

# WARM HEARTH

## In the Small Corners

### Such Singing in the Wild Branches

The music of Spring is in the air.  
The tips of the tree branches in our residents' garden are swollen and ready to break into blossom.

I think of Mary Oliver's words:  
"Such soft and solemn and perfect music doesn't last // For more than a few moments. It's one of those magical places wise people / like to talk about. / One of the things they say about it, that is true, // is that,

once you've been there, // you're there forever. / Listen, everyone has a chance. / Is it spring, is it morning? // Are there trees near you, / and does your own soul need comforting? / Quick, then — open the door and fly on your heavy feet; the song / may already be drifting away.



The residents are running on their heavy feet today in Mughni, outside of Yerevan (pictured here). The ancient St. Gevorg's monastery is there, which I visited many years ago just as Spring was having her way. And it is a joy to imagine the residents there, with new sun on their pale wintered faces, in this season of Lent, which is sacred to many Armenians. I hope they go barefoot today. I hope they hear the solemn and perfect music for a few moments and that they know that they too have another chance, yet again.

They have been home for over a decade now, many of them, but I imagine just as our hearts and souls still need healing and transformation and comforting, so too do theirs. May we at Warm Hearth look at the world differently this Spring and see the opportunities in our group home for beginning again, for deep full-hearted joy. May it be so for our dear residents. And may it be so for you, both in your own private journeys and in your journey of loving our residents and circling around them.

Sincerely Yours,

*Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri*

Founder & Executive Director





## Davit

Davit is a conscientious, joyful and loving presence in our home. Karine (caregiver) recently said, "Davit is my happiness." She is teaching him arithmetic. When he was having a hard time, Karine told him to use his fingers. One time it wasn't working and when she asked why, he said, "I don't have enough fingers." Karine then put her hands on the table and suggested that he help himself to her fingers. Davit started laughing and and they laughed together until their sides hurt.

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**Our 2017 Goals:** sustainable and loving care for our residents and a home that is increasingly independent.

Friends of Warm Hearth, Inc.  
 PO 1081  
 Flagstaff AZ 86002  
 T. (928) 607.7025

[www.friendsofwarmphearth.org](http://www.friendsofwarmphearth.org)

[info@friendsofwarmphearth.org](mailto:info@friendsofwarmphearth.org)

[www.facebook.com/friendsofwarmphearth](https://www.facebook.com/friendsofwarmphearth)

## Your kindness sustains our residents, our hearts and our home.

Lousine Stepanian (Pasadena, CA) has created the **Armenia Mindfulness Project (AMP)** with our residents in mind. AMP's passionate mission is to work with Warm Hearth, training our staff and providing them with the necessary self-care tools to offer adequate and effective care to their residents. By providing hands-on training to Warm Hearth's staff and addressing issues related to the occupational hazards of compassion fatigue, AMP will strive to normalize cultural factors and overall issues surrounding the mental health stigma in Armenia. Warm Hearth direct care providers will develop a deeper sense of awareness needed to care for themselves, which will greatly enhance the potential for change within the community. This training program will offer the opportunity for this generation (and generations to come) to carefully navigate challenges facing mental health in Armenia; to encourage compassion, care and awareness above all else. Lousine would like to lead the first AMP team to Warm Hearth in 2017 or 2018. Please reach out if you would like to participate in this work.

