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PRESS RELEASE
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New Film Encourages Youth to Get Rooted with ATP in Armenia

PASADENA--Armenia Tree Project (ATP) launched its latest educational film at an event hosted by the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian High School in Pasadena on April 26.

The film, titled #GetRooted with Building Bridges, was created by ATP's Building Bridges environmental education program. This program launched in 2010 introduces ATP's environmental education material to diasporan students, teaches them about Armenia's rich natural heritage, and connects them to students in their ancestral homeland.

The video launch at the AGBU school was notable because many of the students in the audience actually had roles in the film. They planted trees with their counterparts in Armenia during a class trip in 2015.

The event was led by Patil Kaptanian and Peter Deirbadrossian, students who have been actively involved in raising environmental awareness at the school in recent years.

Peter recited a moving poem called "The Tree": "There was a huge tree, a centuries old tree. Bad people cut that tree, and a year after, that tree gave vines (new branch), fresh green branches. Dear friends, I felt that the tree is my ancient nation, and the vines are me and you, the new generation. Next year, when I go to Armenia and plant a tree, I will bow down in front of that tree, because I will be granting new life to the next generation."

Several other leaders were recognized at the event including Principal Armine Movsisyan, Armenian language teacher Norayr Daduryan, science teacher Asdghig Yoghourtjian-Sepetjian and technology teacher Varant Chinchinian. In addition, popcorn was donated for the film screening by ATP supporter James Melikian, who is also known as "The Popcorn Man."

The premiere was organized by Anahit Gharibyan, who leads ATP's Building Bridges program on the West Coast. The film was introduced by executive producer Sarah Hayes, who heads the Building Bridges program.

“Our film demonstrates the importance of caring for the environment and encourages youth to visit Armenia to plant trees with their peers. There are more than 100 Diaspora elementary, intermediate and high schools throughout the world. We seek to reach out to these schools and work with them to implement ATP’s Building Bridges environmental education program within their classrooms,” explains Hayes. “Such actions will encourage cross-cultural alliances which will advance a strong national appreciation.”

The video was produced by CivilNet.TV in partnership with ATP’s staff in the US and in Armenia. The first Building Bridges video, “Something New,” has gotten nearly 25,000 hits on YouTube. The new #GetRooted video is available online at:

www.tinyurl.com/getrootedarmania

The Building Bridges program provides a range of multimedia content to students in the diaspora including a website, Facebook page, videos, live presentations from ATP staff, and hosting visits with ATP in Armenia.

There is also a printed newsletter created by Sarah Hayes and illustrated by Alik Arzoumanian. The sixth edition of the publication, which is available for free both online and in print, was released in the fall and the focus is on water globally and in Armenia. To request copies of the publication or other information about the Building Bridges program, contact Sarah Hayes at sarah@armeniatree.org.

PHOTO CAPTION

(L to R) ATP Environmental Education Program Manager Sarah Hayes, Western Region Development Associate Anahit Gharibyan, AGBU Manoukian High School Armenian teacher Norayr Daduryan and high school students Peter Deirbadrossian and Patil Kaptanian at the premiere of the new #GetRooted video