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The overall mission of the Massachusetts Chapter is: To advance professional social work practice and the profession
To promote human rights, social and economic justice, and unimpeded access to services for all

Armenian Social Workers Visit Massachusetts Chapter

Phyllis King

NASW-MA CHAPTER PRESIDENT

Social Work is a very new profession in Armenia. Prior to the separation of Armenia from the Soviet Union in 1991, professional social work education and training did not exist. **Dr. Nancy Humphries**, former Dean of Social Work at the University of Connecticut and Past President of National NASW was responsible for this amazing development.

Ten social workers came to Boston recently under the auspices of the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association. Their three week experience was funded by the USAID Community Connections Visitor Exchange Program. It included visits to a wide variety of social service agencies, health and hospital services, school based programs, senior centers, the State House, and two Schools of Social Work, Simmons and University of Connecticut. The program included about thirty site visits, often with several speakers at each. Members of the group lived with host families, visited historic Boston, attended art and cultural events around the city, as well as discovering entertainments on their own.



Phyllis King, NASW-MA President (second row, center) with visiting Armenian Social Workers.

The visiting social workers, ranging in age from 23 to 60, diverse in experience, met with me for their initial overview of social work in the United States. Two hours flew by. People were so curious, and interested in everything. We had a wonderful interpreter, who was able to seamlessly move from Armenian to English. My talk covered a brief history of social work in the U.S., the varied fields of social work prac-

tice, government, non-profit, and private services, educating the public about social work services, the role of NASW in the development of the profession, licensing, continuing education, the central role of the Code of Ethics, and challenges to the profession.

Clearly, this was only a bird's eye view. The group will learn much in the comprehensive program planned for them. I look

forward to attending their public wrap up session and will report about it in a future issue of FOCUS. Even in the short time I've been involved in this project, it is apparent that NASW has much to offer the newly developing social work profession in Armenia. I gave the visitors big yellow and black NASW tote bags, given out at previous Symposium events. I expect they proudly carried them wherever they went.

