our history

Since 1999, The Paros Foundation’s principal supporters, the Strauch Kulhanjian Family, have worked to raise awareness of Armenia’s rich culture and promote it on the world stage.

Launched in 2006, The Paros Foundation has earned a reputation as the “go to” organization to oversee project implementation in Armenia. Beginning with our support for six exemplary local non-governmental organizations working with children, people with disabilities and the arts, the foundation works to help build a sustainable and vibrant homeland while improving living conditions for its most vulnerable populations. Our goal is to develop high quality, high integrity non-governmental organizations in Armenia by significantly upgrading their working environment and providing guidance and needed resources. This includes providing inspiring office space, free of charge, to three of the six organizations we work with in Armenia.

our mission & vision

The mission of The Paros Foundation is to effectively implement humanitarian, educational, cultural and development projects; and to support trusted local organizations in partnership with the diaspora.

The Paros Foundation strives to implement small and medium sized projects in Armenia. We strive to bring Armenia and the Armenian community worldwide closer through our unique model of philanthropy, volunteerism and service.

our promise

The Paros Foundation underwrites all administrative and overhead costs allowing 100% of donor contributions to go directly towards projects and supported organizations.
WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

2020 marks the 50th year of my relationship with Armenia and the 20th year of our philanthropic efforts in the country.

Our first donation to the Paros Chamber Choir and Unison was in honor of my father, Professor Karl Strauch, Professor of Physics, Harvard University. He introduced our family to Armenia. Dad was one of America's senior scientific representatives to the Soviet science community during the height of the Cold War. It was his job to establish relationships with premier particle physics research groups in the Soviet Union. The Physics Institute in Yerevan was such an enterprise, lead by Professor Artem Alikhanian, with whom Dad became close friends. Professor Alikhanian invited our family of four to visit Armenia in 1970. Professor Alikhanian introduced Dad to Minas Minassian and they also became friends. The Minas above adorned the houses and offices in which I have lived and worked since the late 1960’s.

It is an honor to support the exceptional and caring leadership that my friend and our Foundation’s leader Peter Abajian provides to The Paros Foundation. We have known Peter for over 20 years. We trust him. We appreciate his dedication to the causes of helping and serving others. We admire his passion for making a significantly positive difference in the lives of people in the homeland.

Peter Abajian has been our Executive Director for nearly 15 years. He has built The Paros Foundation from a modest philanthropic effort with several programs funded by one American-Armenian family to a project oriented enterprise, supported by hundreds of families. Peter raises over one million dollars a year beyond the funding that our family provides to cover all administration and fundraising expenses. Peter's tireless and tenacious efforts have earned the admiration of the international Armenian philanthropic community. His project management, and that of his most able team, are appreciated by private and public organizations throughout Armenia. Most importantly, fellow Armenians’ lives have been improved, enriched, and spiritually heightened by the successful results of the dozens of projects you have funded. We are so fortunate to have Peter as our Executive Director. We all must do what we can to support this leadership and the fruits of the Paros team’s labors.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your generous support!

ROGER STRAUCH
CHAIRMAN & FOUNDER

THE PAROS FOUNDATION
The Paros Foundation continued to reach new levels of success in 2018 and 2019 through the strong support and commitment of our donors, partners, beneficiaries and staff.

As a result of our transparent and unique model of philanthropy—and the level of trust we have established with the Armenian diaspora—we successfully implemented a greater number and value of projects benefiting Armenia and her people. I am particularly proud of our many accomplishments in Gyumri and in Armenia’s Tavush Region, that are noted further in this report. Together, we are making a significant difference in the lives of thousands of our compatriots!

In addition to our SERVICE Armenia program trips in 2018 and 2019 to Armenia, we successfully led a Journey to Armenia donor trip in October of 2018. With an impressive itinerary and service component, participants explored throughout Armenia and witnessed several successful Paros projects first hand. Also in the fall of 2018, the Armenia! Exhibit at The Met opened and thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Strauch Kulhanjian Family, we were able to join as co-sponsors of this historic event and host two private donor receptions and tours.

Success breeds more need. Our local partners and communities in which we work have witnessed our success, and are asking us to partner with them on more projects than ever. Please take this opportunity to become part of The Paros Foundation’s family of donors and get involved. A very special thank you is in order for our donors who enable our work in Armenia.

