

Spitak YMCA Newsletter 2020

Intensive garden & greenhouse

01.01.2020-31.12.2020

In the spring we gave another impetus to the development of an intensive garden-greenhouse. It seemed that this was the only one of our works that could not be stopped by the epidemic, we would work as we do every year. But luck did not smile on us here. Due to the unexpected snowfall in April, most of the trees in the garden were damaged, as well as a large



number of pillars and the hail protection net. The scene, to put it mildly, was one of the worst. It's awful when you wake up in the morning, see the snow outside the window in the middle of spring, immediately rush to the garden, hoping that everything is fine there, but you see the awful. The blossoming trees lay on the snow, covered with huge pillars and a net. It was as if a part of you had been killed. For three years we cherished those trees and the garden like a child, rejoicing in every grain of their harvest.

And behold, some of the little ones are no more! You inadvertently wanted to cry when you saw that picture.

Has this year decided to destroy everything, will we not be able to do anything? No, nothing can break us. We will continue to cherish what we have. And so, gradually we restored a certain part, we continued to cultivate the trees that did not have time to suffer from the cold and snow. We planted tomato seedlings in the greenhouse



and went back to our normal work in the garden. We got a pretty good crop from the existing farm, which we used to feed the patients. apples, pears, raspberries, tomatoes. We used tomatoes



to make tomato paste, which we also used to make dishes.

Everything would be better if it were not for the damage caused by the weather, but we are satisfied with everything we have been able to work out.

In 2021 we will restore all the damages, we will continue to flourish the only & unique intensive

garden in our region.

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COVID 19

At the beginning of 2020, the whole world was shocked by a new type of virus, which spread under the name of Covid 19. With the spread of the virus, life seems to have stopped all over the world. Quarantine eliminated all contact with each other, depriving them of even the opportunity to work.



We present the speech of Alvard Mkrtchyan, Director of Spitak YMCA, on the current situation.

- As the number of patients increased, the number of medical institutions treating them also increased. And so, in July, Spitak Medical Center became a hospital for the treatment of patients with covid. It was necessary to provide food for those patients & medical staff - breakfast, lunch & dinner. The Ministry of Health could trust all this only to its experienced master team. For that, a competition was held, in which we, the Spitak YMCA, participated. As a result, Spitak YMCA won that competition and took on the difficult responsibility of serving patient food.

This was very important in

several ways. First of all, the issue of providing our employees with jobs was solved again, secondly, the organization continued to work and do something useful in this difficult situation, which, most importantly, we gained a lot of experience in this field, which we are sure will be quite useful for us in the future. while providing services.

We were working on a rather busy schedule, because everything had to be in perfect condition. As the director of the organization, I was entrusted with a very responsible job; I had no right to fail, especially since this was our first experience in this field.



There were many nuances that needed to be followed. In addition to covid 19, many had other illnesses that caused certain foods to be banned, and special foods had to be served. We had to follow all the sanitary rules, everything had to be in perfect condition, especially in case there was a "danger" of us getting infected at any moment. And we could not serve in such a situation. All this was possible for me

first of all, because the service provider must first be satisfied with his own work, with what he has provided. At first I wondered how I would feel when I took sick time to open such a package of food. Would it be nice for me to serve such a quality, would that food be delicious for me? And when I saw that it was really tasty and the package looked great, I realized that any patient would like such a food package. After all, when people get sick, they become more vulnerable, any kind of attention is needed for them. And imagine how nice it is to see how well you are treated □ that even the food is prepared in such a way that it is not only delicious, but also pleasantly aesthetic.

We continued to provide the service until August 31, after which the medical institution stopped treating



people with coronavirus infection, because there was no need for it

anymore.

It seemed that everything was over, we would soon return to our normal work, the world would finally get rid of this evil, but before the first stage was over, the second came. In mid-October, Spitak Medical Center again became an institution for the treatment of infected patients of Covid 19. This time, without any competition, the RA Ministry of Health expressed its confidence in Spitak YMCA to provide food service to patients once again. This proves that the service we provided was really at a high level, we fully fulfilled our duty, and the Ministry of Health was very satisfied with the work we did.



And so, this time we already did our job with a more skilled, experienced way. We already knew all the nuances, we already knew what they wanted from us, what they expected, what we would give. Our day passed without tension or unnecessary worries. True, of course there was the same sense of responsibility, there was the same anxiety to do everything right, but there was also the calmness to master it all.

