

**St. Leon Armenian Church  
ACYOA SENIORS**

**2017 ACYOA General Assembly & Sports Weekend  
COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Submitted by:  
St. Leon ACYOA Seniors  
2017 General Assembly & Sports Weekend Committee  
Rev. Fr. Diran Bohajian, Pastor**

**2017 ACYOA General Assembly & Sports Weekend  
Committee Report**

## **Introduction:**

The ACYOA Seniors of St. Leon Armenian Church were extremely excited to host the 2017 General Assembly & Sports Weekend, from May 25-29, in Fair Lawn, New Jersey. Our committee of hardworking volunteers embraced our Armenian roots and Christian spirit to plan a memorable weekend of ACYOA tradition for hundreds of expected guests to enjoy.

Under the guidance of our pastor, Rev. Fr. Diran Bohajian, and advisor, Diran Jebejian, the committee worked diligently to achieve our mission: to welcome Armenians from across the country to a weekend celebrating the ACYOA community. By adapting a tenacious work ethic, our committee organized a series of unique events that allowed for a weekend of rekindling friendships, competition and camaraderie, evening dances, and embracing our Armenian Christian culture. With over 230 package plans sold, and an overflow of additional guests at our evening events, we were humbled by the success of such an incredible weekend!

## **Committee Members:**

Rev. Fr. Diran Bohajian, *Pastor*

Linda Chamesian, *Chairperson*

Paul Chamesian, *Athletics*

Leeza Cinar, *Social Media*

Laura Dosch, *Hospitality*

Ara Kasparian, *Athletics*

Lenna Keshishian, *Art Design*

Andrew Khanarian, *Treasurer*

Chelsea Kress, *Transportation & Ad Booklet*

Jennifer Oscherician, *Events*

Peter Oundjian, *Registration*

Nicholas Tashjian, *Secretary*

Diran Jebejian, *Advisor*

## **Preparation:**

After the very real fear that there might not be an able parish to plan the 2017 General Assembly and Sports Weekend, the St. Leon ACYOA Seniors considered hosting. Motivated to celebrate yet another annual ACYOA Memorial Day Weekend, our Seniors revitalized the once idol ACYOA Seniors chapter in mid-July, and formed a committee to host the 2017 weekend by August!

With under a year of planning time, our committee members were driven by passion and enthusiasm to plan a memorable weekend for hundreds of expected guests. We held meetings regularly to ensure the committee was working cohesively, and everyone was kept up to date on progress. Individuals on the committee worked on their respective tasks, checking in with the chairperson and advisor, between meetings. By March of 2017, meetings became more frequent, and by late April, our committee was meeting weekly. Dedicating countless hours to the planning process of this weekend was well worth it!

## **HOTEL:**

Participants stayed at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe in Teaneck, New Jersey, which also served as the location of the General Assembly on Thursday and Friday, as well as the banquet hall for our Sunday night event, Gala at the Glenpointe. The Marriott had a spacious lobby, restaurants, conference space and other amenities ideal for hosting a General Assembly and Sports Weekend.

**Lessons Learned:** Having dedicated floors of hotel rooms for weekend guests helped avoid noise complaints from guests of the hotel who were not weekend participants. The lobby was spacious and far removed from hotel rooms, which also kept noise on the floors to a minimum. After the Sunday Night banquet, we arranged for our guests to stay in an area outside of the banquet hall, removed from the lobby, allowing the flow of the party to continue, and discouraging weekend participants from dispersing around the hotel. Having reserved this space, the celebration continued to naturally unfold, and guests did not feel that the event had an abrupt ending.

Note: Our hotel guests had access to free wifi, but were not always notified upon check in. Be sure that the front desk is telling each guest upon check in.

## **SPORTS:**

We were able to utilize St. Leon Youth Center's gym for our sports competitions. The court allowed for two basketball games to be played simultaneously, as well as two volleyball games to be played during breaks from basketball games. Individual sports, including tavloo and ping-pong, were set up in a room just outside of the gymnasium. We also had access to a kitchen, where we served bagels (a North Jersey specialty) to our morning athletes, and sold drinks and snacks to our guests throughout the weekend.