PETER ABAJIAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
It was with great pride that, thanks to the Strauch Kulhanjian Family, The Paros Foundation shared in the sponsorship of Armenia! Exhibit at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (September 21, 2018 - January 6, 2019). This once in a lifetime event brought together priceless artifacts of Armenian culture from throughout the world, and exhibited this impressive collection at one of the premier museums in the world. As Exhibit Sponsors, The Paros Foundation hosted two private donor receptions and tours during the exhibit. We hope all who attended and viewed this collection gained a new appreciation for Armenia’s rich heritage, culture and history and our deepest appreciation to the Strauch Kulhanjian family for creating this opportunity for us.
The Paros Foundation supports six exemplary organizations in Armenia. These organizations are leaders in their respective fields. Support is provided in the form of organizational operating funds, the provision of office space, operational resources and mentoring. The goal is to assist these organizations manage their growth and attract financial, human and physical resources to their respective causes.

- **Number of Orgs Supported**: 6
- **Supported Since**: 2006
- **Beneficiaries 2018/2019**: 1,150

**ORGANIZATIONS WE SUPPORT**
MANANA YOUTH CENTER

Since 1995, the Manana Youth Center provides children with training in film production, animation, photography and journalism. They aim to create literature, works of art, media, radio and television programs, films, and educational games for children and encourage creative, unprejudiced thinking among the youth.

With support from the European Union, Manana implemented a series of regional media workshops throughout Armenia aimed at developing interest among young Armenians. The result was the creation of 17.am, a platform available to Armenian youth throughout the country to interact and promote their work.

The Paros Foundation continues to provide financial support for their core classes and operation.

GHOGHANJ CHILDREN'S CENTER

Established in 2001, the Ghoghanj Children's Center provides after-school and summer school programs to “at-risk” children from economically challenged families at two Yerevan locations. Their goal is to provide the necessary academic, psychological and social support to ensure that these socially vulnerable children are able to excel in school and become self-confident young adults. Their dedicated staff and volunteers guide the children through several core classes including English, Russian, computer, design painting, theater and dance.

Students from the center’s Arm-Math Robotics Program took first place from among 70 teams in the nationwide UITE 3-D Modeling contest.

The Paros Foundation continues to support the Kentron and Nor Nork centers with rent-free program space and financial support.
UNISON NGO

Since 2002, the UNISON NGO has been working to serve and improve the lives of people with disabilities (PWD) in Armenia. Their goal is to help PWD lead independent and productive lives by providing art and computer training, legal advice, psychological counseling, employment training and advocacy.

As a result of their intense and on-going advocacy work, several government buildings were made accessible and several Yerevan-based public buses were fitted with lifts. Furthermore, UNISON represented Armenia at many workshops and seminars regarding people with disabilities throughout the world. They completed the implementation of a three year sub-grant from Save the Children on encouraging employment for PWD.

The Paros Foundation provides UNISON NGO with financial support and rent-free accessible office space.

THE PAROS CHAMBER CHOIR

Since 1993, the award-winning Paros Chamber Choir has impressed audiences around the world with international performances in England, Armenia, Georgia, Lebanon, Italy and France. Working with Maestro Raffi Mikaelian, the group has developed into a world-class chamber choir despite the fact that most of the members are disabled and many sing from a seated position.

The Paros Chamber Choir continued to live up to its name as a beacon for Armenia through many notable performances. They shared the stage with Placido Domingo, sang for Pope Francis and at two World Choir Games in Riga and Sochi securing two silver medals.

The Paros Foundation provides funding and rent-free office and rehearsal space for the choir.
ORGANIZATIONS

WE SUPPORT

VANADZOR ART SCHOOL

Since 1969, the Vanadzor Art School (formally known as Vanadzor Music School #3) has been providing music and art education to local students. The school was destroyed in the 1988 Spitak Earthquake, but with the help of the San Francisco Arshak II Opera fundraising efforts, Wells Fargo, Armenia Fund, and other donors, the school underwent a complete renovation.

250 students attend the school, excel in their studies and participate in many concerts and competitions. Students continue to receive excellent musical education and several have entered the Yerevan State Conservatory to continue their studies. Paros continues to assist with student scholarships and repairs to the school building.

VANADZOR MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

The Vanadzor Museum of Fine Arts in the Lori Region was established in 1975 and contains an impressive collection of artwork. The Museum houses more than 1,800 works of art including paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and decorative arts. A steady flow of tourists and guests continue to visit the Museum and their rich collection of artwork. A complete renovation of the museum began in 2019.

