

## AAHPO Fourth Annual 5K Raises Funds for Artsakh Healthcare

By Stephan S. Nigohosian



LEONIA, N.J. —Overpeck County Park is a world away from Artsakh, but that distance became inconsequential recently when upwards of 100 people participated in the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) Fourth Annual 5K Run/Walk event.

This year's activity, held to raise desperately needed funds to support healthcare and medical services for the Armenian population of Artsakh and Armenia, was even more significant in light of the humanitarian crisis caused by Azerbaijan's unlawful blockade of the Lachin Corridor. Armenian citizens in Artsakh are deprived of food, heating fuel and medical attention caused by the closure of the sole route that connects Artsakh to Armenia and the outside world. For this reason, AAHPO continues to focus its efforts toward alleviating the lack of critical

resources and medical care facing indigenous Armenians in Artsakh. Examples of this are the training of doctors in the rural areas of Artsakh in innovative approaches, methods, and technologies in medicine, as well as underwriting the cost of curating and sending medical equipment and medicine to the region.

"The continued growth of our 5K Run/Walk Event is a testament to the dedication and compassion of Armenian-Americans in NY, NJ and CT," said AAHPO President Larry Najarian. "The situation in Artsakh has been very difficult for quite some time now, but the most recent repercussions caused by the Azeri blockade has made our mission of providing assistance to our brethren in the region all the more critical."

The 5K course, equal to 3.1 miles, offers scenic views of the Manhattan skyline and picturesque, waterfowl-populated ponds and marshes. But the beauty of the course did not distract the event's participants, consisting of both seasoned and novice runners, from the gravity of the situation. Groups of walkers and runners from many different backgrounds and vocations converged as one team to help those in need.

Among the participants was champion racewalker Sherry Brosnahan, who holds one world masters record and eight US masters records in racewalking at distances from 20 to 50 kilometers.

Her presence underscored the recognition, regardless of one's ethnic background, of the inhumanity of the Azeri blockade. "I am here to have fun with the group and to exercise for my health," she said, "but most importantly, to raise funds that will help those faced with a very dire situation."

Representatives from organizations which have partnered with AAHPO in previous events



also showed their solidarity by participating, including Aram Setian, former president of the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA). "It is incumbent upon us as diasporans to do what we can to help our brothers and sisters in Artsakh and Armenia," he said.

One of the additional benefits the event provided runners was the opportunity to boost their competitive racing statistics, as race results were officially recorded and certified by USA Track & Field, the United States national governing body for track and field, cross country running, road running and racewalking. In addition, all registrants received a commemorative T-shirt and a pair of wireless earphones donated by Phillips Corporation.

AAHPO is greatly appreciative of the sponsors whose generosity made this year's event possible: Armand P. Asarian, MD; Alma Janet Olivos-Asarian, MD; William G. Basralian Funeral Service; Bedminster Eye and Laser Center; Englewood (NJ) Pediatrics; Dr. Tro's Medical Weight Loss & Direct Primary Care; Harco Incentives; Paul Miller Auto Group; Peapack Private Wealth Management; Northern Jersey Obstetrics & Gynecology; Toufayan Bakeries and USA Track & Field.

To donate to the cause, visit <https://aahpo.org/>.