

**Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Greater Boston  
ACYOA SENIORS**

**2016 ACYOA General Assembly & Sports Weekend  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Submitted by:  
2016 General Assembly & Sports Weekend Committee  
and Rev. Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, Pastor**

## **2016 ACYOA General Assembly & Sports Weekend Committee Report**

### **Introduction:**

The ACYOA Seniors of Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, MA, eagerly took on the task of hosting the 2016 ACYOA General Assembly and Sports Weekend, held May 26-30, 2016 in Boston, MA. Our committee of over 20 dedicated members worked for almost two years preparing for this comprehensive gathering, working hard to organize a weekend that showcased both our Boston and Holy Trinity parish pride!

Having never hosted a Sports Weekend, and it being nearly 60 years since Holy Trinity hosted a General Assembly back in 1957, our chapter was particularly honored to host the 2016 Weekend, especially as it marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ACYOA. Our hope was that the Weekend would provide an opportunity for not only present-day ACYOA to gather for a weekend of Christian fellowship, Armenian cultural expression and healthy sports competition, but that ACYOA alumni would recall with fondness their own ACYOA days, and rekindle their passion for the ACYOA by attending the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala on Sunday night. With over 350 package plans sold, and nearly 500 guests at the Sunday night Alumni Gala Dance, we believe our desire to host a meaningful and memorable Weekend were accomplished.

### **Core Committee:**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Pastor           | Fr. Vasken Kouzouian                         |
| Youth Director   | Yn. Arpi Kouzouian                           |
| Co- Chairmen     | Danielle Malconian and Ronald Malconian, Jr. |
| Events           | Christine Hovsepian                          |
| Public Relations | Christine Hovsepian and Sandra Hovsepian     |
| Registration     | Caroline Ekchian and Anna Margaryan          |
| Treasurer        | Suzanne Ekchian                              |
| Fundraising      | Greg Ekchian                                 |
| Transportation   | Greg Torosian                                |
| Service Project  | Lilit DerKevorkian and Ani Hollisian         |

### **General Committee:**

Bobby Avakian, Christina Azarian, Oscar Derderian, III, Greg Dorian, Stephen Hollisian, Cynthia Hovsepian, Amalia Petrosyan, Naneh Petrosyan, Caroline Thayer, Haig Torosian, and Anoush Youssoufian

## **Preparation:**

Our initial bid was prepared for presentation at the May 2014 General Assembly hosted by Bayside, NY. Prior to presenting our bid at the General Assembly, we approached our Pastor and Parish Council, advising of our desire to host, and presenting our proposed bid with our preliminary findings. Our Pastor and Parish Council unanimously encouraged us to take on this Weekend, and their unwavering support continued throughout the entire planning process.

After winning the bid at the 2014 General Assembly, during which our chapter also won the Chapter "A" award, we felt very motivated and excited to take on the challenge. We began planning right away, and by September 2014 we had signed our hotel contract, and were well underway to booking our Sunday night contract and other venues.

In the beginning stages we had a small core committee, but as the planning got underway, our ultimate committee grew to over 20 members. Our core committee met monthly, with the bigger group meeting every few months for the first year, and then beginning in January 2016, the core committee moved to weekly meetings, and monthly for the larger group. As the Weekend grew closer, we met more often, various committee members meeting nearly almost every night in the month prior to the Weekend.

## **HOTEL:**

Participants stayed at the Westin Waterfront Hotel in downtown Boston, which also served as the location of the General Assembly on Thursday evening. The Hotel had a spacious lobby, restaurants, conference space and other amenities ideal for hosting a General Assembly and Sports Weekend.

**Lessons Learned:** Despite trying to keep all Weekend guests housed on as few floors as possible, because all hotels only have a set number of double bed rooms per floor, our guests were spaced out onto nearly every floor of the hotel. This caused a number of disturbances, resulting in the eviction of at least three Weekend participants from the hotel. A stronger security presence, both hotel and Committee provided, may help keep disturbances to a minimum. Having a large hotel lobby, and a hotel that allowed guests to stay there all night, helped alleviate what could have been even more evictions.