The Paros Foundation has been supporting the Museum with marketing efforts designed to raise awareness regarding its significant collection of art in an attempt to help redevelop and reinvigorate the historical art colony in the Lori Region.
Armenia's border communities continue to be a priority for The Paros Foundation. These communities have been ravaged with decaying infrastructure left over from Soviet times, cross border sniper fire from Azerbaijan and difficult economic conditions. Launched in 2015, the Foundation's Prosperity on the Border initiative works to promote border security and prosperity through well thought-out, targeted infrastructure, economic development and educational projects in Armenia's border communities. Investing in these communities creates hope and security, which can lead to a prosperous future. In fact, in the village of Nerkin Karmir Aghpyur, we have seen the birth rate double as villagers witnessed significant improvements to their village's infrastructure since our work began there in 2012.
In 2018 and 2019 the following projects were implemented:

- Baghanis Kindergarten Construction
- Baghanis Agriculture Assistance
- Baghanis Family-Based Agribusiness
- Zorakan School Renovation
- Empowerment for Women
- Empowerment for Women 2
- Noyemberyan Kindergarten #2 Expansion
- Aygepar Kindergarten Renovation
- Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur Water Pipeline
- Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur School Renovation
- Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur Family-Based Agribusiness
- Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur 911 Building Renovation
- Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur Home Renovation
- Chinari Kindergarten Renovation
- Movses Kindergarten Renovation
- Achajur Water Reservoir Renovation
- Paruyr Sevak Kindergarten Renovation
In June 2019 the newly constructed kindergarten opened its doors with a village-wide celebration. Children now attend a kindergarten in a safe, clean and exciting environment. Much appreciation to Developmental Services for Armenia (DSA) and our other supporters who made this construction project possible.

BAGHANIS KINDERGARTEN
Gyumri, Armenia’s second largest city, has faced numerous hardships in its recent history. The 1988 Spitak Earthquake, the Karabakh Conflict and collapse of the Soviet Union left Gyumri’s residents in a dire humanitarian crisis. Armenia’s inability to properly rectify this situation for the last three decades has led to generational poverty and despair. The Paros Foundation, through its Projects for Prosperity initiative, has risen to help meet Gyumri’s challenges.

In 2018 and 2019, The Paros Foundation purchased new apartments for 13 poverty stricken families living in inadequate temporary housing called “domiks”. Moving these families to their new homes and tearing down their old "domiks" proves to be life altering for these people. In addition, hundreds of families received food packets in the summer, as well as firewood and manufactured heating logs in the winter to heat their homes and cook meals. To help gather information and implement our humanitarian programming, the Foundation works closely with and supports the work of the Shirak Center NGO. In 2018, The Foundation supported the partial renovation of Zangak Kindergarten in Gyumri and continues to support the Dogs of Gyumri NGO.

The Paros Foundation continues to fully fund and operate the Debi Arach Children’s Center. This Center has grown to work with more than 200 children on a regular basis with its staff of 14. In 2019, Debi Arach officially renamed its vocational training program the "Assarian Vocational Training Program," thanks to continued support from Dr. Gary and Linda Assarian.
The Debi Arach ("Moving Forward") Children's Center in Gyumri, Armenia was established on April 15, 2015. The center provides 200 children necessary academic, psychological, social and humanitarian support they need weekly by professional staff and volunteers. The center provides counseling with a psychologist on staff, homework help and tutoring for almost every subject children learn in school including English, Math, Art/Design, Computer classes and career training through the Assarian Vocational Training Program.

Children receive a nutritious meal each day, helping them obtain the calories and nutrients they would otherwise not receive. Furthermore, the Center addresses a very important hygienic need by providing the children in attendance with supervised bathing facilities. The goal is to help hundreds of children mature into successful young adults and work to break their family's cycle of poverty.

**EDUCATION**
- Homework Assistance
- Cultural & Educational Excursions
- Free College Entrance Exam Tutoring
- High-Tech Curriculum

**HEALTH**
- Health Examinations
- Psychological Support & Art Therapy
- Vitamin & Hygiene Product Distribution

**HUMANITARIAN**
- Distributions of Coats, Shoes, Boots, School Supplies
- Transportation Stipends for Students
- Dental Care Provided Through our Mobile Dental Clinic
- Wellness Check-Ups Through Med-Aid ARMENIA
BY THE NUMBERS
WWW.DEBIARACH.ORG

200 CHILDREN SERVED
14 PROFESSIONAL PAID STAFF
14 VOLUNTEERS
43,800 NUTRITIOUS MEALS SERVED

ASSARIAN VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

Launched in 2017 with generous support from Dr. Gary and Linda Assarian, vocational training is an integral component of the Debi Arach Children’s Center, helping future generations in Gyumri work themselves out of poverty. The program launched with a high-tech focus teaching web-design and web programming to young adults. Following classroom instruction in several course subjects, students graduated into internships to obtain real world experience. More than half of the graduates are now gainfully employed and utilizing their new skills in the workplace. These classes have continued with more than 40 students to date.

