

# Jinishian JOTTINGS

...from poverty and despair to self-sufficiency and hope



## A Time to Give Thanks

### Letter from the Coordinator



Eliza Minasyan

Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks to God, family and friends—all of those who have cared for us and supported us, nurturing our success and growth.

Primarily, this is a wonderful opportunity to reaffirm our belief in God, our love for God and our gratitude to God for God's generous miracles and abundant gifts. Thanksgiving also is an opportunity to reaffirm our love for one another and our gratitude for the immense role that others play in our life and in the life of the community.

Thanksgiving is a tradition rooted in the life cycles of farming that culminate in life-sustaining harvests. It gives us a reason for pause and celebration. Harvesting reflects great toil, as well as great personal investments of time and resources, in hopes of a bountiful harvest to ensure security, success and

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a prosperous future. In many ways, the Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP), our partners and the people we serve contribute to the Thanksgiving celebration by sharing in the legacy left by Vartan Jinishian and others who give of themselves in helping those who have suffered and still struggle. We do this by investing in inspiring programs noted for their efficiency and effectiveness that uplift individuals, families and communities, helping to revive the communities and transform generations.

Please join with us today to strengthen the JMP tradition of planting the seeds of goodwill. Help transform succeeding generations in shaping the legacy of our extended community. Enjoy the following success stories, which enhance the meaning of Thanksgiving.

### Upcoming Study Tour

June 12–24, 2012

September 9–21, 2012

[www.pcusa.org/jinishian-tour](http://www.pcusa.org/jinishian-tour)

## Students in Gyumri pitch in to help needy schoolchildren

When students in the Armenian city of Gyumri learned that some children stopped going to school in the winter because they didn't have shoes, the students pitched in with creative ways to tackle the problem. Their efforts were part of the Warm Shoes to Schoolchildren from Vulnerable Families project sponsored by the Jinishian Memorial Foundation.

Students from Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute channeled their enthusiasm for the project by forming fund-raising teams. One team organized several open-air concerts, inviting pop groups to perform in Gyumri. Passersby

*"This is an unprecedented event . . . Armenia—ready and enthusiastic to help others in need"*

donated money to the cause.

"This is an unprecedented event in Gyumri. I am happy to see the new generation of Armenia—ready and enthusiastic to help others in need," said Ms. Arevik, one of the participants.

Another innovative idea of the Gyumri students was called Living Statues. The students decorated themselves as statues, then stood at the most populated sites in Gyumri, greeting the people walking by and inviting them to support the initiative. The reaction the students got was often one of surprise—and generosity. Many residents of Gyumri, representing different ages and social strata, eagerly contributed what they could to help critically disadvantaged children.

"We would like to mobilize the Armenian population—and particularly



Children lining up to receive their new shoes; notice them wearing old slippers as shoes.



### Help provide winter footwear for Armenian children

Due to budget cuts, the Warm Shoes to Schoolchildren from Vulnerable Families program was suspended, but fund-raising efforts have generated almost enough money to restart the program this year. Interested in helping? A \$35 contribution can provide a pair

of winter boots for a needy child, profoundly enhancing the child's educational opportunities, health and self-esteem. The waterproof boots are locally made with leather and fur lining. You can help by giving at: <http://gamc.pcusa.org/give/E051792/>. In the comments section, mention "shoe program."



Selling T-shirts was one of many creative ways students worked to raise awareness of children who have no shoes.

the youth— in supporting the children from needy families and show that together we are able to fight the poverty in our country," said Ms. Hripsime from Gyumri, a leader of JMF's Civic Dialogue and Action program, which encourages civic participation among university students.

The students' inspirational fund-raising efforts can be seen in videos at [www.pcusa.org/jinishian](http://www.pcusa.org/jinishian).

Jinishian Memorial Program  
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Students in the Creative Space fashion school work with their teachers.