## **SPORTS:**

The state-of-the-art newly renovated Boston University Fitness & Recreation Center, located on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, served as the venue for all sporting events. With 11 Men's basketball teams, 3 Women's Basketball Teams, and 10 Co-Ed Volleyball teams, the multiple courts enabled us to keep on schedule and end sports at the projected times on both Saturday and during Sunday's finals.

**Lessons Learned:** The awards ceremony, held on Sunday evening prior to the start of the Alumni Gala Dance, was poorly attended, with some teams either not being present or caring about the awards ceremony. Perhaps awards should be given at the end of finals at the gym, with only the Babayan Cup (overall champions) and Sportsmanship awards being presented at the Sunday evening event. Also, when planning the schedule, make sure to plan for double elimination, and do not make any last minute changes to the schedule.

## **EVENTS:**

### **Saturday, April 16: ACYOA Sports Weekend Service Project**

Prior to the Weekend, members of our Sports Weekend Committee organized an ACYOA Sports Weekend Service Project for local area ACYOA members. ACYOA Seniors gathered the morning of April 16, known as Global Youth Service Day, to prepare hand-packed sack lunches, which included a meal, first aid kit, Bible verse and note of encouragement. The 25 ACYOA members from four area parishes – Cambridge, Watertown, Framingham and Hye Point – who participated in the project then traveled around the Boston area to distribute the care packages to the local homeless population. Many thanks to Lilit DerKevorkian and Ani Hollisian for organizing this effort.

### **Thursday, May 26: General Assembly at the Westin Waterfront Hotel, followed by Prayer Service at Armenian Heritage Park and Delegates' Reception at the Bostonian Hotel**

Following Thursday evening's brief General Assembly, all delegates, clergy and guests were transported to Armenian Heritage Park, located between the historic Faneuil Hall and North End of Boston. With the hope of starting off our Weekend in not only a spiritual way, but also connecting us to our Armenian culture and history, an evening prayer service was held at the Park. We then walked across the street to The Bostonian Boston Millennium Hotel for the Delegates' Reception.

### **Friday, May 27: General Assembly continues at Westin Waterfront Hotel, Primate's Luncheon, followed by Laugh Boston Welcome event at Westin Hotel**

The General Assembly continued all day Friday. During the Primate's Luncheon, Armenian Olympic Gymnast, Houry Gebeshian, addressed the delegates about the challenges she has faced in preparation for the 2016 Rio Olympics, followed by the presentation of awards by the ACYOA Central Council. At the conclusion of the General Assembly, Sports Weekend kicked off with a welcome event at Laugh Boston, an event space right off of the lobby of the Westin Waterfront Hotel. Knowing that guests would be coming in from all over and arriving throughout the evening, we planned a relaxing and casual evening in the hotel.

### **Saturday, May 28: Sports Competition; Space 57, Revere Hotel, Boston**

Following the day's sporting events at the Boston University Fitness and Recreation Center, participants were bused to Space 57 in the Revere Hotel in Boston, a unique space perfect for socializing and dancing. The space was a bare room that we decorated with lighting (belonging to our ACYOA) and rented lighted furniture.

### **Sunday, May 29: Divine Liturgy at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge, MA; Sporting Finals; 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Alumni Gala Cocktail Dinner Reception and Alumni Gala Dance at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel**

During Sunday morning's Church services at Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, the large number of weekend participants who attended services witnessed a visual reminder of the power of God (and light) when the power that had gone off at the beginning of Badarak was restored in the middle of Fr. Vasken's sermon, while he was preaching about "being the light of the world." [No, this was not staged.] At the conclusion of services, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, conducted the installation of the new ACYOA Central Council. Church by candlelight and the choir singing a cappella truly enhanced the beauty of the morning's Church services. Participants were then bused from both the Church and the hotel to the sports venue for the afternoon's sports finals.

