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U.S. EMBASSY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY-MARCH ISSUE

ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNITED STATES FOR THE PEOPLE OF HAITI

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The January 12, 2010, earthquake and its aftermath posed enormous challenges to the people of Haiti and the entire world community." On January 22, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia Marie L. Yovanovitch discussed U.S. assistance to the Haitian people and the Government of Haiti with Armenian Public Television. Ambassador Yovanovitch expressed sympathy for the victims of the earthquake and stressed the important role the U.S. played in recovery efforts. She noted that the U.S. was managing the airport at the request of the Government of Haiti and that more flights were able to get through with relief workers and supplies. Ambassador Yovanovitch noted, "Now there are more food distribution points; there is more medical assistance. The U.S.S. Comfort docked yesterday. It is an enormous ship with over a thousand beds and several operating amphitheatres. It will provide a huge boost to the medical assistance available to the people of Haiti."

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



On February 5, 2010, Chairman of the RA National Assembly Mr. Hovik Abrahamyan and United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Armenia Mission Director Dr. Jatinder Cheema signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The main goals of the MOU are the implementation of legislative reforms that meet the principles of international law; development of informational expertise, analytical and research capacities of MPs and

National Assembly staff; and improvement of the National Assembly's monitoring and evaluation skills.

USAID-FUNDED HEAT AND POWER UNIT TO BENEFIT ARABKIR MEDICAL CENTER

On February 5, Ambassador Yovanovitch, Deputy Minister of Health Tatul Hakobyan, and the Scientific Advisor of the Arabkir Medical Center and Member of Parliament Ara Babloyan marked the official handover of a USAID-funded Combined Heat and Power unit to the Arabkir Medical Center in Yerevan. A symbolic "button-pushing" ceremony by the Ambassador started the unit that will assist the hospital's 20,000 plus beneficiaries each year by providing efficient electricity. Major TV stations covered the event and highlighted the fact that the Center received the \$155,000 equipment through the USAID Commercialization of Energy Efficiency Program (CEEP).



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DEPUTY SECRETARY STEINBERG'S TRAVEL TO ARMENIA



Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg traveled to Armenia on February 4th and 5th. In Yerevan he met with President Serzh Sargsian and Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian to discuss bilateral and regional issues. As part of his visit D/S Steinberg gave an interview to the Public Television of Armenia during which he spoke about normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations and Nagorno-Karabakh.





EMBASSY SPONSORS PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON ARMENIA-TURKEY RELATIONS



On February 12, Ambassador Yovanovitch, together with Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian and Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) President Güven Sak participated in a panel discussion on “Turkish-Armenian Relations and Cross-Border Regionalism,” hosted by the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia with the support of the U.S. Embassy Yerevan. The discussion sought to obtain a better view of the role of business in

developing relations between the neighboring countries and the economic and business opportunities that may arise with an open border between Turkey and Armenia. The packed event was attended by representatives of major business associations, international organizations, diplomatic missions and government representatives. It was reported widely on the evening news with various media outlets quoting Ambassador Yovanovitch on the significant long-term political and economic benefits of an open border for both countries, and the region as a whole.



EMBASSY MARKS 15-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF FLEX



On February 25, the U.S. Embassy, in collaboration with the Armenian Ministry of Science and Education, American Councils/ACCELS, and program alumni commemorated the 15-year anniversary of the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program in Armenia. Ambassador Yovanovitch and Armenian Minister of Science and Education Armen Ashotian delivered keynote remarks. About 100 program alumni from Armenia, who are leaders in their fields, working in local gov-

ernment, international organizations, civil society, and business, enjoyed the chance to meet each other in a warm and festive atmosphere. Ambassador Yovanovitch was quoted by media representa-

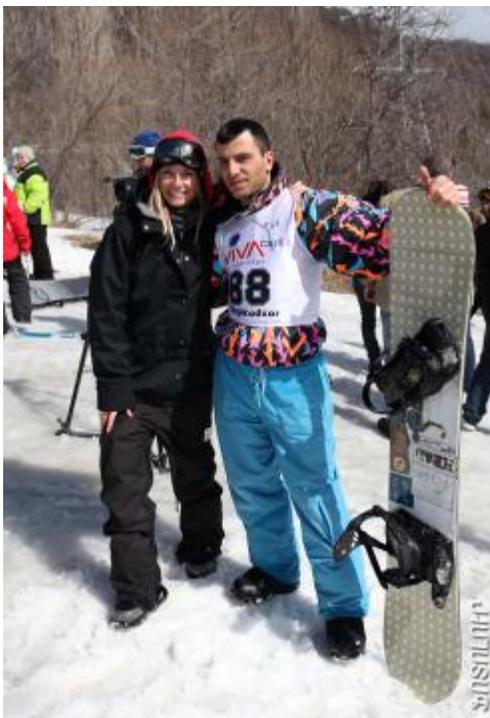
tives who attended the event saying, "The FLEX program is an example of the strong educational partnership that has flourished between the United States and Armenia. Both countries know that the exchange of people and ideas is essential to the promotion of democracy, economic prosperity, international cooperation, and security around the world."



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U.S. EMBASSY HOSTS PROFESSIONAL WOMEN SNOWBOARDERS



The U.S. Embassy hosted two American professional women snowboarders Amber Stackhouse and Erin Comstock, who led a "Sports Envoys" program March 2-7. The program was carried out in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Sports United office and the Snowboarding Federation of the Republic of Armenia. Stackhouse and Comstock were the first American Sports Envoys in Armenia and the first snowboarders to participate in the worldwide program. During their six-day trip, Stackhouse and Comstock visited Yerevan and Tsaghkadzor. While in Yerevan, the Envoys met with middle school students, university film stu-

dents, and female athletes to discuss the importance of participation in sports for women and girls. In Tsaghkadzor, the Envoys conducted two snowboard clinics, did a snowboarding exhibition and judge a boarder cross event. Special thanks goes to the Armenian Olympic Committee which made the Tsaghkadzor portion of the program possible.



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PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION CEREMONY HELD AT THE U.S. EMBASSY



On March 1, Ambassador Yovanovitch and Peace Corps Armenia Director Lee Lacy kicked off Peace Corps Week in Armenia by recognizing and presenting certificates of appreciation to exceptional Armenians who exhibited excellence in volunteerism and service within their communities. The event was attended by mass media representatives, who interviewed the Peace Corps Director and volunteers who highlighted the ways that Peace Corps promotes the values of national service and volunteerism across Armenia through a variety of events and activities designed to raise public awareness.

U.S. Embassy Presents Woman of Courage Award to Mariam Sukhudyán

At a ceremony held at the U.S. Embassy on March 10, Ambassador Yovanovitch presented the U.S. Embassy of Armenia's first ever *Woman of Courage Award* to civil society activist Miss Mariam Sukhudyán. The award honored Miss Sukhudyán's responsibility, courage and leadership in the pursuit of justice and her advocacy for the protection of the environment and children with special needs. It highlighted Miss Sukhudyán's "determination to act in order to right a wrong, in spite of the personal sacrifices that entailed." In her remarks, Ambassador Yovanovitch noted that Miss Sukhudyán "has campaigned to protect Armenia's forests, wildlife and environment; she has volunteered in schools for special needs children; and when she arrived at Nubarashen Special School Number 11 and found neglect and abuse of children in its care, she acted to stop it ... not for her own benefit, but for justice and the welfare of all children in Armenia." The following day all charges were dropped against Miss Sukhudyán.

