



Alumni of the Month

November 2017

David Jermakian

Central Council Chairperson Mallory Maslar interviews David Jermakian about his involvement in the ACYOA, life growing up in the Church, and current involvement in his parish community.

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

David Jermakian: Following my Sunday school years, I was very excited to finally reach an age where I was eligible to join our very active ACYOA under the leadership of Rev. Fr. Nersess Jebejian. I give credit to my parents and the leadership of my Parish at that time for instilling in the youth the importance of continuing to be involved in our parish from the very beginning (Sunday School) to the present (Diocesan Delegate).

I feel the ACYOA was the most important bridge between my adolescent years to now, as far as sustaining my involvement in church activities and wellbeing. Fr. Jebejian was the perfect person to encourage all our St. John youth that although were small in numbers, we were big in heart and love for our Armenian heritage. Our small but mighty chapter could exhibit our David vs Goliath attitude throughout our ACYOA sports weekend years. We competed, won, made friends from all the other ACYOA chapter and my fondest memories are those special years.

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

DJ: As mentioned above, the ACYOA was the bridge that kept me involved in church as opposed to slowly but steadily becoming less involved. Our youth often focus on attending college or building a career, and that gap of time where they are not involved in the ACYOA may contribute to the lessening of their enthusiasm towards being involved in their parishes later in life.

I can only speak for myself that I have never created a gap between my childhood, teenage, and adult years. Because of that, my life has been very fulfilling, knowing that I have contributed to maintaining what my parents and grandparents have built in our St. Mark community.

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

DJ: My first Sports Weekend on Cape Cod was an eye opener, and it got me hooked to the point that I could not wait for the next one to take place. Some of my most enjoyable memories all took place at various Sports Weekends throughout the country.

I remember one time in Detroit, my fellow ACYOA members and I missed the event bus. We had to hitch a ride on the back of a tow truck in our best attire (that I probably spent big bucks on to impress the girls). I also vividly remember driving to Toronto in two very packed cars. I fondly remember my own parish hosting Sports Weekend in 1972, when I was playing in a rock band that played for the hundreds of attendees at the poolside

mixer. Florida was memorable, if for no other reason than I had never been there before. There were so many good times, but those are just a few of the highlights.

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

DJ: Although I am not attending Sunday Badarak as much as I should, my heart and soul is always with the church. I believe it has contributed greatly to maintaining a strong moral compass, and I am more spiritual than I lead people to believe. Thankfully, my spirituality and morality has trickled down to how I have brought up my family. My wife and daughters are all very involved in the life of our church, and it is important to me that we are all doing what we can to keep the Armenian Church healthy in our community.

MM: Are you still involved in your parish community?

DJ: I always have been and still am involved in St. Mark's spiritual, social, leadership and youth activities as a dedicated member of my parish. I am presently a Diocesan Delegate following many years as a Parish Council member and, for a couple terms, chairperson.

Not coincidentally, my father was similarly passionate about and involved in his church before he passed in 2006. I guess I am a small chip off the block; though I will never fill his shoes, I am trying my best. He was also a person that never had a gap in his Armenian Church life.

MM: Any advice for current and future ACYOA members?

DJ: For current ACYOA members, my advice is to remain active and attend as many events as possible in order to keep your friend connections and constantly add new acquaintances to your friend list. In your later years, if you have maintained an active relationship with your parish and are involved in leadership/membership roles (in the Parish Council, Choir, Cultural Club etc.), you will find that the friends you made through ACYOA will appear somewhere at some time alongside of you. This truly brings a warm feeling to your heart.

Unlike most other nationalities in America, we are a relatively small family of people, and it is all the more important to keep what Armenian friendships we have and continually grow our relationships. This intimate connection is the Armenian way, and it has helped us endure the many hardships we have encountered. In my opinion 46-09 48th Ave. Apt #2F, Woodside, NY 11377, the ACYOA is and always will be one of the most important organizations that will keep our culture alive.

As for our future ACYOA members, all I can say is this: you will be entering an organization that is fulfilling, adventurous, fun, and essential to our longevity as an Armenian community. Enjoy it!

Respectfully, David Jermakian – Former ACYOA member, father of two daughters that are currently ACYOA members, and current Diocesan Delegate of St. Mark Church in Springfield, Massachusetts.