new life into our board and our work together and possibly to growing and expanding over the next few years.

In the meantime, we would like to acknowledge and thank each board member for their unique contributions to our work.

Thank you to [Jessica Barrett Simpson](#) for your inquiring and analytical mind as you address the questions, systems and plans that arise. Thank you for your commitment to our home, and your desire to see our work grow and thrive.

Thank you to [Marshal Bryant](#) for the time you spend with numbers and figures as they relate to Warm Hearth. You organize the numbers in such a way that they tell a story about our organization. Thank you for your attention to our financial system and for making it stronger.

Thank you to [Lee Ann Williams](#) for visiting Armenia this past year and for the way in which you think about the residents' individual needs and dreams and try to help us meet those needs. Thank you for calling our residents your friends.

Thank you to [Bridget Brown](#) for your unbridled optimism and faith in this work. Thank you for sharing your work experience in the USA with our staff in Armenia and for bridging these two countries with so much grace.

Thank you, to each of our board members. We are blessed by your efforts on behalf of our residents.





Alina, one of our residents

Stewardship

We have chosen to start small, move forward slowly, and value a steady heart and hand. Twelve years in, we are ready to open another home. We are able to do so because we have been planning and saving and waiting for the right time. We are able to do so because of you. We are able to do so because of your commitment.

Along the way, each of you has chosen to make Warm Hearth a priority. You have chosen to reach out to our residents, to believe in a vision with breadth and to give whatever you have to give.

Part of what makes Warm Hearth unique is that on every level we try to value what society says is invaluable.

That means we love people who have been abandoned. That means we accept gifts of \$5, slipped into an envelope and mailed our way, with as much gratitude as a gift of \$5,000. That means we take discarded furniture and mend its worn places. That means we make art with broken things. Our work is a mosaic.

If we do things right, our impact will be on individual souls first and foremost. If, in the meantime, we impact systems and neighborhoods and governments, as we hope to do, we will be grateful and humble and astonished.

If we do things right, you too will know that you (first) and your gifts and contributions (second) are valuable to us and our residents.

Keeping Promises

Thank you for entrusting your resources to Friends of Warm Hearth. We consider our budgets to be moral documents – reflecting what we hold most dear, reflecting our priorities and revealing our values of prudence and security.

With an eye to the future and as we add eight new residents in the coming year, we have established a Promise Fund, which will allow us make good on our our promise to each new resident to provide them with a warm, accepting, supporting and loving home for life.

We want our residents to be secure into their elder years regardless of global economics. Donors who choose to make designated gifts will bless our residents through this new fund, which will aim to provide operating reserves for twelve months.

On every level we try to value what society says is invaluable.

The Nitty Gritty

If numbers speak your language, here is their story.

Program expenditures accounted for 80% of our cash expenditures. Fundraising costs amounted to 11% and administrative costs were 9%.

In 2017, individual contributions totaled approximately \$97,000 in cash and comprised 50% of gifts given.

Foundations, churches and organizations and the Armenian government gave another \$97,000, again, 50% of total gifts.

In addition, around \$2,600 worth of commodities such as furniture, paint, clothing and equipment were donated to our residents.

Twenty volunteers combined their efforts and donated their services, time and expertise. These contributions are valued at around \$26,000.

Full financial statements are always available on a quarterly basis.

Now is the time.

In the last two years, our costs have steadily increased. This is due to the fact that in order to expand, we needed to build our organizational capacity.

We wanted to be ensure that we were in a strong position before opening another home. We believe we are there.

On your mark. Get set. Go.

Comparative Statements of Financial Position

Current assets	2017	2016	2015
Cash - temporarily restricted	\$315,000	\$200,000	-
Cash - unrestricted	14,851	154,950	315,830
Prepaid expenses	-	11,341	10,000
Property & equipment			
Land & houses in Armenia	268,940	157,208	157,208
Furniture & equipment	6,787	6,787	6,964
Less accumulated depreciation	(40,444)	(35,904)	(34,036)
Net property & equipment	235,283	128,091	130,136
Total assets	\$565,134	\$494,382	\$457,966
Liabilities (accrued payroll taxes)	1,838	1,838	1,838
Temporarily restricted net assets	315,000	200,000	-
Unrestricted net assets	248,296	292,544	456,128
Total liabilities & net assets	\$565,134	\$494,382	\$457,966

Comparative Statements of Activities

Revenue	2017	2016	2015
Cash contributions	\$191,309	\$157,856	\$165,635
Sale of handicrafts	2,745	4,132	2,401
Contributions of goods and services	28,362	27,960	22,683
Interest income	1,353	1,305	1,092
Total contributions & interest	223,769	191,253	191,811
Expenses			
Facility & program	110,557	106,492	98,836
Promotion & fundraising	*22,435	*28,741	*24,421
Management & general	20,025	19,604	16,183
Total expenses	153,017	154,837	139,440
Changes in net assets	70,752	36,416	52,371
Net assets, beginning of period	492,544	456,128	403,757
Net assets, end of period	\$563,296	\$492,544	\$456,128

* These amounts include \$25,714, \$25,949 and \$19,882 in services respectively in 2017, 2016 and 2015.



warm hearth

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