

Celebrating 11 Years of Success: Armenian International Medical Fund

GLENDALE - On March 30, 2014 the 11th Anniversary Gala for the Armenian International Medical Fund (AIM Fund) was held at the Brandview Ballroom in Glendale, California.

Over 250 guests attended the event to celebrate the achievements of the AIM Fund and demonstrate their continued support for the mission of this organization, which is to create and maintain innovative health care programs in Armenia.

The Gala was organized by the collaborative efforts of the Board of Directors and members led by AIM Fund's President, Salpy Akaragian, RN-BC, MN. Ms. Akaragian has directed multiple health care initiatives in Armenia. In 2004, she established the Cochlear Implant Regional Center in Yerevan with AIM Fund and UCLA Health's medical team. Since AIM Fund's inception, Ms. Akaragian has demonstrated a commitment to the organization and to the children and young adults in Armenia who benefit from the efforts and dedication of the Cochlear Implant Project, which continues to bring the miracle of hearing to those in need. Ms. Akaragian will be receiving the Ellis Island Medal of Honor on May 10, 2014.

Glendale City Councilman, the Honorable Ara Najarian, Esq. served as the Master of Ceremonies and was introduced by Maro Yacoubian, Esq. The evening started with a benediction by Rev. Fr. Karekin Bedourian. The guests were entertained by the Dynamic Duo Dance Group, as well as Karavan Dance Studio and Heartbeat DJ.

Special guests included Amy Richter and Sara Chitjian. Amy Richter shared her touching story and experiences with UCLA's Cochlear Implant Program as a firsthand cochlear implant recipient. Ms. Chitjian was recognized for her generous donation, which will enable AIM Fund's medical team to support the surgery of an additional child during the July 2014 mission.

The event, which raised funds for the Armenian International Medical Fund's Cochlear Implant Project, honored:

Akira Ishiyama, MD, Professor, Head and Neck Surgery, David Geffen UCLA School of Medicine; Co-Founder & Vice President, AIM Fund. Dr. Ishiyama is a Professor of Head and Neck Surgery at the UCLA School of Medicine, directing the Otolaryngology/Neurotology division and has been serving as the Director of the Victor Goodhill



Dr. Akira Ishiyama center, flanked by his wife on the left, and Salpy Akaragian on the right.

established and is the Director of UCLA's Cochlear Implant Program. Since 2004, Dr. Ishiyama has led eleven medical missions to Armenia with the collaboration of the AIM Fund. Dr. Ishiyama's humanitarian work in Armenia has enabled hearing-impaired children to become fully integrated within their community. He is also the main driving force in implementing the neonatal hearing-screening project in Armenia, and has established the Armenian National Ear Institute as well as a fellowship training program.

Vicken Sepilian, MD, FACOG, Immediate former President of the Armenian American Medical Society (AAMS). Dr. Sepilian is a fertility specialist who practices in the Los Angeles area. He is actively involved in various not-for-profit organizations including, but not limited to the Armenian American Medical Society and AIM Fund. He

continues to demonstrate his enthusiasm towards community education, as well as medical education and research.

Don Kawachi, Stryker Corporation. Mr. Kawachi continues to be instrumental in Stryker Corporation's donation of state-of-the-art surgical drills and computer simulated temporal bone drilling equipment to AIM Fund's medical missions in Armenia. He also accompanies the team to the medical missions providing his expertise and support during each surgery. He successfully completed his eighth medical mission in September 2013.

Maeve Brown, Cochlear Americas. Ms. Brown was introduced to the organization in 2011. Since then, she has worked with her team at Cochlear Americas to develop an agreement allowing for significant discounts on the cochlear implant and Baha systems being shipped to Armenia. Maeve continues to be valua-



From left, Dr. Vicken Sepilian, Salpy Akaragian and Glendale City Councilman Ara Najarian



ble to the AIM Fund, helping to bring the gift of hearing to the children and young adults of Armenia.

Each honoree was given an opportunity to say a few words. The guests were moved by the modesty of the honorees who accepted their awards and shared their experiences of the organization and the children and families of Armenia. The fruits of their labor were beautifully illustrated with a wonderful video of the Armenian children and their families created by the very talented Vahe and Vache Garabedian of the Motion Lit Video Group.

To date, the organization

has implanted over 70 children and young adults with cochlear implants with a 100 percent success rate. Proceeds from this event will be utilized to purchase cochlear implant devices for four children.

The AIM Fund will continue to sponsor innovative health care programs in Armenia for as long as it has the support of its leaders, members and community who continue to demonstrate a commitment to philanthropy in this region. AIM Fund is planning to hold a casino night fund raising event Fall of 2014.



Armenian International Medical Fund Banquet Committee



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