Dear Parents,

**LET’S TALK ABOUT COMMUNITY**

An interesting article appeared on the AGBU Sydney website this week, titled *Let’s talk about community (in the Armenian Diaspora)*. This interesting article has also been shared on the social media, leading to an open discussion and dialogue over the number of issues raised and touched on in the piece. The article has been written by one of our former students, Kevork Dertadian who is also a current School Board member and the Chairman of AGBU Youth.

We have published a copy of the article in our Newsletter today. I encourage you to read it and share your thoughts by joining in the conversation. As a school ‘community’ we are also part of the Armenian and much larger Australian community, so it is important that we reflect on the role we play in the community that we all share.

If you would like to discuss anything in the article, please contact the author at: youth@agbu.org.au

**ENVIRONMENTORS**

Last week, the students participated in the *EnviroMentors* workshop called ‘Keeping Waterways Clean’. The workshop was supported by the new Northern Beachers Council, as part of ‘Keep NSW Beautiful’ project. This is the state’s premier organisation for litter reduction and environmental sustainability. Independent and not-for-profit, the focus is to engage communities to make NSW the least littered state in Australia, transforming littering behaviour to create a beautiful and more sustainable environment.

Students learnt about waterway health and catchment pollution. They explored the story of a catchment and observed how it is affected by characters role-played by students. After observing the effects of contaminants, students understood the necessity to protect our fragile waterways. One particular highlight was the much-loved 3D interactive catchment model, which presented issues of water quality and biodiversity in a digestible and memorable format.

Looking forward to celebrating Fathers’ Day with you all at our Picnic on Sunday!

*Best wishes and a safe trip to Years 5 & 6 who are heading off to Canberra next week!*  

2nd September, 2016

**MANOUG DEMIRJIAN**

**Ընդհանուր Ամենամայրի օր ~ Happy Fathers’ Day**  
To all our School Dads and Grandfathers.  
Have a Great Day on Sunday!
Cancer Council recommends you protect yourself in 5 ways:

**SLIP** on clothing that covers your arms and legs

**SLAP** on a broad brimmed or legionnaires hat

**SLOP** on 30+, broad-spectrum sunscreen

**SEEK** shade

**SLIDE** on wrap around sunglasses

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**LIBRARY BAGS**

Congratulations to all the students who remembered to bring their library bags for borrowing this week. If you forgot to bring yours in, try to remember next week.

**LIBRARY DAY IS MONDAY**

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**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Fruit & Veg Month**

04/09 **Fathers’ Day Picnic** - Lane Cove River Park

06/09 **Book Club - Issue 6 Orders Due**

07/09 **Start of Year 5/6 Canberra Excursion**

09/09 **End of Year 5/6 Canberra Excursion**

20/09 **Cross Country Run**

21/09 **Armenian Independence Day**

Alexander Rest Home Visit - Year 5/6

23/09 **Last Day Term 3**

Student Portfolios Sent Home

10/10 **First day Term 4**

13/11 **Armenian Cultural Day**

11/12 **Christmas Concert and Graduation**

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**HOUSE POINTS TERM 3**

**Uniform, Playground, Charity & Awards**

**Sevan** - 102 points

**Yerevan** - 109 points

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**BOOK CLUB - ISSUE 6**

Order Forms/Money Due by

**Tuesday**

6th September, 2016

Orders after this date cannot be processed. Please place your orders in clearly marked envelopes.

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**TEACHERS’ AWARD**

**TERM 3 – WEEK 7**

Year 5: Christopher

Lara

Lilit

Year 3: Zabel

Year 2: Lara

Alina

Harry

Year 1: Sargis

Kindergarten: Peter

Preparatory: Yeva, Alexander

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**EXTRA PHOTO ORDER**

If you are interested in ordering a whole school photo, then please contact the school office on 9486 3266 and request the special order form and payment envelope from 'Academy Photography'. Alternatively, complete the order form when you have viewed the sample copy near the office.