In August of 2019, a second focused vocational option was added to include instruction for cosmetologists, hair stylists, make up artists and manicurists. This was aimed to help young women find employment in the region and provide a much needed service to their community. An additional 24 students are enrolled in these courses. Future plans include the opening of a state of the art social enterprise beauty salon in Gyumri with our trainees.
THE PAROS FOUNDATION WILL MAKE SURE THAT YOUR SUMMER EXPERIENCE IN ARMENIA WILL BE TRULY REMARKABLE.

The Paros Foundation is committed to the principle of service and volunteerism. SERVICE Armenia helps develop the relationship between program participants and Armenia. These month-long service trips are planned to include service projects, educational excursions and outings, and time for leisure and fun activities. The Paros Foundation staff responsible for this program have a tremendous amount of experience working in Armenia and successfully implementing and overseeing service projects and tours.

JUNE 23RD - JULY 24TH 2021

Join other 17 - 22 year olds and volunteer in Armenia while making memories that will last a lifetime.

For more information & to apply visit or contact:

ParosFoundation.org/ServiceArmenia

PETER@PAROSFOUNDATION.ORG
(310) 400 - 9061
My name is Dustin Hochmuth and I launched Groceries for Gyumri as a project to raise money to assemble and distribute 100 food packs to poor families in Gyumri, Armenia. I came up with the idea when, in 2017 as part of The Paros Foundation’s SERVICE Armenia 2017 program, Peter Abajian and Narine Panosian took me and a few other participants to see the living conditions of some of the residents of Gyumri. This year minor renovations were done at the Center, a ‘Packs on Backs’ distribution was carried out for 185 children, and “Groceries for Gyumri” distributed food packs to 100 families. SERVICE youth had a chance to get to know students at Debi Arach through a fun day of dancing, playing sports, and socializing. Other highlights included four exciting excursions with the Yerevan Children’s Home, the Vanadzor Orphanage, the Kharpert Home for Special Children and the Ghoghanj Children’s Center.

In 2019, the SERVICE Armenia group worked on renovation projects at the Talin Music School in the town of Talin, the school in the village of Zorakan, the Debi Arach Children’s Center in Gyumri and at the Nor Hachn Museum in the village of Nor Hachn. In addition to these projects, the group implemented orphan excursions for children from the Yerevan Children’s Home and the Kharpert Home for Special Children. Dustin Hochmuth, a two-time past participant who launched “Groceries for Gyumri,” led it again for the second summer. SERVICE Armenia participants assembled food packets and distributed them to 50 impoverished families.

The Story of One Participant’s Effort to Make a Difference

“… and I launched Groceries for Gyumri as a project to raise money to assemble and distribute 100 food packs to poor families in Gyumri, Armenia. I came up with the idea when, in 2017 as part of The Paros Foundation’s SERVICE Armenia 2017 program, Peter Abajian and Narine Panosian took me and a few other participants to see the living conditions of some of the residents of Gyumri. The apartment complex we were shown was in total deplorable condition and was literally falling apart, and the worst part was that 10 families still live there. Later on that night at dinner, I asked Peter, “Is there anything more we can do to help these people?” SERVICE Armenia coordinator, Stephanie Nercessyan, was planning on implementing a project, so together we ended up delivering 10 packs of non-perishable items such as soap, pasta, and toilet paper to several families in the city. During the distribution, I met and spoke to the people living in these terrible conditions and got the opportunity to hear the families’ stories. After going on this excursion, it inspired me to come back to Armenia in 2018 and do a food drive project of my own on a larger scale.

Groceries for Gyumri was a joint idea with my mother Jeanne Papazian, who came up with the idea for the concept and the logo. After sending many emails to friends and family, we were able to raise $3,000, which was enough to fund 100 food packs. As summer rolled around, I joined the other participants for the SERVICE Armenia 2018 trip. The group went to buy all of the goods for the hundred packs from a local supermarket in person and then put them all together at the group’s house in Yerevan. Then, the group finally headed to Gyumri to do the distribution. It was a very long day consisting of delivering the packs and meeting the families and hearing each story, which felt more tragic than the last. However, also with each family the group could truly see the impact they were having on these people by the looks on their faces and their gratitude just to get some simple supplies like cooking oil, beans or bread. I am confident that this reaction from the beneficiaries registered on a very deep level with members of our group, as it demonstrated just how fortunate we are in the U.S., but also reminded us that since we are so fortunate, it is important to help out others in need and that we cannot forget that these people are our brothers and sisters.”

