THANK YOU SPEECH

FOR

AMY BOYADJIAN

Hello everyone. I am truly honored, humbled and ecstatic to have been named Woman of the Year for 2013 for the ABMDR. I have been working with the organization for the past five years and I am astounded and inspired by the dedication and selflessness of our members. As Armenians, we have a special mandate to really be there for each other, and through the global outreach of the ABMDR, we have made a tremendous impact on our community as we serve, inform, and save lives.

I want to thank my husband Michael for always being by my side, encouraging me, and partnering me through all of the adventures and challenges we have faced together. To my daughter Natalie, you are an inspiration, and you give me the reason to give of myself as much as I can to support our community, its children, and the future. I want to thank my friends and family for all of their love and support, and of course, I want to thank God for always guiding me to find the strength to serve and contribute to this noble cause.

Eight years ago, my father died of cancer. It was a devastating blow to our entire family-he was only 61 years old, but that tragedy really opened my eyes and showed me that we really all are in this fight for life together. The ABMDR does vital work in providing a registry for organ donor matches, so critical to our culture’s survival. The mission of the organization is simple. It is “to save lives by recruiting and providing matched unrelated donors for bone marrow or stem cell transplantation to all Armenian and non-Armenian patients worldwide who are suffering from leukemia and other life-threatening blood related illnesses.” The beauty of the work that we support is that it is so simple and yet can have unimaginable impact for those desperately seeking a donor match. Armenians have a unique genetic make up and because of that, it is beyond challenging to find suitable matches among the existing international registries, therefore, it is vital to establish and maintain a registry that focuses on recruiting and identifying matched unrelated bone marrow donors for ethnic Armenians. A small minority of patients inflicted with leukemia or other life-threatening blood disorders find donors within their families. 75% of patients’ survival depends on finding unrelated donor matches. With just a simple swab test, each one of us can do our part in finding donor matches. There is nothing like the gift of saving someone’s life.

I want to thank everyone present, including my family, all of my dear friends and fellow members of ABMDR, the people of the Chamalian School that do such wonderful work with and for our children, and of course, to Salpi, my muse and inspiration. Your collective support of me personally, professionally, and civically means more than you will know. Thanks to all of you again from the bottom of my heart, and remember a simple swab test can save precious life.

Thank you!.