**SCHOOL PHOTO**

$25

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**Sponsor a child in Armenia through the Armenian Apostolic Church**

www.armenianchurchsydney.org.au
Early Childhood Category
Adelin, Lara & Lia ~ Piranhas Don't Eat Bananas - Aaron Blabey
Khloe & Sophia ~ The Cow Tripped Over the Moon - Tony Wilson
Albert, Berj & Peter ~ My Dog Bigsy - Alison Lester

Younger Readers Category
Kevork & Sara ~ The Cleo Stories: A Friend and a Pet - Libby Gleeson
P&C ~ Shadows of the Master - Emily Rodda
Talia ~ Molly and Pim and the Millions of Stars - Martine Murray
Adelin, Lara & Lia ~ Run, Pip, Run - J. C. Jones
Alina ~ Soon - Morris Gleitzman

Older Readers Category
Lilit ~ A Single Stone - Meg McKinlay

Picture Book of the Year Category
Lucas ~ Suri's Wall - Matt Ottley
Alina ~ Ride, Ricardo, Ride! - Shane Devries

Eve Pownall Award for Information Books
Christopher ~ The White Mouse: The Story of Nancy Wake - Peter Gouldthorpe

ALSO… THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE BOOK FAIR
More books were purchased with the $260 Book Commission from Scholastic

Once again Thank You for supporting AGBU Alexander Primary School

DHOL LESSONS
10 CLASSES for $150
AGBU AGOUMP
2 YEO STREET, NEUTRAL BAY
Fridays 7-8pm
September 2 until October 28

Taught by professional Music Teacher: HAROUT BEZDIKIAN
For Enquiries: tamzara@agbu.org.au
Let’s talk about community (in the Armenian Diaspora)

A sense of community is central to members of the Armenian diaspora around the world. It is what soothes the pain of a lingering and unacknowledged history of genocide. As a result of the machinations of war, and a still palpable series of war crimes in 1915, Armenians today find themselves on a very short list of ethnic groups in the strangest of predicaments: most of the people in the world who identify as Armenian do not live in Armenia.

It is this background that propels so many Armenian people from around the world to get involved with Armenian organisations, to send their children to Armenian Schools, to play for Armenian sporting teams, to continue to dance traditional dances, to play and sing classical music. In recent years, however, there seems to have been a slow but noticeable decline in our commitment to community in Sydney.

Given how important community has been to the diaspora, it seems worth reflecting on what community is, how it works and what our experience of it is.

Some observations about community

Being part of a diaspora is associated with a kind of foundational trauma, one that laments that your home may not be where your heart is.

This fractured identity is felt most harshly by first and second generation migrants, whose stories of ‘back home’ seem so much closer in time and memory. For the oldest generation of migrants, the willingness and ability to be involved in their local Armenian community provides a sense of purpose that protects against feeling lost and alone in a strange place.

For the newest generation of Armenian diaspora, which now represent third and fourth generation migrant families, the purpose of and reason for involvement in community seems more varied and complex. Third and fourth generation diaspora are more settled in their ‘parent home’, partly because it is the only home they have ever known and partly because they are a product of the privileged environment that it has provided.

Today young Armenians ‘get involved’ for a range of reasons, including a sense of obligation to their parents, the desire to meet a partner, a commitment to culture and the preservation of history, a drive to improve and achieve in competitive sport, to develop interpersonal skills, for professional development or to simply make connections they haven’t been able to make elsewhere.

This scattered map of motivations is perhaps why older generations are so worried about why it is so difficult to motivate young people to join the cause. Without a single story or a clearly defined set of ideas to appeal to, the message behind and purpose of community can get lost.

But this fragmentation doesn’t only present obstacles, it also presents opportunities. The more reasons there are that motivate young people to be part of a community, the more ways there are to recruit them.

Some questions about community

One thing that might help provide some clarity is to ask a few questions about what community is. We have traditionally thought of the ‘Sydney Armenian community’ as a single thing. In our contemporary world it may, however, be more accurate to say that, like the reasons that motivate young people to be involved, there are many and various kinds of Armenian communities.

