

GREATER DETROIT ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY PLANS TO PARTICIPATE IN RECONSTRUCTION OF ARMENIA IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

With a meeting convened on Thursday, December 8, 1988 consisting of representatives of St. John's Armenian Church of Greater Detroit and a number of community organizations, the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee was organized and immediately mobilized its efforts to assist our earthquake devastated homeland.

On Sunday, December 11, 1988 together with over a thousand members of the Armenian community, Michigan Governor James Blanchard attended the Divine Liturgy at St. John's. At the conclusion of the services, the Governor briefly addressed the congregation conveying his sympathy along with that of the citizens of the State of Michigan, and following the services contributed a personal donation in the amount of \$1000.00 to the Armenia Earthquake Fund. Senator Carl Levin expressed his sympathy and sent a personal donation of \$500.00. A few days later a letter of sympathy arrived from the Mayor of Detroit, Coleman Young along with his personal donation of \$5000.00 to the Fund.

On Sunday, December 18, a full page ad appealing for assistance was published in the Detroit Free Press paid for by St. John's Armenian Church, itself. On Thursday, December 22, a full page ad appeared in the Observer Suburban Newspapers, gratis, arranged by parishioner Richard Aginian, President of Observer Newspapers. On Sunday, December 25, a full page ad appeared in the Detroit News sponsored by a friend, Harry Kosins, Clothier. Publicity and appeals appeared on all local TV Channels with the exception of ABC's Channel 7 and on all radio stations, gratis.

Earthquake relief supplies on route to Armenia, including medical supplies and equipment, new clothing, shoes and blankets were dispatched aboard two semi-trailers from St. John's to Pan Aviation in Florida. One of the semis was donated by Roadway Express Co. and the other was paid for by St. John's Armenian Church, itself. Pan Aviation donated their cargo plane and services to transport the desperately needed supplies. St. John's sent forty thousand pounds of relief supplies to Armenia.

On Saturday, January 29, Governor James Blanchard of Michigan and his staff sponsored, organized, promoted, managed, and entertained at a Caberet Concert for the benefit of the Armenia Earthquake Fund at Greektown's International Banquet Center. Pegasus Restaurant donated the facilities and the food for the occasion with all proceeds in the amount of \$24,000.00 being donated to the Fund.

Parishioners placed hundreds of Earthquake Fund Canisters in businesses throughout the Metropolitan Detroit area, thus far netting over \$6000.00.

St. John's Church School sponsored the Armenia Earthquake Walk-a-Thon on Sunday, April 9. Three hundred students, parents, staff members, and friends walked a six mile route raising approximately \$12,000.00 for the Fund.

Aside from these public officials' personal donations and efforts and the Church School sponsored Walk-a-Thon, there were many group and personal efforts throughout the Metropolitan Detroit Area and Ann Arbor.

Major donations received by the Armenia Earthquake Fund were from Mr. & Mrs. Edward and Helen Mardigian, \$100,000.00; Mr. & Mrs. Michael & Shirley Kojaian, \$40,000.00; Mr. Raymond Paul, \$25,000.00; Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul, \$10,000.00; Mr. Ronald Aprahamian, \$10,000.00; and Mr. & Mrs. Charles and Alice Manoogian, \$10,000.00.

All expenses in regards to relief and fund-raising efforts have been and are presently being underwritten by St. John's Armenian Church solely to date approximately \$25,000.00, so that no expenses would be incurred by the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee.

On Wednesday, June 21, 1989, His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate accompanied by Mr. Jack Antreassian, Co-Ordinator of the Diocesan Earthquake Committee arrived in Detroit to be the personal guests of thirty members of the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee for a dinner and meeting held at St. John's Cultural Center during which on behalf of parishioners and Armenian and non-Armenian friends of St. John's Armenian Church, Fr. Paren Avedikian presented a check in the amount of \$900,000.00 to the Primate for the Diocesan Relief Fund earmarked for a Medical and Dental Clinic in the forty acre complex to be developed by the Diocese in Stepanavan, Armenia.

Following the presentation of the plans for this complex, the Committee was informed that as soon as final approval for the total complex has been received by the authorities in Armenia, and accordingly estimates have been calculated by a sub-committee of the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee, we will embark upon a new fund-raising effort to complete the Medical & Dental Clinic Project.

We take this opportunity to thank the thousands of non-Armenian and Armenian donors and hundreds of volunteers through whose donations and efforts the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee was enabled, in a to small way, plan to rebuild what nature so mercilessly devastated.

