



Alumni of the Month  
November 2018  
**Renee Ferraro**

*Central Council Secretary Mallory Maslar interviews Renee Ferraro, parishioner of the Armenian Church of the Holy Translators in Framingham, MA, about her life growing up in the Church and involvement in the ACYOA.*

**Mallory Maslar: How did you first get involved in the ACYOA?**

**Renee Ferraro:** I was baptized and raised in the Roman Catholic Church until I was introduced to the Armenian Church by attending a cousin's wedding when I was about 10 years old. My grandfather started taking me to Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY, and I instantly knew I was where I belonged. I started attending Sunday School, made friends, and of course joined the very active ACYOA chapter.

**MM: What impact has the ACYOA had on your life?**

**RF:** ACYOA has a very special place in my heart for many reasons. It was a place I could meet other Armenian kids, and I developed friendships that endure today! It was a place where I could connect to my peers, and I felt safe and comfortable during the rocky, lonely, and turbulent adolescent years. It provided me with the opportunity to develop a more personal relationship with God and a deeper connection to my Armenian faith.

**MM: What are some of your favorite memories being involved in the ACYOA?**

**RF:** Dances, sports weekends, and retreats at St. Nersess Seminary! The ACYOA summer trip to Armenia I took with my friends in 1987 was terrific! It's been a blessing to see my three children enjoy the same experiences many years later!

**MM: What have been some of your influences in your Christian life?**

**RF:** There have been many!! My first Der Hayr, Fr. Michael Buttero and Yeretzgin Pat, welcomed me into the parish and dedicated themselves to our ACYOA. Fr. Mardiros Chevian, who directed the St. Nersess Summer Programs when I was a teenager and young adult, has also made a great impact on me. I am inspired by many of my ACYOA peers who have gone on to serve the church in many wonderful ways. And I'm very grateful for my current pastor, Fr. Krikor Sabounjian and Yeretzgin LuAnn, who have fostered a community where I have been able to raise my children with the most amazing church family.

**MM: Are you still involved in your parish community?**

**RF:** Yes!! I've been able to share my talents with my parish in many ways. I've taught Sunday School, participated in many years of ACYOA events as a parent, and led our parish in a successful community outreach program where we served a hot meal in the local Salvation Army meal program once a month for 10 years. There have been other opportunities to respond to our own parish needs as well.

**MM: Any advice for current and future ACYOA members?**

**RF:** We are lucky to have a youth organization that addresses fellowship, service, education, and worship! Embrace the opportunity to lean on your church family, and let it guide you through these difficult teenage years. You will look back and realize it's a great blessing!