Dustin Hochmuth returned to Armenia the following year to implement the second year of the successful Groceries for Gyumri project for 50 more families along with his SERVICE Armenia 2019 peers.
In October 2018, The Paros Foundation held its Journey Through Armenia trip – the adult version of our very successful SERVICE Armenia summer youth trip. Fifteen participants from the United States, both Paros supporters and friends, joined our staff on an exciting 11-day journey that was planned with the support of our partner, SIMA Tours, and included visits to UNESCO world heritage sites and dining at Armenia’s many excellent restaurants. Together the group also visited the world’s oldest established winery, rode the world’s longest aerial tramway as well as had the opportunity to interact with Armenia’s children through service work. The Journey Through Armenia group spent an afternoon at Victory Park with a group from the Kharpert Home for Special Children, and distributed winter coats to children attending the Debi Arach Children’s Center in Gyumri.

Not only was this trip one great adventure, but this group was responsible for sparking several new efforts for our organization. Together they raised funding to renovate the restrooms in the Zorakan Village School and contributed to our Purchase a Home projects to help move an impoverished family living in a domik into a new home.
WE PROVIDE A DETAILED COST ANALYSIS OF EVERY PROJECT AT THE INCEPTION WITH AN ACTUAL SPEND AT COMPLETION, SO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR DOLLARS HAVE BEEN PUT TO WORK.
PAROS EVENTS

Thank you to our friends & supporters for hosting the following events:

APRIL 2018

Our first Donor Appreciation Dinner in Southern California to meet Roger Strauch, Paros Foundation Founder & Chairman and learn more about our strategic projects and next steps in Armenia.

JUNE 2018

A reception in support of our Prosperity on the Border initiative benefitting the village of Chinari hosted by the Atamian and Badishkanian Families at the Badishkanian Residence in New York.
Give a Family a Home
backyard fundraiser hosted
by the Deramerian Family
benefitting our Purchase a
Home project for our 10th
family, the Azizbekyans.

Second annual New York
event hosted by the Atamian
and Badishkanian Families -
Cocktails on the Terrace - at
the Badishkanian residence
benefitting the Varagavan
border village.
FINANCIAL SUMMARY
A look into our finances from 2018-2019

INCOME

The Paros Foundation successfully raised more than $1.2 Million in 2018 and $1.5 Million in 2019, making these our most successful fundraising years to date. This increase in income allowed us to implement a greater number of projects in Armenia thanks to the generous support of our donors and the Strauch Kulhanjian Family's commitment to underwrite administrative expenses.

EXPENSE

The Paros Foundation continued to make grants to our organization partners in Armenia in 2018 and 2019. Our projects in Armenia continued to expand as a result of our increased income. The Foundation's operating expenses remained relatively consistent and are underwritten by the Strauch Kulhanjian Family and other donations earmarked for administrative support.
2018 INCOME

CASH $1,143,031

IN-KIND $67,000

OFFICE SPACE $53,000

STRAUCH KULHANJIAN FAMILY (FOR ADMIN) $324,000

MISCELLANEOUS $14,000

2018 TOTAL INCOME $1,210,031

2018 EXPENSE

PAROS PROJECTS $658,386

ADMIN EXPENSES $391,833

GRANTS TO ORGS $81,417

SERVICE ARMENIA $27,117

2018 TOTAL EXPENSE $1,158,753

$0 CHARGED TO ADMIN

THE PAROS FOUNDATION
2019 INCOME

- CASH $1,552,384
- STRAUCH KULHANJIAN FAMILY (FOR ADMIN) $315,000
- IN-KIND $35,000
- OFFICE SPACE $33,000
- MISCELLANEOUS $2,000

2019 TOTAL INCOME $1,587,384

2019 EXPENSE

- PAROS PROJECTS $1,056,920
- ADMIN EXPENSES $367,649
- SERVICE ARMENIA $79,995
- GRANTS TO ORGS $102,225

2019 TOTAL EXPENSE $1,606,789

$0 CHARGED TO ADMIN
2018 DONORS

#
3 M's St. Mary Armenian Church

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