

WARM HEARTH

In the Small Corners

Ah, love, let us be true to one another! (M. Arnold)

I just returned from Warm Hearth—from long dusty walks along alleyways with the residents as we traipsed to roadside restaurants. We were on a four-day trip to Syunik Marz, the southernmost region. There we conducted a belated celebration of Warm Hearth's anniversary, remembering where and how the seeds of Warm Hearth were first planted. It was glorious to just be together — to travel, to rest, to eat, to wander. I think it served to remind all of us — staff and resident alike — that first and foremost we are people living life together, trying to love one another well. And in that, it was like a cold drink of water, nourishing and cooling the places inside of us that had grown parched.



On our journey, we also visited old haunts where memories surfaced, both painful and cleansing. We played and sang and laughed with a group of 19 individuals from one of the orphanages where some of our residents once lived, who like our residents have outgrown the orphanage and are waiting for a transfer to a psychiatric institutions or for a home like Warm Hearth. It is heartbreaking to stare into the face of such need and then turn and drive away. We are still trembling.

So we are looking for a way forward, for a way to open. After an unsuccessful year of trying and trying again to hire a new Development & Advocacy Officer, we need to recalibrate and determine how we will walk forward to respond to all that we witness. This is the work of the world—not just ours, not just yours. But let us do it together.

Sincerely Yours,

Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri

Founder & Executive Director



WARM HEARTH
& JERMIK ANKYUN FOUNDATION



****All stories and photographs of the residents are shared with their joyful permission.****



Anna

Every time we circle around to Anna in this space, I am reminded that she is home. This simple fact says a lot when it comes to Anna. As most of you know, Anna has been in and out of the institutions for most of her life. We are grateful for the chance to hold her in close proximity, to see her struggle and change and fall and love. She externalizes how desperate we all are for love and connection, even if many of us have learned to hide it well. May she heal enough to feel the love that is hers.

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

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

Adrienne Witol (pictured below with Davit), traveled to Armenia in June from Ontario, Canada. She accompanied the staff and residents for a week before conducting an exceptional training on “The Neuroscience of Fear: The Roles Attachment, Relationship, and Mindfulness Play in Healing and Developing Resilience.” A neuropsychologist herself, one of Adrienne’s many gifts was her perceptive prowess: she took what she saw—often something lurking beneath the surface—and wove it into her conversations with staff and residents *and* into her training modules. She exposed what was beneath to the surface for many of us and shined light and hope into the corners of our hearts that were dark and full of suffering. Perhaps equally important, Adrienne danced gracefully with us on our trip to Syunik Marz, each night after dinner. She entered fully in as we all played with movement, exploring old and new rhythms. Those evenings too were therapeutic as we wrung from our bodies the accumulated stresses and tensions, sweating out our deepest prayers and hopes.