During the second year, but that was not the end. recover soon or no one will have ones at a certain distance, in an

The success of any work and pleasure. And whether we love is the same, we want to former work. We want to live healthy and happy.



wave, we continued to serve the medical facility until the end of the That evil is still alive! Let's hope that it will end soon, people will to communicate with his close atmosphere of fear.

depends on doing it with love have done everything with great return to our former life, to our and work where everyone is



Tennis Championship

Every year in Spitak YMCA a "table tennis" professional-amateur championship is organized, in which our participants of the "table tennis" program participate, as well as all those who come from Spitak and other cities. Anyone interested in the



championship is a audience. But this year it would be just a luxury for us. We could not organize such a championship because of the epidemic, but our participants did not want to miss this year, they wanted to organize even a closed championship. We met them and organized a "Closed Table Tennis



Championship 2020" for our beneficiaries participating in the program. Even though the championship was closed and only the spectators were us, nevertheless everything passed in a very interesting, warm atmosphere. The game was friendly, and we just do not want to mention winners and losers. The company won. The rest is in the pictures.

Grape blessing in Spitak YMCA

The Feast of the Transfiguration of the Holy Virgin is known as the Blessing of the Grapes. It is the fourth of the five pavilion feasts of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the oldest of the feasts dedicated to Our Lady. Every year it is celebrated on the Sunday around August 15.

We did not celebrate this holiday at Spitak YMCA, as it coincided with the main holiday season, when most of the projects were down and only a few of the staff were working. However, there was no specific working

-non-working period for us this year. Everything was mixed up. It coincided with the time when we provided food



service for people with Covid. Along with all that, we wanted our daily life to change in some way. Celebrating one of

the pavilion holidays will make us feel lighter.

And so, we invited Spitak St. The priest of the Church of the Resurrection, Father Hovsep, who came with one of the ministers of the church to perform the Blessing of the Grapes. It was a pleasure to be so close during those difficult days of the epidemic. After the ceremony we tasted the fresh Armenian grapes and started performing our duties again.

The war, the Armenians of Artsakh, us

"2020 did not stop slapping us with its blows. Slap so hard that for a long time, or maybe we will never be able to wake up. It was the most difficult, cruel and terrible year for the Armenians living in this period. One of the pages of our life that we want to delete irrevocably, delete so that it does not come back, others will never be '2020s'."

The third Artsakh war started



on September 27. It seemed that we could only hear, see, or read about such



wars. We could never have imagined that it could happen to us, that we could witness the catastrophe that would destroy thousands of young lives, make thousands of families miserable, leave thousands eternally waiting, rob us of our happiness, and leave us with a sense of guilt, of guilt, which is felt by any Armenian who lives now, lives

thinking that he lives instead of one of the young lives he did not live. Now even when talking about all that, I find it quite difficult, because with each letter I start to drown in memories. My throat suffocates the feeling of pain, regret, powerlessness. Why did it happen, why were we all incapable of all that?

The situation was really terrible and indescribable for all of us, all over the country. No one was able to work or do anything else. We just froze, we did not even communicate with family members. All we had to do was wait for the news on the Internet or in front of the TV. We hoped that this news would not be about another

casualty and another shelling, but we were holding our breath every second waiting for that news to be about the end of the war. That was all we prayed for every day. Relying on God has become our only hope.

But there came a time when people really needed our help, we could not help but offer it. During the war,



the peaceful population of Artsakh was targeted, after which the people of Artsakh were transported to Armenia, and organizations and individuals helped them by providing them with shelter, clothing and food. I talked about all this, about the situation with our partner Zurich YMCA, and, as always, I received their support. With the funding of the Zurich YMCA, we received four families from Artsakh in the YMCA from October 5. We provided them with daily stuff and clothes. We tried to organize a part of their daily entertainment by involving them in everything we did at YMCA. We thank our volunteer group for all that. Our volunteers spared no effort

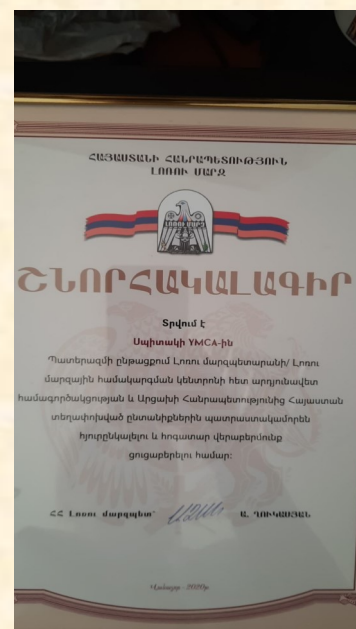
and energy to make the day of the people of Artsakh a little colorful, that those colors had disappeared in all of us. All that was around us was white and white, darkness and gloom, the lights had gone out, life had become meaningless and empty. What, we became close in a very short time. They seem to have become part of our YMCA family. We spent most of our day with each other. We helped and encouraged each other in difficult situations. At a time when our men were fighting for life and death on the battlefield, we tried to at least joke, talk, communicate, engage a little in distraction, distract each other, try to find some glimmer of hope. But that external mask, of course, simply covered up the grief and anxiety in our hearts. After all, every second Armenian family had its own soldier on the border of the homeland □ One is a father, the other is a son, the third is a husband, the fourth is a loved one, a brother, a friend, and so on. Even the one who had no relatives on the front line, mourned, worried, hurt, feared for everyone, because everyone was ours, our SOLDIER, DEFENDER, HOPE FOR THE FUTURE. Each time we read about a new victim, when we saw pictures of them, we became even more upset and hated life for its brutality. After all, in the eyes of those soldiers we saw a whole life, we saw dreams, a future □□□ And it all faded in just a second. Everything was lost, everything around became empty and colorless, as the boys took the light with them. And it will