## **EVENTS:**

### **Thursday, May 25: General Assembly at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe, followed by Delegates Reception at the Glenpointe**

Following Thursday evening's General Assembly in the Manhattan room of the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe, all delegates, clergy and guests were invited to the Delegates Reception, which was held in an atrium just outside of the meeting room. Guests were served passed hors d'oeuvres, and there was a cash bar available as well. Having the reception adjacent to the meeting room allowed for a simple flow from the meeting to the reception.

**Friday, May 26: General Assembly (continued) at Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe, Primate's Luncheon, followed by The Block Party at St. Leon**

The General Assembly continued Friday, May 26th in the Manhattan Room of the Glenpointe, with a break for the Primate's Luncheon. At the conclusion of the General Assembly, Sports Weekend kicked off with our first event: The Block Party. The event was set up in the parking lot of the St. Leon campus, which was transformed with string lights, picnic tables, food trucks, a cash bar, and live band. The lot was surrounded by a wooded backyard, enclosing the event space. The event provided the opportunity for hungry guests to enjoy famous New Jersey food truck delicacies, and ease into a relaxing start to a busy weekend!

**Saturday, May 27: Coaches Club at MetLife Stadium**

Following the day's sporting events, participants were bused from the hotel to the Coaches Club at MetLife Stadium, a unique space combining elements of dancing and lounging, with a patio that overlooks the famous MetLife field, home to the New York Giants, New York Jets, and host of Super Bowl XLVIII. Guests enjoyed music from a live DJ, and there was a cash bar available.

**Sunday, May 28: Divine Liturgy at St. Leon Armenian Church, Fair Lawn, NJ; Sports Finals; Gala at the Glenpointe**

Sunday morning began with Divine Liturgy at St. Leon Church, celebrated by Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan. Presiding over Divine Liturgy was our Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. Following Divine Liturgy, the Primate officiated the ACYOA Central Council's Installation of Officers.

After Divine Liturgy, guests moved to the St. Leon gymnasium, where the championship games took place. Athletes took part in basketball and volleyball finals, and spectators watched eagerly, cheering from the sidelines.

Following the sports championships, athletes and weekend guests attended an awards banquet at the Glenpointe hotel. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the banquet, and distributed trophies to all the winners. Following dinner, a dance took place with Joseph Krikorian and his band taking the stage. Guests continued to enjoy the evening, as live music flowed throughout the ballroom.

## Lessons Learned:

Issue	Description	How to Avoid
<b>Check In</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately half of our guests formally “checked in” to the weekend, where they received a welcome package, signed up for a text remind service (Remind.com -for updates throughout the weekend) and had the option of purchasing a t-shirt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It seemed that some guests didn’t feel there was an incentive to “check in” to the weekend. Since there was a check in for each night event, and a separate wrist band for each event, this wasn’t an issue of security. However, we would liked to have had more people sign up for the Remind.com service, to ensure all guests were receiving updates and weekend reminders.</li> <li>An option for the future would be to have the check in at the gym during the sports. The issue here is that guests will be walking around with welcome packages. Another option is to make it necessary for guests to check in (ex: Check in to the weekend to pick up your tickets for each night’s event).</li> <li>If check in isn’t a priority for the future host committee, we strongly encourage using the Remind.com service for guests, and having them sign up for it as part of the online registration process.</li> </ul>
<b>Bus Schedules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bus drivers followed an hourly schedule, acting as a shuttle between the hotel and each respective venue. However, there were times when a bus would hesitate to travel with only a couple passengers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the bus drivers to follow the schedule so guests and drivers know what to expect. Share this schedule with the guests so there isn’t any confusion, and guests can plan accordingly.</li> <li>Also, it is imperative to have a point of contact between the committee and the bus driver to answer any questions or in case of a schedule change.</li> </ul>
<b>Late Attendance (Evening Events)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite having early start times to our evening events, guests typically arrived 2 hours into the events.</li> <li>Busses were overcrowded at these late times, which caused a large crowd of guests at check in.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing the check in desk from 10-11:30 with more volunteers is encouraged to keep the crowd manageable.</li> <li>Offering an incentive for guests to arrive early could motivate an even distribution of attendance (ie: free drink ticket from 9-11pm)</li> <li>Keeping in contact with guests via a text service (ex: Remind.com) to message guests about arrival, and provide incentives if necessary (ie: food trucks will be leaving soon, arrive if you plan on ordering dinner!).</li> </ul>

