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A U T U M N E D I T I O N

# in the SMALL corners

FRIENDS OF WARM HEARTH, INC. NEWSLETTER



## Susanna

The biggest change in Susanna is that she now participates in group discussions and activities with joy. This was not always the case as she was a solitary soul for many years. She has come to life in many ways. Now that she has fully entered community life, she vocalizes how much she wants to be at Warm Hearth for the rest of her life. We assure her she can and will be. She exhibits a special tenderness toward Sassoon, whom she can calm and care for in a unique and understanding way. Her greatest sadness is that her sister, who used to visit her at Warm Hearth, is no longer in touch with her.

## Introduction

Ashghen (pictured here with our residents) is our most recent Mental Health Specialist and joins our residents on a weekly basis.

Twice a week at Warm Hearth our staff members meet with Ashghen to discuss the home life. Any challenges, accomplishments or notable events are discussed. Afterwards our resi-

dents have a chance to talk with Ashghen more informally. They talk about life and whatever struggles or joys are near to their hearts. They play games and do creative activities designed to build unity and a sense of belonging. Since our residents began working with Ashghen

we have noticed that they have been more able to solve conflicts amongst themselves, as well as individual problems. The staff notice that they are helping one another more. The her arrival and we are grateful for her passion and commitment to our home and residents.

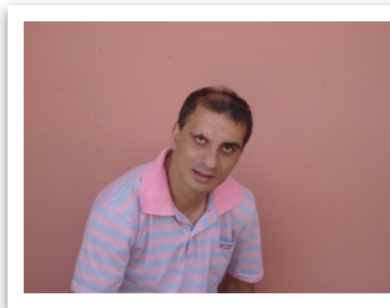


## ✕ A New Resident ✕

*In July of 2013, Arsen was welcomed into our home after the death of both parents.*

## A PLACE TO HEAL, LIVE, LOVE

Arsen is our most recent resident; his story is different than most of our residents. After hearing about him and spending time with him, we quickly realized that he belongs with Warm Hearth. Arsen is in his 30s and lived with his parents most of his life. He was well-cared for. When they died, he lived alone for a time. There was no one who could care for him. He was not able to thrive on his own due to a pervasive developmental disability. Arsen's cousin from Moscow found Warm Hearth and approached us about providing a home for him. He



has been living with us since July and while we have a lot to offer him, it is still not the same as a parent's love. We hope to give him a safe place to heal and a lifetime home. Our desire is that he soon find companionship with our residents and staff and grow in new ways through our life skills and vocational programs, therapy sessions and gentle way of life. At the same time, we look forward to what he has to teach us and give us, knowing he will become a part of us, changing us as well.



## They Shine

*Heather Gregg (pictured below with Gayane) is a donor of Warm Hearth and has known some of the residents since 2001 when she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Armenia.*

I have been back to visit Armenia twice since I lived there from 2001 - 2003, when I fell in love with the country and the people. On those return visits, it has been so good to reconnect, to savor the fresh, flavorful food, and to soak up the natural beauty of the country. At the same time, it is disheartening to see that poverty persists, that roads remain potholed, and that many people remain desperate to leave and find a better life.



My visits to Warm Hearth have been bright spots in the midst of those harsh realities. The staff and

residents face real challenges, to be sure: neighbors remain largely unreceptive, space and funds are limited, a resident wonders why her mother and her sister no longer come to visit. But despite those challenges, they shine.

When I visited this summer, I was struck again by Alya (the Armenia Country Director) and her firm commitment to the difficult work that is done at Warm Hearth along with the hope she has for the growing acceptance of people with disabilities in Armenia. Davit and Gayane, two residents, proudly displayed their carpet work on the loom. Roman smiled broadly as he showed off the puzzle he was putting together. And Susanna lit up when I admired the careful stitches she had embroidered on a tablecloth. The residents proudly gave my cousin and me a tour of the house and the well-tended plants in the yard, and they cheered each other on in a rousing back-porch bowling game with plastic bins and balls.

Armenia is a beautiful place. It is far from perfect, and many Armenians would gladly leave if they could. At the same time, however, many of the nation's generous, hospitable people face their challenges with beauty, grace and strength - just as the staff and residents of Warm Hearth continue to do.

## YOU ARE INVITED

- If you live in LA and would like to join us on Saturday, September 21st for dinner to celebrate Warm Hearth and learn the latest news, please contact Natalie at (480) 921-1181 or [natalie@friendsofwarmhearth.org](mailto:natalie@friendsofwarmhearth.org). Thank you to the Vartanyan family for generously hosting us. Speakers include: Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri and Juliet Setian.
- If you live in San Francisco, we will have a presence at St. Vartan's Bazaar on October 4th and 5th and at St. Gregory's Bazaar on September 13th and 14th. Thanks to board members, Lee Ann and Sara for representing our work.

DONATIONS CAN BE SENT TO: FRIENDS OF WARM HEARTH, PO BOX 4784, SUNNYSIDE, NY 11104 TEL. (480) 921-1181