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AGBU Continues to Invest in Creating Generations of Talented Young Armenians

College-age students gain valuable experience in Armenia and throughout the diaspora

Every year, AGBU offers a spectacular array of programs that not only help Armenian youth prepare for successful careers, but also allow them to become better acquainted with what it means to be Armenian in the 21st century. In summer 2016, Armenians in their teens and twenties packed their business attire, instruments and shovels for internship, musical and community service programs that took them around the globe to help them understand themselves and their heritage even better.

New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP)

In 2016, the New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP) was comprised on 32 interns who spent their summer gaining professional experience and connecting with their Armenian heritage. As the first of the organization's cadre of internship programs, NYSIP empowers young Armenians to achieve success by providing meaningful, purpose-driven professional opportunities.

This year, interns arrived from Canada, France, Lebanon, Russia, the United Kingdom and throughout the United States to spend the summer contributing to their professional development and enhancing their involvement in the Armenian community. During the eight-week program, participants worked in various fields at prestigious companies and organizations, including Cushman and Wakefield, Lincoln Center, Merrill Lynch Private Wealth Management, Mirrorball, the Near East Foundation, NewsDeeply and Slalom Consulting.

Andre Amirsaleh, a student at Bucknell University, interned at the web development company 1over0, where he learned about the inner-workings of web design: “My favorite accomplishment this summer was building a website from the ground up. I was able to understand the whole process, from fundamentals to design details, and I can now even teach someone else. My internship with NYSIP has taught me so much more about the industry than I ever imagined, and because of my internship, I know I want to begin my career in this industry.”

Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP)

The Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP) welcomed 18 diasporan Armenians for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build their resumes, while immersing themselves in a full schedule of educational, cultural and social activities throughout Armenia. The program provides students with an edge in a new global market by offering them hands-on, international work experience in their field of study, while giving them the opportunity to develop closer ties to their heritage and a professional network of peers in the worldwide Armenian diaspora.

In its tenth year, YSIP gave participants from Armenia, France, Italy, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States exposure to an international setting that helped cultivate a cross-cultural perspective for interns, who worked in a number of premier state and private institutions and organizations, including the Arabkir Medical Center, Deem Communications, Interpol Armenia, KPMG, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN Kolba Lab and “Storaket” Architectural Studio.

Summer 2016 also marked the establishment of the Dikran Knadjian Medical Internship at Queens’ College in Cambridge, England, which will allow one medical student a year to pursue a fully-funded internship in Armenia. The program’s first student, Benjamin Devoy, did his internship at the Heratsi Hospital Complex №1 under the supervision of Dr. Hamayak Sisakyan: “The past six weeks have been priceless. I’ve learned so much, both about medicine and about Armenia, especially the differences between hospitals in Armenia and the UK. I’m so glad that I was given the opportunity to come to Armenia and experience a whole new world. I’ll always have a place in my heart for Armenia,” said Devoy.

London Summer Internship Program (LSIP)

2016 was the second year of the London Summer Internship Program (LSIP), which placed 13 students from Argentina, Armenia, Canada, China, Greece, Lebanon and the United States in internships at leading companies and organization, including Amber Capital, Backes & Strauss, Gumuchdjian Architects, HantecFx, OTS Solicitors, Tateossian Group and Tufenkian Artisan Carpets.

In addition to their daily work schedules, the AGBU LSIP interns took trips to iconic landmarks in the United Kingdom, such as the London Eye, Big Ben, the Tower of London and St Paul’s Cathedral. They also spent a day at Oxford where they learned about the history of the city and visited some the university’s colleges.

For Grace Torossian, a student at the University of Michigan, LSIP proved to be a transformational summer: “This program has been one of the best experiences of my life. Aside from the work experience, the friendships I have created with this group of

Armenian young professionals will surely last a lifetime. I am honored to have been able to be a part of AGBU's renowned program, especially in its early stages. This internship has made me a more well-rounded individual, which will help me in all aspects of life."

Discover Armenia

In its thirteenth year, Discover Armenia brought 21 high school students to Armenia for a three-week program as both volunteers and visitors. The young adults arrived from Belgium, Canada, France, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States to reconnect with their ancestral homeland and participate in different projects aimed at local development, all while having fun and making memories that will last a lifetime.

Throughout the program, Discover Armenia participants visited sights in all regions of Armenia as well as Nagorno-Karabakh, spending three days constructing a house for a family in need in the village of Varsar in partnership with Fuller Center for Housing Armenia and visiting an orphanage in Vanadzor to entertain children with games and sports competitions. They also visited the AGBU Armenia headquarters and served lunch to pensioners at the AGBU Nork Senior Dining Center. Another highlight of the program was climbing Mount Aragats with Ara Khatchadourian, who reached the top of Mount Everest in April to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. All participants received 40 hours of community service credit that they can now present to their high schools and universities.

Discover Armenia participants all left the country feeling more attached to Armenia and their Armenian culture: "I couldn't have asked for a better trip. I feel I have accomplished so much in such a short period of time, from climbing a mountain to singing a solo in a language I don't even know. I'd like to thank all the staff who helped organize this trip for making it one of the best holidays ever," said 16-year-old Berge Schembri of the United Kingdom.

Musical Armenia Program (MAP)

For the past five years, the Musical Armenia Program (MAP) has been uniting talented musicians and music lovers in Yerevan and fostering the Armenian musical tradition in participants from various backgrounds. This year, 10 participants from Argentina, the Netherlands, Russia, Sri Lanka, Syria, and the United States traveled to Armenia and were brought closer to the artistic heritage of the Armenian people.

The three-week program included a diverse array of activities for these high-caliber musicians. Musically, participants perfected their craft through one-on-one lessons with renowned professors from the Komitas State Music Conservatory, studied the repertoire of Armenian music on their own instruments and gave a final performance at the AGBU Yerevan Hall in the Gala Concert at the end of the program. Each year, MAP offers 14 lectures on the ancient Armenian notational system [khaz] in addition to Armenian musical history from medieval to contemporary. In addition to the final Gala Concert, participants performed regularly at various local venues and festivals, attended several auditions, and participated in master classes by renowned musicians.

Renowned Sri Lankan violinist Dinesh Subasinghe was part of the 2016 MAP cohort and gained a new appreciation for Armenian music: "MAP is an enormous and practical program, because if you want to learn the music, you have to learn the culture and history

of the country. I was lucky to have such exceptional teachers, who cared about us and gave us affection. I really loved this program and want Armenian music to develop, because Armenia has something deeply touching in soul.”

For more information on AGBU programs for young adults, please visit <http://agbu.org/programs/> (<http://agbu.org/programs/>)

Established in 1906, AGBU (www.agbu.org (<http://www.agbu.org>)) is the world's largest non-profit Armenian organization. Headquartered in New York City, AGBU preserves and promotes the Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs, annually touching the lives of some 500,000 Armenians around the world.

For more information about AGBU and its worldwide programs, please visit www.agbu.org (<http://www.agbu.org>)