## SUGGESTIONS:

1. **Contracts:** In addition to the Core Committee, have attorneys and contract specialists on advisory committee to review contracts review before signing. Also be sure to review the contracts in detail and negotiate points to best suit your committee's needs.
2. **Insurance:** Make sure to contact your Church's insurance company well in advance of the event to find out if additional insurance will be required.
3. **Audio-Visual:** Be sure to speak with your contact at the hotel or venues for any AV/technical needs, as fees add up quickly. Try to negotiate the prices or bring in your own equipment (projectors, microphones, etc.)
4. **Proximity:** Keeping our hotel in proximity to the gym and night events made it easy for guests to go to and from locations throughout the weekend. It also kept transportation costs down.
5. **Transportation:** We strongly encourage to have **one** person designated as the point of contact for bus drivers through the weekend to help with communication regarding scheduling, directions and payment. See above for more suggestions on bussing.
6. **Advertising:** Keep advertising steady and strong leading up to the weekend. During the weekend, we **HIGHLY** recommend the use of Remind.com, or a similar service to be able to send guests updates and reminders throughout the weekend. While we had guests sign up for this during check in, a more practical sign up time would be to embed this in the registration page.
7. **Central Council Communication:** Ensure that communication between the committee and the Central Council follows a chain of command, so communication remains clear and consistent. Review all Assembly needs well in advance to ensure everything is covered and there are no last minute surprises on either side.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

1. **Showcasing our City:** Atypical from the past few General Assembly & Sports Weekends, our committee welcomed guests to our home state, as opposed to a city. It was our goal to showcase the hidden gems of our home and embrace our Jersey pride.
2. **Home Gym Facilities:** Our committee was fortunate enough to utilize St. Leon Church's youth center gym, keeping our costs down, and making the sporting competitions easily accessible from our campus.
3. **Location! Location! Location!** Accessibility was an important factor in our decision making and we felt the location of the hotel and venues made them very accessible, both physically and by providing amenities that benefited our participants and program.
4. **Social Media:** Our guests were very excited about the "Remind" texting service offered throughout the weekend. We were also active on Instagram and Facebook, posting updates for sports schedules, events updates and photos!

5. **Photographs:** We hired photographers to be at each evening event, as well as the sports competitions. We uploaded the pictures to our Facebook page which resulted in more activity on our page, and spurred the excitement for people to reminisce on the events. We posted them a day or two after each event, providing a quick turnaround.
6. **Online Registration:** We had an online registration page for general weekend registration, clergy registration, and sports team registration. This allowed for ease of organizing registrations, database development, online payments, etc. We used [www.123ContactForm.com](http://www.123ContactForm.com) (\$29.95/month) and recommend the application for future organizers.
7. **Event Check in:** We used an application called Attendium, to help keep track of guest check in at each evening event. Committee members downloaded the Attendium app to their phones, which was pre-loaded with our registration list, and simplified the check-in process. This made it easy to keep track of our guest count, and allowed easy access to the information for after-event reporting.
8. **Commemorative Ad Booklet:** Our Ad Booklet was included in the welcome packages that guests received upon check in. It was full of supporting messages and incredible signs of sponsorship from family and friends who helped our weekend come to life!
9. **Donations:** We had an overwhelming amount of financial support from our local parish and ACYOA community at large. In addition to submissions to our Ad Booklet, we received several donations in the months leading up to the weekend, earmarked specifically for Sports Weekend. We were also blessed to have a few individuals and families willing to sponsor parts of the weekend. We also received donations from some local corporations which we were able to put towards snacks for the weekend.
10. **Budgeting:** By reviewing the figures of several prior Sports Weekends, we prepared lower anticipated numbers for attendees, athletes, and fundraising, offering a more conservative budget for our weekend. This helped us to stay on track with profit and loss margins, and offer one of the most affordable package plan prices for participants in recent history. Keeping track of all incomes and expenses, no matter how minimal, were crucial to our record keeping.
11. **A Supportive Parish:** Having just revitalized our ACYOA Seniors chapter, we were blessed to have the support of our parish. Working with parishioners and ACYOA supporters helped yield a successful weekend, and also helped our ACYOA Seniors chapter flourish. We are humbled by the financial and spiritual support from all who helped our cause.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Linda Chamesian, Chairperson