Sunday evening, just over 100 alumni and weekend participants attended the elegant and elaborate Alumni Gala Cocktail Dinner Reception at the newly renovated Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Having used this hotel when our church hosted the 2011 Diocesan Assembly, we were excited to also welcome our guests to the beautiful historic Boston landmark. When we signed the contract nearly a year earlier, the hotel was undergoing renovations, which included a completely newly renovated Grand Ballroom just in time for our weekend. Both the renovations and the menu for the Alumni Gala Dinner Reception went well beyond our expectations.

At the conclusion of the Alumni Gala Dinner Reception, our Committee presented the Sports Awards. The Alumni Gala Dance then began, and the nearly 500 guests enjoyed the contemporary live Armenian music of Kevork Artinian & Friends, and a late night dessert buffet. The music and dancing continued well into early morning.

**Lessons Learned:**

| Issue  | Description  | How to Avoid  |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>FRIDAY NIGHT VENUE AT THE HOTEL</b></p>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We debated whether or not to host Friday night in the hotel, and decided that for both financial (cost of venue; no bus transportation) and logistical reasons (people would be arriving throughout the night) it would be a good fit.</li> <li>• However, being in the hotel made it easier for guests to go back and forth to their rooms, and we had a lot of unregistered weekend guests trying to either register last minute or sneak into the Weekend.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either do not host Friday night at the hotel, or have more people on duty for registration and more vigilant committee and hotel security to remove unregistered weekend guests.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>BUSES GETTING LOST</b></p>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite repeated assurances from the bus company that the drivers knew the route and the roads to take, buses were getting lost going to the sports venues.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even though the bus company should do this, map out the directions for the drivers, and supply them to the company well in advance <u>and</u> again during the Weekend.</li> <li>• Also, it is imperative to have a bus captain on each bus (committee member or someone from parish) to ensure familiarity with the area and someone to keep in touch with the Committee (i.e. sports teams running late, upcoming arrival at a venue, etc.)</li> </ul>     |
| <p><b>TOO MANY PEOPLE SHOWING UP AT ONCE AT EVENING VENUES</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite offering a staggered bus times throughout each evening, most participants all tried to get on the buses at the same time.</li> <li>• We had a 9:00 p.m. start time on Saturday, and most participants did not start to arrive until closer to 11:00. The same was true for Sunday night, although we had many more arrive earlier on Sunday.</li> <li>• There were many empty buses in the beginning, and then filled to capacity buses arriving later in the evening, all arriving close together, which caused a lot of issues for check-in.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller buses (much more expensive) and more committee members assigned to check-in would help alleviate the check-in issue</li> <li>• A later start time for Saturday night event would help alleviate empty buses in the beginning</li> <li>• A stricter bus schedule, i.e. stopping bus service to the venue and letting guests know there will be no transportation after a certain point to the venue may encourage an earlier arrival time.</li> </ul> |

| Issue                        | Description  | How to Avoid   |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each venue will require a separate contract, which is written in contract language not easily understood by those not in the field.</li> <li>• Our hotel contract negotiations alone took over 8 months.</li> <li>• We had a total of 9 venue/company contracts and 4 audio-visual contracts!</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have attorneys and contract specialists on your advisory committee.</li> <li>• Their commitment will primarily be in the beginning of the process and taper off once all the contracts have been signed.</li> <li>• Don't be afraid to ask for what you think is fair. We received almost all of our requests.</li> </ul> |
| <b>INSURANCE</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our insurance company required that we take out an additional \$1 million of liability coverage, and also required a number of provisions be met before coverage would be bound. Because of dissimilar experience, there was little assistance from past SW host committees or the diocese on this matter, which meant we were left to figure things out on our own which was very complicated and time-consuming.</li> <li>• For example, the bus company did not provide a formal contract, and the insurance company required one, which meant we had to create and approve a contract, all in the last few days leading up to the Weekend.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure to contact your Church's insurance company well in advance of the event to find out what will be required.</li> <li>• We reached out almost a year in advance and still had last minute issues.</li> <li>• Have an insurance and contract specialist serve on the advisory committee.</li> </ul>                |