start again, but it will not shine as brightly as it did before. It will pierce with its light, reminding us that it is THEY, up there, watching over us so that we can live righteously, to be the



worthy successor of them.

Our new friends did not miss every moment to thank us, they said that we really give them light in that darkness. It was a great responsibility for us to accept them. We were vulnerable, but they were even more vulnerable. They had seen the war with their own eyes,



they had seen the destroyed cities, the people wounded and killed by the explosion, they had heard the sound of bullets, they had looked into the eyes of death and left

their homes. It is one thing to hear about all this, it is another thing to see with your own eyes, to feel on your own skin. Realizing all this, we had to be quite careful with our guests, talk, act in a way that did not hurt or offend them. Among them were grandparents, middle-aged people, young people and children. The age group was wide. With the help of our staff and volunteers we tried to do everything to create comfort for all of them. Volunteers organized walks for the young, the playroom of the childcare program served for the entertainment of the children, and the middle-aged and older worked with us in the kitchen to prepare food for the sick.

The war ended on November 10, but our guest houses were destroyed, they could not return to Artsakh so soon. That is why they continued to stay with us for a while. We said goodbye to the first group on November 24, and the second group will leave us at the beginning of next year. The words of gratitude that our guests said to us before leaving are indescribable. In that short time we became so close that the farewell turned out to be quite touching. We hope to meet again, but this time just to see each other and ask for help. Let no one else ever see all this, let what has happened never happen again, let us only flourish and become stronger. From now on, let all our hearts be troubled only while waiting for the first cry of a child, and not while reading the list of the next victims. Let us live in peace all over the world. >>

□- Alvard Mkrtchyan

Autumn 2020

The 2020 was devoid of the pleasant moments that were created during children's events. We missed the equally innocent and beautiful performances of those innocent



children. As we sat as spectators and listened to the loud sound coming from their small bodies, the whole hall rang, now we were moved by every word

they uttered, because they did it all because of us, they grew before our eyes.

Missing all that, but not having the opportunity to implement it, we decided to change the colors of YMCA in the fall. As the childcare program did not work, but we still had children from Artsakh, we decided to organize a small event dedicated to autumn with their help. Our conductors taught the children beautiful poems dedicated to the fall and songs, and their parents and YMCA staff introduced themselves as spectators. Everyone was very excited. They came from the village of Hadrut in Artsakh,

they had never seen anything like it, the children had never participated in events. That is why the excitement was greater and the excitement indescribable.

We hope that in 2021 we will fill that gap. We will organize many,



many events with the children of the Childcare program.

Installation of solar waterheaters in Spitak YMCA

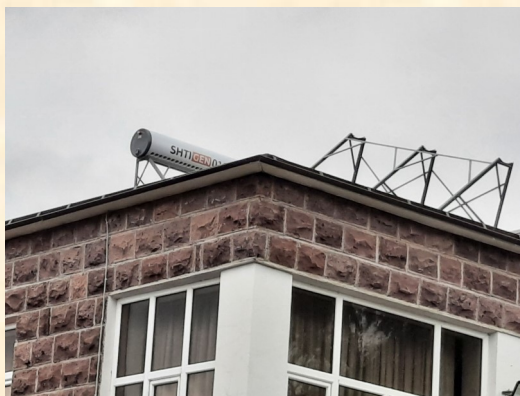
During the war, when various organizations provided shelter to a number of families from Artsakh, as a thank you, the regional administration wanted to do something useful for those organizations. And that it was installation of solar water heaters.

The Lori regional administration installed a 300-liter three



water heaters in Spitak YMCA with UN funding.

These water heaters have significantly reduced the financial costs of Spitak YMCA. We are grateful to the Lori regional administration, as well as to the UN, for their support and assistance.





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