

Press release

14.09.2018

## Australian Chess Master to Bike Through Historic Armenia in Support of COAF

YEREVAN — Arianne Caoili, wife of Armenian Chess Grandmaster Levon Aronian, will embark on a 2-week cycling tour throughout Cilicia, Anatolia and northern Iran this month. Arianne will start her journey from the medieval Armenian port city of Ayas in Cilicia on September 21 and will finish the trek in the town of Agarak located on the Armenian-Iranian border. Born in Manila, Arianne Caoili moved to Armenia in 2013 and has been engaged in various entrepreneurial and philanthropic initiatives. The Australian chess player, born to a Dutch mother and Filipino father, was awarded the title of Woman International Master (WIM) by FIDE and has competed in seven Women's Chess Olympiads.

Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) is an organization dear to Arianne's heart since it is committed to improving the lives of children throughout rural Armenia by giving them opportunities for advancement. Arianne has always been passionate about helping children, especially with regard to education, music and disabilities. The biking tour's fundraising goal of \$5,500 USD will allow COAF to expand its athletic programs for youth living in 6 villages of Armenia's Tavush region. Funds will go toward establishing clubs and much needed sporting equipment and salaries for coaches. Tavush, located on the border with Azerbaijan, is prone to sporadic attacks and is in vital need of programs aimed at revitalizing the region and giving youth newfound opportunities and health-oriented activities.

Caoili has utilized her professional background in public and private sector consulting as an advisor to the Armenian government. In 2015, she established Armenia's first boutique strategy consulting firm, Akron Consulting, which specializes in business and public policy advising. She is also owner and editor-in-chief of Champord, the only free, mass-distributed newspaper in the Caucasus region, with the largest print run in Armenia. She serves as chairman of the board for the Champord Fund, an organization invested in the development of civil society and the training of young Armenian journalists. Arianne is currently the CEO of one of Armenia's largest alcohol distributors, 40 Degrees, a fast-growing, unique and novel start-up which she founded 3 years ago.

Arianne's cycling expedition will be documented by GoPro action cameras and journalists who will accompany her. Converse Bank has agreed to cover some of the expenses Arianne will incur on her trip. COAF will regularly share footage of Arianne on the road via its social media outlets. Stopping points on the route include Adana, Sis, Gaziantep, Tarsus, Urfa, Diyarbakir, Van, Doğubayazıt, and Maku. "I am excited to explore the rich history and amazing culture of medieval and ancient Armenia. Throughout the cycling tour I will encounter the vestiges of Hellenistic and Roman empires in Armenia. Further afield we will discover ancient cultures and temples that predate recorded history," stated Caoili in a recent interview.

**Support Arianne Caoili's biking tour for COAF #bike4coaf.**



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*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 44 villages in Armavir, Aragatsotn, Lori, Gegharkunik, Shirak and Tavush regions, impacting over 75,000 people.*

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