**SUGGESTIONS:**

1. **Contracts:** In addition to the Core Committee, include the parish attorney, Parish Council and ACYOA Central Council in the contract review before signing. Also review the contracts a week or two before the weekend with each venue and go over with them exactly what is necessary, expected and required. Have copies of all contracts on hand at each venue during the weekend so you can refer back to what was agreed upon.
2. **Audio-Visual:** All of our Boston venues required the use of in-house audio-visual companies (in Boston, the local company was PSAV). These fees add up quickly. See what you can do to bring these costs down (we used the diocesan LCD projector and our own parish's portable microphone to save \$2,000 at the hotel). Also, if the same company is in more than one venue, ask in the beginning if you can have one contract for the whole weekend which may provide a discount.

3. **Proximity:** Try to centralize the venues and hotel to one area, if possible. Spending time getting to/from venues makes for a difficult schedule, especially for sports.
4. **Transportation:** Make sure you provide directions for the drivers. Bus captains help with communication from the hotel and the venue, as well as control on the buses.
5. **Advertising:** Have one person in charge of advertising, and post frequently keeping everyone's interest. Make sure to have a way of communicating during the weekend to keep participants up to date. We highly recommend using an app (we used [www.yapp.us](http://www.yapp.us).)
6. **Deadlines:** Keep a master calendar of all deadlines. Set reminders for your deadlines.
7. **Central Council Communication:** Make sure everything is corresponded through email so you are able to refer back when needed. Review all Assembly needs well in advance to ensure everything is covered and there are no last minute surprises on either side. Also, realize that this weekend has been planned by many chapters; there is no need to re-invent the wheel. JUST ASK!
8. **Teamwork:** Know that you will get stressed, but remember that you are all in this together and that you have the support of the Central Council.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

1. **Unwavering Support:** We could not have achieved any of our goals without the unwavering support from our Pastor, Parish Council and entire Holy Trinity parish.
2. **Showcasing our City:** The Armenian Heritage Park Service and Delegates' Reception provided the perfect way for us to set the tone for the Weekend – highlighting both our Armenian faith, pride, and history, and the beauty and history of our beloved City of Boston.
3. **Unique Programming:** Olympian Houry Gebeshian's address at the Primate's Luncheon allowed for us to welcome an inspiring contemporary and relevant sports figure to share her story of struggle and triumph with our delegates and clergy.
4. **Location! Location! Location!** Accessibility was an important factor in our decision making and we felt the location of the hotel and venues made them very accessible, both physically and by providing amenities that benefited our participants and program.
5. **Social Media:** The use of a mobile application (e.g. YAPP app) and other forms of social media by our Committee made for greater excitement and communication both before and during the Weekend.