## Creative Space program in Lebanon lifts spirits

By Carmen Havatian

*The goal of the Creative Space program in Lebanon is to guide students on the road to their creative ideals through fashion, creating an atmosphere of teamwork and collaboration while promoting individuality. Throughout the two months, the class worked together to create an haute-couture collection, with each student responsible for designing and producing at least two garments that contributed towards the final collection showcased in a selling exhibition.*

Fashion is a miraculous world of fantasy and hard work that I always dreamed of doing.

I always wanted to enroll in a fashion school and I worked hard trying to achieve my goal, but there were always obstacles in my way. Finally, this summer my dream came true, thanks to Sarah Hermez, the founder and facilitator of the Creative Space program, and the Jinishian Memorial Program, which gave me the opportunity to participate in an intensive course in fashion design. From the first day of class my life changed positively. It was an amazing experience to socialize with people coming from different religious, social and political backgrounds. In this materialistic world, it's so rare to find people who help others to pursue their dreams and do not expect anything in return. In this case our facilitator helped us in many ways, not only by teaching us how to make clothes and how to become designers, but also by helping us morally and psychologically through fashion. We learned how to become patient, how to give time to ourselves



Carmen's joy overflows with her sense of accomplishment.

and listen not only to others but also to ourselves. I feel so lucky for participating in this project. It had a positive impact in my life, changing my entire attitude toward life.

## Lebanese program enables learners to become teachers as they share their skills

By Taline Ladayan, Lebanon

When we hear "Jinishian," we think of 45 years of compassion, partnership and networking in service to our communities, helping others, guiding them toward self-sufficiency and, most importantly, sharing whatever we have with others in need.

One of our local governmental organizations with whom we have worked closely for many years, the Bourj Hammoud Office of Social Development, recently invited two of our participants to share the experience and knowledge they gained in a Community Development Vocational Training course, "Flower Arrangement, Soap and Candle Making," sponsored by the Jinishian Memorial Program in Lebanon. Ms. Arsho and Ms. Lila accepted the invitation. For the first time in their lives Arsho and Lila went to an organization and spoke in front of a group of 20 women attending a training session designed to eliminate illiteracy. They shared ideas about creating opportunities through acquiring skills.

The two facilitators, Arsho and Lila, moved from being "beneficiaries" to "donors," as they donated their time and knowledge in service to others. The activity was enriching and empowering for both the participants as well as the facilitators. At the end of the session the two speakers earned applause and praise from the participants, who were eager to learn more.

"This was worth thousands of dollars" Lila said, adding "Next time we can do better."

## Those served by JMP in Syria give thanks

By Ani Cholakian, JMP Syria director

In the past 45 years, the Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP) in Syria has served countless numbers of families and individuals to "enable them to move from poverty and despair to self-sufficiency and hope." The impacts of the program are reflected in numerous testimonies expressed with gratitude.

The following three examples reveal individuals who confront difficult situations in their daily lives but always give thanks to God for the help of the Jinishian Memorial Program.

Recipients of aid from the Jinishian Memorial Program aren't the only ones who have thankful hearts. Those who serve in the program say they feel gratified and honored to be able to live out the words of Matthew 25:40: "And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"



The woman (above left) lives in a modest one-room apartment with her husband; they have had no children and have no income except for financial assistance from the Jinishian Memorial Program and from friends. Despite the challenges she faces, she thanks the Lord and prays for those who work to improve the lives of those in dire living conditions.



The woman (above center) had cardiac bypass surgery as a teenager through the help of the Jinishian Memorial Program. Since then she has been living on a strict medication regimen and has to have regular doctor visits. She lives with her mother, with no income except for donations from siblings whenever they can afford it. Despite the adversity she has faced, she enthusiastically attends all of the JMP educational sessions offered in her area, taking notes, smiling and asking questions. She says her life fills with delight when she attends such events.



The woman (above right) in black is a widow who supports her family by operating a small grocery she bought with the help of a Jinishian Memorial Program loan. She lives with her only son, his wife and their toddler. Recently the son became ill and is virtually bedridden. Although the family faces great challenges, the woman has been able to repay the loan, which she obtained through a JMP revolving fund program in Damascus. The Jinishian Memorial Program also provides assistance for the health care of the young father at home.