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Rev. Fr. Diran Bohajian, Pastor

St. Leon Armenian Church ACYOA Seniors  
2017 General Assembly & Sports Weekend Committee

<b>General Assembly and Sports Weekend Participation</b>	
<b>Hotel Rooms Sold</b>	
Thursday	23
Friday	64
Saturday	67
Sunday	65
Monday	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Number of Attendees</b>	
<b>General Assembly</b>	
Clergy/Staff	13
Delegates	54
Observers	
<b>Total</b>	
<b>Event Attendance</b>	
Friday Night	252
Saturday Night	328
Sunday Night	379
<b>Registration Information</b>	
Packages Sold – includes athletes	236
Athletes	126
Friday	23
Saturday	42
Sunday	34
Clergy	
<b>At the Door Sales</b>	
Friday Night	23
Saturday Night	52
Sunday	111



## Financial Report

### Income:

<b>Registration</b>		
	Individual registration (including partial refunds)	\$46,040.00
	Team registration	\$2,275.00
<b>Donations</b>		
	Ad Book and Sponsorships	\$22,175.00
	Other donations	\$816.00
<b>Fundraisers</b>		
	Volleyball Fundraiser	\$702.11
	Palm Sunday Fundraiser	\$545.93
	Super Bowl Fundraiser	\$1,233.61
	Bake Sale Fundraiser	\$223.18
<b>Concession Sales</b>		
	Food and beverage sales	\$1,327.00
	Shirt Sales	\$2,250.00
<b>Door Sales</b>		
	Friday door sales	\$940.00
	Saturday door sales	\$4,055.00
	Sunday door sales	\$7,100.00

**Revenue: \$89,682.83**

**Expenses:**

<b>General Assembly</b>	
Thursday Reception	\$2,520.00
Friday Breakfast	\$1,750.00
GA Room	\$750.00
Audiovisual	\$1,502.00
<b>Friday Event</b>	
Setup, food and security	\$8,646.94
Entertainment	\$1,200.00
<b>Saturday Event</b>	
Venue	\$16,138.58
Entertainment	\$400.00
<b>Sunday Event</b>	
Food and venue	\$17,275.00
Entertainment	\$9,469.40
<b>Athletics</b>	
Referees	\$1,400.00
Trophies and athletic equipment	\$312.19
<b>Fees</b>	
PayPal	\$1,106.75
123Contact	\$117.00
Square	\$184.58
Bank fees	\$6.00
Attendium	\$65.00
<b>Other</b>	
Transportation	\$2,920.00
Hotel security	\$1,890.00
Photographers	\$820.00
Administrative (postage, letterhead, envelopes, meeting refreshments)	\$1,589.96
Promotional materials (ad book, schedules, signage, Geotag)	\$1,614.01
T-Shirt Printing	\$1,861.25
Wristbands	\$41.97
Welcome bags and snacks	\$733.01
Gratuities (bus drivers, entertainers, contract contacts)	\$959.98

**Total Cost: \$75,273.62****Profit: \$14,409.21**