



Alumni of the Month

February 2019

Kelly and Dikran Callan

Central Council Secretary Mallory Maslar interviews Kelly and Dikran Callan of St. John Church in Southfield, MI, about how they met in the ACYOA, as well as their current involvement in the ACYOA.

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

Kelly Callan: Kelly was involved in ACYOA Juniors and Seniors, serving on the local Detroit chapter board throughout those years. She organized and participated in local chapter events, attended General Assembly and Sports Weekend, and volunteered quite a bit. Dikran started participating as an ACYOA Senior, attending Sports weekend and eventually serving on the chapter board.

MM: How did you guys meet?

KC: This takes some explanation...

Despite growing up in the same Detroit parish and having parents who had been friends for many years since their ACYOA days, we had never really spoken to each other until we ended up on the ACYOA Armenia Service Project (ASP) trip together in 2000. Everyone on the ASP trip bonded through our time together as we visited sites and worked side by side at Camp Siranoush. It was a life changing experience we would highly recommend, as it allowed us to serve, deepen our faith, and connect to Armenia. After the trip Dikran went back to school and Kelly went off to start her first year of college. She was focused on her education, but Dikran kept talking to her, and the rest is history. We got married years later in the same church where both of our parents were married 30 years earlier.

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

KC: A big one! First, we met on an ACYOA trip, and we are now married with two beautiful children (Sosi, age 6 and Zaven, age 2). As if that wasn't a big enough impact, experiences through the ACYOA brought us closer to our heritage and to our parish in so many ways. We have learned the value of service to our church and community through early involvement in ACYOA, and we met many friends through ACYOA events to whom we are still connected today.

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

KC: The ASP trip certainly stands out, as does General Assembly and Sports Weekend. Those weekends provided us an opportunity to meet Armenians from all over the Eastern Diocese – it was a starting point from which many friendships developed and continued to be cultivated through other events and meetings (Hye Camp, St. Nersess Seminars, etc.) that followed through the years.

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

KC: Participating in the Badarak through music (specifically in the choir) is one of the deepest ways Kelly is able to connect to her faith. An opportunity to attend a youth session at St. Nersess also stands out in her memory as being an extremely moving experience. Dikran finds meaning and fulfillment by serving the youth of our parish and community through a variety of outlets. For both of us, the opportunity to travel to Armenia through service trips twice has significantly impacted us as Christians to deepen our faith and renew our commitment to serve. We hope to take our children on service trips there in the future.

MM: Are you still involved in your parish community?

KC: Absolutely. Since the days of ACYOA Seniors, Kelly sings in the choir and has served on the Choir Board at St. John, having held the role of Chairman multiple times. She also enjoys singing for weddings. Dikran serves the church in multiple capacities: Sunday School teacher, youth basketball coach, Parish Assembly volunteer, Auditor for church organizations, chaperone for ACYOA Juniors retreats and events. This list doesn't count his Armenian community involvement outside the parish where he is very active as a dance instructor for the Detroit Arax Hamazkayin Dance Ensemble.

It is also important to us to expose our kids to parish involvement early on, and we make sure they have opportunities to see us participating in parish life. They too participate: our daughter Sosi attends Sunday School, and our son Zaven attends a new program for toddlers called "Little Saints."

MM: Any advice for current and future ACYOA members?

KC: Get involved! For some it's easy to stand up and participate, and others may need to push themselves a bit. But whenever you can open yourself up to opportunities, good things will often result. Being involved in ACYOA offers so many opportunities to enrich your life and the lives of others – often in ways you may not immediately realize, but will become apparent to you at a later time.