

YOUTH GROUP
ST. GREGORY ARMENIAN CHURCH
BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

Although the St. Gregory Youth Group has been in existence for well over six years and has in the past played an active and vital role in the life of the church, it has become obvious and disheartening to see interest and morale waning in the past two years. Where we once had about 25 steady members we now have a maximum 15 and usually about 8 to 10 at meetings and activities. The ongoing decline in membership is due to youths departing for out-of-town schools upon completion of High School and also due to their moving into a different age and interest level. Experience has shown that we cannot effectively lower the minimum age requirement and although this year we welcomed two new recruits, Steven Kradjian and Brian Baradet, the balance of old and new members is not commensurate. Next year, for example, there is a possibility of five additional members moving away.

Four Youth Group members attended the St. Nerses Summer Studies Program and felt it to be a wonderful, positive experience. They made lasting friendships with Armenian youths throughout the diocese and all returned with pride in their heritage and renewed dedication to the service of their church. By partially sponsoring our youths, our parish is to be commended for encouraging a very worthwhile project.

Three members and George and Marion Rejebian attended the Annual A.C.Y.O.A. Sports Weekend in Providence, Rhode Island. The youths renewed friendships made at St. Nerses and had a marvelous time. It is hoped that some of our youth will be able to attend this year's exciting Weekend in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Youth Group continues to help serve the monthly church dinners and are involved in service as choir members and Sunday School teachers.