

## **COAF Annual Gala raises record 4,1 million USD**

YEREVAN, DECEMBER 21, ARMENPRESS. During the 15th annual Gala of the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), which aims at holding fundraising for the future educational, healthcare, social and economic innovative programs in Armenia's rural communities, 4.1 million USD has been donated which will serve for the replenishment of the COAF Smart Center and will be available to nearly 150.000 residents of Lori province, reports Armenpress.

“It was an impressive evening, and we are delighted by the support of the Diaspora and our global family, with the people who for 15 years deeply believed and provided donation to the COAF mission. This enables us to expand our activity by serving 150.000 residents of already 100 communities. Moreover, the recent peaceful revolution [in Armenia] further highlights the COAF fundamental values by instilling democracy and freedom for the citizen to determine his/her future”, COAF founder and executive director Garo Armen said.

Asbarez reports Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress Andrea Martin served as the evening's producer and host; renowned art world figure Tony Shafrazi was the honorary chair. World renowned auctioneer Simon de Pury conducted the auction. Honorees included President of the Carnegie Corporation Vartan Gregorian and the late Clare Russel Gregorian and the iconic entertainer Charles Aznavour, who passed away in October 2018.

A significant component of the evening was a live art auction guided by Gala Honorary Chair Tony Shafrazi, one of the art world's most prominent figures.

COAF ambassador Andrea Martin once again hosted this year's gala. The Andrea Martin Performing Arts Auditorium, located in the COAF SMART Center, was named after the Emmy and Tony Award-winning Armenian-American actress in appreciation of her love and support for the children of Armenia.

COAF's Humanitarian Award was presented to Vartan Gregorian (president of the Carnegie Corporation) and his late wife Clare Gregorian, who was a founding COAF board member. Nine college scholarships were established for COAF youth in Armenia in appreciation of Clare Gregorian's dedication.



Vartan Gregorian has served as an adviser to the COAF Board for several years. Prior to his current position, which he assumed in 1997, Gregorian served as the president of the New York Public Library, and later as the president of Brown University. He has been decorated by various governments, including over seventy honorary degrees.

Attendees also heard an inspiring speech from a young teenager by the name of Marina Mirzoyan from the COAF-supported village of Hatsik. Marina is currently a study exchange student in Colorado and who has excelled in English language programs offered by COAF at her local school. She spoke on gaining confidence and not being afraid to fail as a result of COAF's impact on her life. The evening also featured performances by two teenaged musicians from Armenia. Armen Puchinyan (piano) and Armen Daghents (saxophone) moved guests with both classical and popular pieces.

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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.