

KARABAGH GROUP WEDDING, AND TELETHON

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The Nov. 26 fundraiser, which took place in Los Angeles and raised almost \$16 million, was organized by an all-Armenian group. The donors were ordinary Armenians who gave anywhere from \$5 to \$1,000 for the revival of the historic city of Shushi. That the money was targeted for the needs of a single Artsakh city, rather than to the whole republic, indicates a financial sure-footedness and sophistication.

Finally, the telethon demonstrates confidence in the future of Armenian Artsakh, since the money raised will be dedicated to school and road construction, the restoration of apartments, and the maintenance of water supplies. Following the footsteps of other major Diaspora telethons (in Western Europe and in Russia) this year, the North American fundraiser beat its target.

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✘ LOS ANGELES, Calif.—On Nov. 26, Hayastan All Armenian Fund concluded its 12th annual Telethon—a 12-hour non-stop live broadcast from Los Angeles. Summing up the results of a year long effort, which included a whole range of fundraising activities, the Fund announced a total of \$15,875,043 in donations and pledges. The collected funds will be directed at the realization of a variety of social and economic infrastructure projects in the town of Shushi. Through building new roads, schools, rehabilitating water mains and restoring apartment buildings, the Fund will launch the process of the revival of the historic Armenian town. Parallel to these projects, the Fund will continue its rural development effort which reaches out to the villages of Armenia and Artsakh. Present at the Telethon were the executive director of Hayastan All Armenian Fund Ara Vardanyan and the Prime Minister of Nagorno Karabakh Arayik Harutyunyan. The Telethon also featured appearances by Primate of the Artsakh Diocese Archbishop Pargev Martirosian, NKR President's press secretary David Babayan, Permanent Representative of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic to the United States Robert Avetisyan as well as other distinguished and benefactors.

In an address to all Armenians, the Fund's executive director said: "This Telethon is yet another testament of the unity of the Armenian people. Today, as a rule, we sum up and present the results of the fundraising activities organized by the Fund's various local affiliates throughout the year. These funds are directed at solving issues of national importance. I would like to express my gratitude to all the benefactors; without your invaluable support the Fund's work would simply not

be possible. It is your trust that makes it possible to move forward, rebuild our Homeland stone by stone and craft a bright future for our children."

One of the key fundraising events preceding the annual Telethon was the fundraising gala in Moscow where Russian Armenian businessmen made their contributions—\$5,290,000—which were reflected in the final results of this year's all Armenian fundraiser.

Another important fundraising event on the eve of the Telethon was the annual pan European phoneathon. The results of Phoneathon 2009 were \$1,800,000 in donations and pledges: a 10 percent increase from the \$1,5 million collected in 2008. More than 12,400 Armenian families from all over Europe participated in this year's Phoneathon.

This year's fundraising effort was unprecedented in terms of the number of people who participated and decided to have their input in tackling the challenge of rebuilding Shushi. The participation of residents of Armenia was especially impressive with more than 20,000 people making their donations in the period leading to the annual Telethon. More than 13,000 people made their donations in their local post offices. Others used their mobile phones in an innovative fundraising effort that the Fund brought together in association with Viva Cell MTS mobile operator.

The main sponsor of Telethon 2009 was VivaCell-MTS. Other sponsors were: ACBA Credit Agricole Bank, Ameria Bank, Ardshininvestbank and Haypost. The fundraising activities in Armenia and Artsakh continue.

The results of this year's fundraising effort will be finalized at the end of the year when the Fund will sum up all the donations and publish the names of the benefactors.

