



# Following a Dream

*The path that took Christopher Markosian to Fulbright Scholar and Researcher*



**BORN AND RAISED** in the Armenian-American community of New Jersey, Christopher Markosian visited Armenia for the first time with his Hovnanian School eighth grade class. The experience was so rewarding that he wanted to find a way to return and live there for a time. “Growing up, I contemplated the significance of Armenian statehood and my implicit responsibilities as a diasporan,” explained Markosian. “As I progressed through high school and college, my Armenian ancestry gradually became an inseparable part of my identity. I eventually decided that, at some point in my life, I would return to Armenia and live among the people.

The AGBU Internship Program was the ideal opportunity. In June 2018, he was on his way to Yerevan, just graduated from Rutgers University with a bachelor’s degree in molecular biology and biochemistry, with plans to attend medical school in the future. AGBU placed him at Izmirlian Medical Center, a state-of-the-art hospital and research institute in Yerevan. The internship gave Markosian the opportunity to work with and learn directly from the doctors and other health professionals. As he tells it, “The physicians were exceptionally kind and willing to share their expertise with us. We gained exposure to a variety of fields—orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery,

pulmonology, and cardiology, to name a few. I gained a better understanding of the healthcare system in Armenia and the various roles associated with different specialties.”

When the summer internship concluded, Markosian knew he would be returning that September to teach English at Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) through the Fulbright Program. Fortunately, the internship gave him a chance to immerse himself in the everyday life of the country, among fellow Armenian young people from around the world.

When not teaching at YSMU or conducting research at the Acopian Center for the Environment at the American University of Armenia (AUA), Markosian spends time with friends and relatives, attending musical performances and visiting sites outside of Yerevan.

What makes Markosian especially happy in Armenia is hearing Armenian everywhere. Over the summer, he picked up a textbook to learn Eastern Armenian. Initially a challenge, due to his Western Armenian background, he now communicates with ease. He summed it all up by saying, “The AGBU Summer Internship Program offers a unique perspective. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that facilitates both personal and professional growth.” @