**Nicole Andonian: “It is our duty to take responsibility and action for the world which we and our children will inhabit”**

Nicole Andonian is a young medical professional who has started her own grassroots initiative this year, to help make a difference in the fight against COVID-19 through Armenia Fund and the CDC Foundation.

A California native, Andonian grew up in Los Angeles and San Diego. With a lifelong desire to help others, she sought to serve in the medical field, and, following her graduation from UCLA, went on to earn a degree from the Ohio State University College of Medicine. Today, she is an Anesthesiology Resident at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center.

Among the organizations and programs that Andonian has drawn inspiration from are Armenia Fund and its broad range of projects worldwide. “I had heard of Armenia Fund some time ago and was most excited about its medical missions and advocacy work, in Armenia and Artsakh,” Andonian says. “As an Armenian living in the Diaspora, I feel it is a privilege to be able to help make the country of our ancestry a better place.”

In April 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was spreading at an alarming rate, Andonian wanted to do something to help healthcare workers in both the US and Armenia fight the virus. She created a gofundme page, with the purpose of splitting the raised funds equally between CDC and Armenia Fund’s Emergency COVID-19 Assistance Program in Armenia. As she started the gofundme page, Andonian also sent out an impassioned letter to family, friends, and colleagues, urging them to lend their support. Soon, close to $5,000 were raised.

“When the Coronavirus pandemic started, I immediately saw the effects on the American healthcare system in my day-to-day work,” Andonian recalls. “I knew Armenia’s healthcare infrastructure would need even more support to get through this pandemic, and I was fortunate to be able to raise funds for Armenia Fund to help boost Armenia’s response to COVID-19.”

“Friends and family near and far, Armenian and otherwise, graciously donated,” Andonian continues. “This is a global pandemic and we are all in it together as citizens of the world. I had planned to travel to Armenia in March in order to work on a breast-cancer-research project, but unfortunately the trip was cancelled due to travel restrictions. Nonetheless, I look forward to rescheduling my trip and visiting Armenia again when it is safe to do so.”

When asked why she thinks it’s important for young professionals such as herself to get involved in grassroots initiatives such as the fundraising effort she has launched this year, Andonian says, “I feel that young professionals are the future. It is our duty to take responsibility and action for the world which we and our children will inhabit. Whether it be supporting a local cause or one supporting our Armenian homeland, every small effort matters.”