6. **Online Registration:** One of our greatest goals and achievements was the development of an online registration form, for general weekend registration, clergy registration, and sports team registration. This allowed for ease of organizing registrations, database development, online payments, etc. We used [www.123ContactForm.com](http://www.123ContactForm.com) (\$29.95/month) and recommend the application for future organizers. **Highlights:** the provision of a parish drop down list which included the name of every parish in the diocese, including mission parishes (uniformity of parish name helped greatly when sorting by parish); a field to list dietary restrictions and allergies; online electronic signature for Release and Waiver of Liability. **Bonus:** The online registration process enabled us to greatly reduce our carbon footprint.
7. **Clergy Recommendation Process:** From the beginning of the planning process, our committee was determined to reintroduce Clergy Recommendations as an integral step in the participant registration process. On the online registration form, participants were asked to provide the name of an approving clergyman, and the committee followed up with each clergyman to ensure that participants who listed a parish affiliation were in fact a member in good standing of the parish listed. Although the follow up was cumbersome, in the long run, it was worth the effort, providing both greater communication and engagement of diocesan clergy, and helping ensure that all those who attended the Weekend were active in the life of the Armenian Church, and had an understanding and respect for both the organization and the Church.
8. **Commemorative Ad Booklet:** The Booklet was a unique (shaped like the Massachusetts license plate) keepsake of a successful and memorable weekend. We received overwhelming financial support from parishioners and diocesan faithful, including in kind services by the printers.
9. **Budgeting:** Preparing a conservative budget, anticipating lower numbers for both attendees and fundraising, helped us to keep on track and stay within our budget.
10. **Advisory Committee:** We had a number of adults who advised our committee along the way, all of whom were in place as early as May 2014. Their help was especially instrumental in the areas of contract and venue negotiations.
11. **An Awesome Team:** The Holy Trinity ACYOA Seniors really stepped up to the plate, willing to roll up their sleeves and commit to “getting the job done!” We have grown so much closer these past two years, spending countless hours together, strengthening both our chapter and friendships.

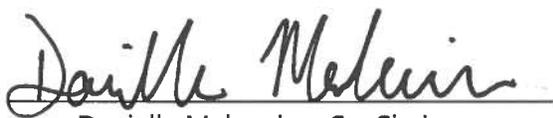
**Conclusions:**

Hosting the 2016 ACYOA General Assembly & Sports Weekend in Boston was both an honor and privilege. For the past many years, our Holy Trinity parish has watched our ACYOA Seniors grow and flourish, becoming a stronger and more cohesive team of hard-working and dedicated members, a vital resource to the parish. Hosting this Weekend helped to show not only our parish, but the entire diocese, what we are capable of doing. The sense of accomplishment for our ACYOA is beyond words.

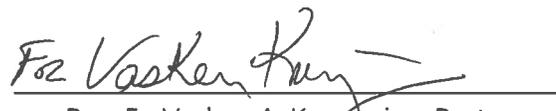
To say we were blessed with a fantastic committee and an unconditionally supportive parish is an understatement. Our parish welcomed our undertaking of Sports Weekend with open arms, holding us to the high expectations of the past, but ready to help wherever needed. Der Vasken and Yn. Arpi served as the greatest mentors. There have been countless family and friends that assisted us in this huge endeavor, offering their help in their respective areas of expertise. The undertaking of such a tremendous weekend would not have been possible without our entire Holy Trinity Family.

We love the city of Boston and our parish and were so happy to share that with everyone! Thank you for "Shipping up to Boston" for the 2016 ACYOA General Assembly & Sports Weekend!

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Danielle Malconian, Co-Chairman

  
Ronald Malconian, Jr., Co-Chairman

  
Rev. Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, Pastor

Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Cambridge, MA  
September 20, 2016

| <b>General Assembly and Sports Weekend<br/>Participation</b> |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Hotel Information</b>                                     |            |
| <b>Room Nights Sold</b>                                      |            |
| Wednesday  | 1          |
| Thursday   | 46         |
| Friday   | 100        |
| Saturday   | 104        |
| Sunday   | 95         |
| Monday   | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>348</b> |
| <b>Number of Attendees</b>                                   |            |
| <b>General Assembly</b>                                      |            |
| Clergy/Staff   | 19         |
| Delegates  | 48         |
| Observers  | 18         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>85</b>  |
| <b>Event Attendance</b>                                      |            |
| <b>Friday Night</b>  | 344        |
| <b>Saturday Night</b>  | 378        |
| <b>Sunday Night</b>  | 472        |
| <b>Registration Information</b>                              |            |
| Packages Sold – includes athletes                            | 345        |
| Athletes   | 136        |
| Saturday and Sunday Package                                  | 14         |
| Saturday   | 19         |
| Sunday   | 14         |
| Clergy   | 14         |
| Alumni (Gala)  | 85         |

