

# WARM HEARTH

## In the Small Corners

### Reunion

Dear friends,

Janna, one of our Arinj residents, is deaf and we are learning each day what she needs and how we can love her. Thanks to volunteer and speech pathologist, Marinda Kaiser, we now have a strong sense of what is needed (sign language classes for staff and residents, weekly community visits to a center for deaf support and speech therapy to strengthen her communication skills).



While we are still trying to pull together funds for these new programs, we have been able to provide her with a few visits to the “Special Education Complex for Children with Disorders in Hearing”. At the first visit, she was immediately surrounded by about fifteen people. Among this small crowd were a few teachers and students from her past. They held and hugged Janna while she cried. Tears fell onto the cheeks of the teachers and volunteers there at this sweet reunion. We are excited to see how she is changed by being able to regularly communicate with others.

We have the opportunity and gift to love and be loved by our residents. But in moments like this, we blessedly realize that there are sometimes others who loved our residents long before us. And sometimes our role is just to provide a way for these connections to grow and depend and thrive. We are here to facilitate a life that makes sense for our residents, whatever that may look like. But what an honor to listen hard to both the spoken and unspoken needs of our residents and find a way to meet those needs whenever possible, or to find the people who can. We cannot be all things to our residents and we are so grateful today for the kind people who encircle them and love them so well, including so many of you.

Sincerely Yours,

*Natalie Bryant-Rizzieri*

Founder & Executive Director



## Christine

Christine was born in Ararat Marz and lived with her family at a very young age. In her early childhood, she became a social orphan when her family left her at an orphanage due to her disability. Since then, she lived in the Nubarashen and Kapan orphanages before moving to Warm Hearth last year. She lived in Kapan for eight years. Kristine is enjoying being a student at the Vocational College and is growing in her craft of carpet weaving. She loves to read, draw, dance and knit. We are so grateful for her presence.

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**Our 2019 Goals:** sustainable and loving care for our residents and two forever homes that are increasingly independent.

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

John Gogian (of Gogian Family Foundation) was a long-time donor. This summer he passed away and I had the honor of participating in his Celebration of Life. Father Greg Boyle (of Homeboy Industries) spoke at this celebration and told a story of John illustrating how we are changed by engaging in work with any group of people. He noted the sobering truth that if we are not changed, we will not be able to last in our work. But even more important, by “changed” he meant that we have *received* from the very people we *serve*. If there is not deep and true kinship with whomever we serve, the work can not take root in a truly transformative way. Receiving and changing happens in and through the process of cultivating trust. ***Social change moves at the speed of relationships. Relationships move at the speed of trust*** (Bailey and Flowers). As I look back at Warm Hearth and the way we have had the honor of contributing to social change in Armenia, I am struck by these words. So often the change has felt slow-moving, the resistance intractable, but when I read these words, the speed feels exactly right.

