



Alumni of the Month  
October 2018  
**Shaké Derderian**

*Central Council Chairperson Mallory Maslar interviews Shaké Derderian, member of St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Church in Wynnewood, PA about her life growing up in the Church, and involvement in the ACYOA.*

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

**Shaké Derderian:** I first got involved through the church where I grew up, Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY. My older brothers encouraged me to join.

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

**SD:** The ACYOA was our social base through our teenage and young adult years. It kept us tied to the church and to our Armenian friends.

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

**SD:** Some of my fondest memories are attending the Armenian Service Program (1984), organizing and hosting the Archbishop's tournament three times in mid-1980s, serving on the Central Council during the separation of the Canadian Diocese from the Eastern Diocese, and leading youth retreats and community activities.

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

**SD:** My parents are perhaps the strongest influence on my Christian life. My parents were always strengthening their faith at events like awakenings, bible studies, and family retreats. For as long as I can remember, prayer and bible studies were a part of our everyday life at home. My parents' marriage and faith played such a significant role in my faith development.

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

**SD:** Yes. I serve as the Vice Chair of the Youth Committee at St. Sahag and St. Mesrob in Wynnewood, PA, as well as the Youth Adviser to our ACYOA Juniors chapter.

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

**SD:** Take advantage of the opportunities that are created through the ACYOA! You gain so much from this organization: the friendships formed through our Armenian Christian bond; the leadership opportunities on the local and national level; the conferences and retreats that are organized on a yearly basis. These youth

programs also develop sportsmanship and Christian fellowship, fostered through both local and diocesan sporting leagues and weekend tournaments. Finally, service programs and faith-forming journeys, both domestic and abroad, build a strong community of young Armenian Youth.