



Press Release

June 17, 2024

COAF Board Member and Acclaimed Actor Joe Manganiello Takes Pilgrimage to Armenia

Yerevan, Armenia – The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) is proud to announce a significant achievement. Actor, producer, director, author, and reality competition host, Joe Manganiello recently embarked on a deeply personal and transformative journey – a pilgrimage to his ancestral homeland of Armenia.

Upon an invitation from Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), the acclaimed actor, who received the prestigious Humanitarian Award at COAF's 20th Anniversary Gala in New York last year, visited the small, landlocked country to embrace his Armenian heritage and reconnect with his maternal roots.

Manganiello's decision to embark on the pilgrimage was born from profound introspection and a desire to deepen his sense of identity. While delving into the rich tapestry of his Armenian ancestry, he sought to weave the threads of the past into the fabric of his present.

Manganiello has publicly shared his family's story as a way to help heal generational trauma and validate the atrocities that took place against the Armenians in 1915. A survivor of the Armenian Genocide, his maternal great-grandmother, Terviz "Rose" Darakjian gave birth to Joe's grandmother Sirarpi in a refugee camp. The actor set forth on the journey with deep reverence for their legacy.

The intensely personal journey gave Manganiello a chance to walk in his ancestors' footsteps, visit the places that shaped his family history, and connect with the culture, traditions, and people integral to his identity.

Along with his girlfriend Caitlin O'Connor and pet dog Bubbles, Manganiello toured Armenia for 10 days in May, taking in the country's rich history, breathtaking landscapes, and vibrant cultural canvas. From its bustling capital city of Yerevan to the serene monasteries and lush valleys, Armenia captivated the actor's soul.



After touring Yerevan's Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Manganiello planted a tree at the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial complex in honor of Terviz and Sirapri, not only to commemorate his great-grandmother and grandmother as victims and survivors but also to symbolize life, renewal, and the enduring human spirit.

Among the trip's highlights was a visit to the state-of-the-art COAF SMART Center in the Lori region of Armenia. At one of COAF's Child and Family Centers in Armavir, Manganiello joined children in a finger painting activity and learned about the many services provided to rural families. He attended dinner at Armenian President Vahagn Khachaturyan's private residence, and met with Zareh Sinanyan, High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs.

Manganiello's journey was not just a trip through a country but a passage through time, offering insights into an ancient civilization that has withstood centuries and attempts at cultural erasure. Joe left Armenia having discovered a hidden gem, where history and modernity coexist in harmony, as well as an important part of himself.

About Joe Manganiello:

Actor, producer, director, published author, Emmy winning voice actor, and reality competition host, Joe Manganiello holds a BFA in acting from The Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama. He can most recently be seen as the host of NBC's brand-new hit series DEAL OR NO DEAL ISLAND, which was just renewed for a second season.

Last year, he starred opposite Uma Thurman and Samuel L. Jackson in the feature film THE KILL ROOM & he is currently putting the finishing touches on the Official 50 Year History of Dungeons & Dragons documentary series he directed and produced for eOne and Wizards of the Coast/Hasbro, set for release sometime next year.

As an actor, Manganiello is probably best known for his roles as the werewolf Alcide Herveaux on HBO's TRUE BLOOD, as Big Dick Richie in Steven Soderbergh's MAGIC MIKE & MAGIC MIKE XXL, as Pee Wee Herman's best friend in PEE WEE'S BIG HOLIDAY, and as super-villain DEATHSTROKE in Zack Snyder's JUSTICE LEAGUE. He occasionally returns to his roots on stage, the last time being a Yale Repertory production of A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE in which he played Stanley Kowalski. He will next be seen opposite Vince Vaughn, Susan Sarandon, and Lorraine Bracco in the



comedy film NONNAS, set to be released later this year.

He financed, produced & directed the award-winning documentary LA BARE, and produced & starred in the films BOTTOM OF THE 9TH, SHOPLIFTERS OF THE WORLD, and ARCHENEMY.

Other roles include SABOTAGE, THE SPINE OF NIGHT, SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE, Sam Raimi's SPIDER-MAN, ONE TREE HILL, WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING, MYTHIC QUEST, ER, & HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER.

Aside from his film work, Manganiello has worked over the years as a paid consultant for Dungeons & Dragons which led to him being recruited to write and develop their New York bestselling series of novels, DRAGONLANCE for TV/streaming as a showrunner. He serves on the board at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

About COAF

The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization 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, as well as social and economic development. COAF launched its programs in 2004, starting in one village and expanding to over 82 villages and communities across the country with an investment of more than \$70 million, impacting well over 100,000 people across rural Armenia.

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