

## **2025 ACYOA GENERAL ASSEMBLY & SPORTS WEEKEND**

*Contributor: Lisa Mardigian*

Our ACYOA Seniors hosted the 2025 ACYOA General Assembly and Sports Weekend that took place Friday, May 23, to Monday, May 26. They welcomed close to 200 ACYOA Seniors and clergy from across the Eastern Diocese. The weekend was a joyous reunion for many and the perfect opportunity to meet new people. The goal of the steering committee was to showcase our beautiful parish and community while providing an amazing experience for our young adults.

All weekend package participants were gifted a Detroit tote bag filled with fun goodies including a deck of cards, snacks, drinks, candy, cheereg bites donated by Kristine Andonian and homemade toffee donated by Anahit Dilakian. Thank you to Andrew Shoushanian for his guidance with our merchandise/apparel and to all who donated toward the welcome bags!!

The weekend commenced on Friday with the ACYOA General Assembly, presided over by His Grace Bishop Mesrop Parsamyan, along with clergy, delegates, and observers from across the Eastern Diocese, which hosted more than 40 delegates, observers, and clergy for a day of fruitful discussions and elections for the ACYOA Central Council, Auditing Committee, and Nominating Committee. Newly elected to the 2025-2026 ACYOA Central Council are Peter Bogosian (Secretary), Lori Dorian (Ministries & Outreach), Shahe Der Torossian (Ministries & Outreach), and Alternate Alex Madajian. Remaining on the Council are St. John's own Mara Najarian (Chair), Alisha Panthier (Vice Chair), Dn. Garen Megrđichian (Treasurer), and Sarah Tavitian (Communications). The ACYOA Central Council sends its heartfelt gratitude to outgoing members Ani Misirliyan, Jackie Russell, and Andrew Yenigag for their many years of dedicated service to the ACYOA and the Armenian Church.

During the General Assembly Primate's Luncheon, several awards were presented by the ACYOA Central Council to individuals and chapters for their service and dedication to the ACYOA and the Armenian Church.

- ACYOA Seniors Chapter A Award - St. James ACYOA (Watertown, MA)
- Sam Nersesian Service Award - Yn. Lucine Sabounjian (Holy Resurrection, New Britain, CT)
- Gregory Arpajian Leadership Award - Maria Panthier (St. Gregory the Illuminator, Chicago, IL)
- Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Melkonian Award - Rev. Fr. Hratch Sargsyan (St. Gregory of Narek, Richmond Heights, OH)
- Rev. Fr. Haroutiun & Yn. Patricia Dagley Award - Paul Andonian (St. John, Southfield, MI)

We appreciate Joy Callan for coordinating the continental breakfast for our delegates and priests and to Jackie and Faouzi ElChemmas for preparing the delicious lunch hosted by our Primate. Participants enjoyed strolling through the Alex & Marie Manoogian Museum with Lucy Ardash and docents to answer any questions.

On Friday evening, over 200 young adults gathered from near and far at Fifth Avenue in Royal Oak for billiards and dancing to the music of DJ Esso, in anticipation of Saturday's sports competition.

Saturday morning, athletes boarded buses early to head to Groves High School for a full day's schedule of sports competitions that included men's basketball, women's basketball, co-ed volleyball, pickleball, backgammon, and eSports. In true St. John's hospitality, participants were treated to breakfast, lunch, and snacks throughout the day graciously prepared and provided by Maral and Brian Thomas. Athletes enjoyed preparing blankets for World Medical Relief under the direction of Carol Ohanessian and Linda Lutz. Thank you to Anahid Movsesian and Dr. Alec Kurjian as our medics for the day and to sports committee members Andrew Boskovich, Dikran Callan, and Armen Oknayan and all who helped sports run smoothly!!!

Saturday evening, patrons partied downtown Detroit at the Little Caesars Arena Biergarten with a lively night of dancing featuring The Nigosian Band and DJ Mkey. Thank you to Laura Lucassian and David Najarian who rode the buses all evening with our youth!

The pews were filled with ACYOA Seniors from across the Eastern Diocese Sunday morning for Badarak, which concluded with the ACYOA Central Council installation. Everyone was treated to a delicious brunch prepared by the St. John Women's Guild before the sports finals! Thank you to our Woman's Guild members Sara Andonian, Denise Boyagian, Yeretzgin Roberta Kochakian, Donna Lafian, Karen Mangune and Dr. Joyce Yeghissian and all their volunteers! All enjoyed the sports finals following the brunch in our newly refurbished gymnasium. We appreciate Dr. Joyce Yeghissian for volunteering her time and talent for medical assistance.

Sunday evening began with a special ACYOA Alumni Cocktail Hour featuring a lavish mezza and ample time to mingle and reminisce. The attendees especially loved a video collage showcasing ACYOA memories! Thank you to Karen Kazarian and Kim Najarian for co-chairing this alumni event!

Next came the Awards Dinner and Banquet, where everyone enjoyed an elaborate buffet dinner before the awards were presented by Surpazan Mesrob Parsamyan.

- Outstanding Sportsmanship: Male: Michael Rose and Female: Sarah Babikian
- Co-ed Volleyball: Champions: Chicagoland, IL, and Runner Up: Holy Martyrs, Bayside, NY
- Women's Basketball: Champions: St. John, Southfield, MI, and Runner Up: Chicagoland, IL
- Men's Basketball: Champions: Chicagoland, IL, and Runner Up: St. John, Southfield, MI
- Pickleball: Champions: Celene Philip and Michael Armen Kadian, and Runner Up: Peter Crane and Michael Nersesian
- Backgammon Champion: Tadeh Derstepanian, and Runner up: Andrew Yenicag
- Mario Kart: Champion: Eric Trimble, and Runner Up: Nick Sarafian
- Super Smash Bros: Champion: Andrew Boskovich and Runner Up: Christian Khachian

The Hamazkayin Dance Ensemble took center stage before the dance floor filled with everyone all night long, enjoying music from the Yerakouyn Band and DJs MKay and Ezzo. As the evening progressed, the church lobby was dressed with a sprawling desert table that could fulfill any sweet tooth!! Our ACYOA also enjoyed their midnight snack treat of sliders and French fries!!! Congrats to the banquet committee Marilyn Dadian, Laura Mardigian, Maral Mamassian, Liz Oknayan and Laurie Reizian for chairing this amazing celebration!

Our Steering Committee included V. Rev. Fr. Aren Jebejian, Paul Andonian, Lisa Mardigian, Mara Najarian, Talia Oknayan, Armen Arslanian, and Celene Philip. A very special thank-you to Jennifer Morris for her invaluable guidance and help throughout the planning and the entire weekend.

The Pastor and the Steering Committee would also like to thank all the individuals who contributed their time, talent and treasure toward the success of the weekend, along with sincere gratitude for the support of generous benefactors Marie Vanerian and Michael Artinian (Swift Home Loans).