Some, like AGBU, ACYA, AYF, Homenetmen, Hamazkaine and Nor Serount, have long and proud histories. They can be identified by their crests, the school’s they run, the Agoumps they fundraise in, the sports teams they train and the barakhoump’s they teach.
Others are more informal: a group of friends who met at an Armenian event; old school mates who reconnected after years; lovers of Armenian art; the foreign husband baptised by an Armenian priest in order to marry the woman he loves; non-Armenians who are fascinated by Armenian culture. These informal communities cut across the boundaries of the more structured organisations, and sometimes they have nothing to do with them at all.

There is still ample opportunity to display unity, such as in attempts to lobby for recognition of our once forgotten genocide, the safe passage of Armenian refugees from conflicts in other parts of the world and contemporary threats to our homeland. But rather than wishfully insisting that there is only one Armenian community, it is worth acknowledging that our communities are diverse, so that when unity is required everyone feels connected to the cause.

Some personal reflections on community
I don’t blame young Armenians for not wanting to be involved in a cause that seems distant and irrelevant to the way they live their lives. But my own experience has taught me that the day-to-day activities of modern Armenian communities involve much more than mourning the losses of and demanding reparations for the events of 1915.

To me, Armenian community is about building a family of friends that can support us through the challenges of the modern world and help us to find our place within it. Getting involved has brought so many benefits, both for myself and those who surround and support me in my AGBU family.

Sometimes our communities place demands on us that we are not sure we can meet. Yet most of the time, with the help of the family of friends that make up the communities I am part of, I have felt able to rise to the occasion.

Sometimes we get lost in the histories of the crests or the formalities of the committees and community starts to look too much like competition. Yet most of the time those informal communities remind me of the bigger picture.

What does all this mean for the future of community in the Sydney Armenian diaspora? My advice to any young Armenian (or non-Armenian for that matter) who is contemplating joining an Armenian community is to remember that your options are plentiful. Being friends with an Armenian is just as valid as joining a committee. Asking questions about Armenian culture is just as valid as joining the barakhoump. But our communities are struggling, they need committee members and dancers and athletes.

So why not give it a go? You might try it and find out it’s not for you. Then again, you might just have the time of your life.

Kevork Dertadian, Ph.D.
AGBU Youth, Chairman

If you would like to discuss anything in this article, please feel free to contact me at youth@agbu.org.au
25TH ANNIVERSARY
OF INDEPENDENCE OF
ARMENIA & ARTSAKH

Under the auspices of
His Grace Bishop Haigazoun Najarian
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand

Organised by the
25th Anniversary of Independence Commemoration Committee
(Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenian Catholic Church, Armenian Evangelical Church,
Social Democrat Hunchakian Party, Armenian Revolutionary Federation,
Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, Armenian General Benevolent Union,
Hamazkaine Armenian Educational and Cultural Society)

SUNDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2016 at 6.00 P.M.
RYDE CIVIC CENTRE - 1 DEVLIN STREET - RYDE

Keynote Speaker
MR KAYLAR MICHAELIAN
Australia’s Permanent Representative to the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh

With the participation of
ARMENIAN COMMUNITY DANCE GROUPS & ARTISTS

ADMISSION FREE – THE COMMUNITY IS CORDIALLY INVITED

For further details contact: Mr Nishan Basmajian
Mobile: 0413364296 – Email: nishanbasmajian@gmail.com
FATHER’S DAY PICNIC

Sunday, 4 September 2016

Lane Cove National Park

Location: Tunks Hill Picnic Area
Located at the northern end of Riverside Drive.
Best entry from Ryde Road

Time: 11am onwards

Food, Drinks & Sweets will be available for sale by the P&C.

Bring your family and friends
Come along and join in the fun & games!

BYO Table & Chairs

Please Note: In the event of the adverse weather continuing through to Sunday morning, the picnic will be relocated to the school grounds. For confirmation, please contact Natalie ~ 0430 336 696.