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**WESTERN PRELACY**  
**OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF AMERICA**  
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*HEEDING THE CALL OF H.H. CATHOLICOS ARAM I*

**PRELACY SCHOOL STUDENTS CELEBRATE  
THE YEAR OF THE ARMENIAN SCHOOL**

On the morning of Friday, October 15, 2006, students of Prelacy Schools gathered at “Avedissian” Hall of Ferrahian High School to celebrate the Year of the Armenian School, which His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, had proclaimed 2006 to be.

The gathering was held under the auspices of His Eminence Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, Prelate. The Prelate was in attendance along with Clergy, Executive Council and Board of Regents representatives, principals, teachers, and parents. The organizer of the event was the Board of Regents and a special committee established for this purpose.

The gathering began at 10:30 a.m. with the pledges by Ferrahian High School student Teny Issakhanian and opening remarks by Armenian Mesrobian School student Araz Harboyan. Remarks were also made by Executive Council Vice-Chair Dr. Hagop Der Megerdichian and Board of Regents Chair Mr. Avo Kechichian, both of whom noted how by heeding the call of His Holiness, the students on various occasions celebrated the Year of the Armenian School and the invaluable role the Armenian School plays in the lives of all Armenians and especially in the structuring of the new generation. The students’ message was delivered by Mesrobian student Sevana Dimijian who beautifully characterized the Armenian School and its livelihood by comparing it to a phoenix, in the sense that both are continually reborn and renewed.

The artistic portion of the program consisted of Armenian folk dances by Pilibos School students, group recitation by Ferrahian students, group recitation and a play by Ari Guiragos Minassian School students, and songs by the Chamlian School choir. Special guest singer Armen Movsessian from Armenia also participated in the program with a set of songs.

In his closing remarks, Archbishop Mardirossian first thanked God for offering the opportunity to have such a gathering to collectively celebrate the Armenian School. He then offered appreciation to the students and organizers for their remarkable efforts. Speaking on the role and mission of the Armenian School, the Prelate remarked “The Armenian School is a second home and a second homeland for us all, an institution with familial warmth that spiritually bridges us with our homeland, our heritage, and our spiritual and national traditions. Poets have likened the Armenian School to a luminous torch, the lighthouse of the mind and soul. These few words illustrate beautifully the purpose and uniqueness of the Armenian School where you learn our language, history, culture, and values. The enthusiasm expressed in your performances today is evidence of this fact.

It is true that this gathering today is the final official celebration of the Armenian School for the year 2006. However, the spirit and message will not end here, because His Holiness Catholicos Aram I has proclaimed 2007 to be the Year of the Armenian Language and because the Armenian language and culture are inseparable and integral to the Armenian school. Therefore, the upcoming year will be the direct continuation of today's celebration, message, and spirit. In the coming year, let us collectively celebrate the year of the Armenian Language, just as we celebrated the Armenian School throughout the year 2006. Let our students, teachers, principals, and parents join hands to organize events that showcase the beauty and preciousness of our language."

The Prelate concluded by noting that we are on the threshold of the New Year and Christmas, and offered his prayers for God to fill our hearts with love and peace during this festive time.

The gathering came to a close with the Prelate's "Bahbanich" prayer and the singing of "Giligia" by the Chamlian choir.