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Press Release

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## COAF Raises Over \$8.4 Million to Build 2nd SMART Center in Armenia

**NEW YORK — The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) raised a record-breaking \$8.4+M on December 11, during its second virtual Gala, “Home Is Calling.” Donations will be invested in the construction of a second SMART Center in rural Armenia.**

The second [SMART Center](#) will be built in Armenia’s Armavir region, where COAF began its mission to rebuild the country’s rural communities 18 years ago. By introducing innovative, non-formal educational hubs to rural communities, COAF is accelerating the pace of progress in Armenia’s most disadvantaged regions. The COAF SMART Center currently operating in Lori has already provided crucial education, healthcare, psychological, and social support services to 2,500+ children and their families, across 27 communities. Armavir’s SMART Center will replicate this investment in the education and holistic development of Armenia’s rural families and children, creating economic and social stability, alongside educational opportunities and career resources, in isolated rural communities.

This year’s benefit was met with enormous generosity, including an astounding \$5 million in anonymous donations and stunning commitments from long-time supporters, including the Vahe Fattal Foundation, whose contribution will establish a Digital Design Studio in the Armavir SMART Center. Another \$1 million was gifted by COAF Founder and Chairman Garo Armen.

“Home Is Calling” brought together a community of people dedicated to uplifting Armenia’s youth and investing in the future of the country. Outstanding donations included: Armen and Janette Avanesians and Family, \$150K; JHM Foundation, \$150K; Jack and Zarig Youredjian, \$150K; Peter and Marilyn Sarkesian / Ajemian Foundation, \$105K; Victor Zarougian and Judith Saryan, \$100K (\$50K supporting COAF’s expansion into Artsakh); Anonymous, \$100K; Haig and Hilda Manjikian, \$100K; and Michael Panosian / ToughBuilt Industries, \$100K. Further contributions were made by Tacori and Levon Travel, who donated two extraordinary pieces of jewelry and a \$1,000 travel



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voucher for COAF's raffle. Pledges also came in from students in COAF's beneficiary communities and children as young as seven.

This year's benefit was co-hosted by Araksya Karapetyan of Good Day L.A. on FOX 11 Los Angeles, COAF Head of Development Haig Boyadjian, world-renowned auctioneer Gabriel Butu, USArmenia television anchor Armine Amiryan, and Tony Award winner Andrea Martin. Entertainment included musical performances by opera singer Gurgen Baveyan, the piano duet Aida Avanesyan and Svetlana Hakobyan, the talented Aghvan Papoyan and Arthur Mnatsakanyan, local artist Gor Sujyan, and the Carpet Jam family of musicians. A string of celebrities made guest appearances, including award-winning actor Ed Harris, New York Times bestselling author Chris Bohjalian, California State Assembly Member Adrin Nazarian, famous poet and writer Peter Balakian, Nobel laureate Ardem Patapoutian, comedic actress and playwright Lory Tatoulian, actor Garik Papoyan, comedian and writer Vahe Berberian, and California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara.

If you missed the show, stream a recording of the show at [givebutter.com/homeiscalling](https://givebutter.com/homeiscalling), or [watch](#) Araksya Karapetyan of Good Day L.A. recap the event below, and consider supporting COAF's mission to advance the children of Armenia.

### **About COAF**

*The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that employs community-led approaches aimed at improving the quality of life in rural Armenia, with a particular focus on children and youth. COAF's target development areas are education, healthcare, social and economic development. COAF launched its programs in 2004, starting in one village and expanding to 64 villages in Armavir, Aragatsotn, Lori, Gegharkunik, Shirak, and Tavush regions, impacting more than 107,000 beneficiaries.*

*Since 2015, COAF has developed and started implementing the SMART Initiative. COAF SMART is designed to advance a generation across the rural world through education that will benefit individuals, societies, and the environment. As an exemplary model of development, COAF SMART will be replicated in other regions and communities throughout Armenia. The first COAF SMART Center was inaugurated on May 27, 2018, near the village of Debet, Lori Region.*