2016 ACYOA General Assembly & Sports Weekend  
 Hosted by ACYOA Seniors of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge, MA  
 May 26-30, 2016

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**INCOME**

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Registration Fees - Packages Sold                                  | \$ 71,140.37 |
| Saturday Night - Ticket Sales – Online                             | \$ 1,700.00  |
| Sunday Night Gala Ticket Sales                                     | \$ 8,050.00  |
| Saturday and Sunday Night - Add On - Online                        | \$ 2,590.00  |
| Sports Registration Fees   | \$ 4,145.00  |
| Fundraising - Salsa Kef Night (May 2015)                           | \$ 2,654.84  |
| Fundraising - Volleyball Tournament (Nov. 2015)                    | \$ 2,715.88  |
| Fundraising - Celtics Fundraiser (Jan 2016); Jillians (April 2016) | \$ 310.00    |
| Fundraising - Parents' Fundraising Luncheon (April 2016)           | \$ 772.65    |
| Fundraising - Manti Making (April 2016)                            | \$ 690.00    |
| Fundraising - Miscellaneous Donations                              | \$ 300.00    |
| Fundraising - Commemorative Ad Booklet                             | \$ 28,685.00 |
| Sports Weekend T-shirts  | \$ 1,719.80  |
| Miscellaneous  | \$ 35.00     |

**TOTAL INCOME** \$ 125,508.54

**EXPENSES**

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| General Assembly - Audiovisual costs  | \$ 4,011.40  |
| General Assembly - Miscellaneous (Guest Speaker travel; Subway bagged snacks)                                 | \$ 441.01    |
| Delegate's Reception - The Bostonian Millennium Hotel   | \$ 2,224.00  |
| Friday Night - Laugh Boston   | \$ 11,000.00 |
| Saturday Night - Space 57 (Venue + DJ, Furniture Rental)  | \$ 13,584.23 |
| Sunday Night Gala - Boston Park Plaza (Venue, decorations)  | \$ 36,826.37 |
| Sunday Night Gala - Band Expenses   | \$ 9,586.87  |
| Sports - Boston University Fitness & Recreation Center Rental   | \$ 4,231.50  |
| Sports - Referees   | \$ 2,145.00  |
| Sports - Equipment & Trophies   | \$ 973.34    |
| Transportation (Bus rental and tips for drivers)  | \$ 7,955.00  |
| Commemorative Booklet Publication   | \$ 4,310.80  |
| Fundraising - Donor Mailings (flyers, copies, postage)  | \$ 731.42    |
| Sports Weekend T-shirts   | \$ 1,010.25  |
| Social Media - Yapp App + Snapchat filter   | \$ 388.52    |
| Public Relations - Promotional (May 2014 General Assembly, signage)   | \$ 362.95    |
| Insurance - Premium for Additional Coverage   | \$ 300.00    |
| PayPal Fees   | \$ 2,585.86  |
| Bank Fees   | \$ 51.00     |
| Online Registration Monthly Usage Fee (123 Contact Form) (\$29.95/month - Feb to Aug)                         | \$ 209.65    |
| Miscellaneous - Administrative Operating Expenses (office supplies, lanyards, swag bags, tips, parking, etc.) | \$ 2,082.15  |
| Miscellaneous - Committee Expenses (dinner meetings; committee hotel reimbursements)                          | \$ 1,315.56  |

**TOTAL EXPENSES** \$ 106,326.88

**TOTAL PROFIT**

|                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>        | \$ 125,508.54                 |
| <b>Less TOTAL EXPENSES</b> | <u><u>\$ (106,326.88)</u></u> |
|                            | <u><u>\$ 19,181.66</u></u>    |