



SAHAG-MESROB
armenian christian school
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2501 North Malden Lane, Altadena, CA 91001 • (626) 798-5020 • Fax (626) 798-0036

October 28, 2008

Dear Neighbors:

I read the fliers by few aggressive neighbors, who change facts, misrepresent our intentions, and spread unfounded anxiety and alarm and I feel morally hurt, and the phrase that comes to mind is "Lord forgive them because they do not know what they are doing."

When I read "Save our neighborhood", I wonder from who? From what? From a Christian private school, that is beyond my comprehension.

How could any one proclaim "Great news – our call to action has worked" as though they won a lottery ticket. I would like to stare at the eyes of any neighbor who can feel proud and satisfied in watching 75 preschoolers and 165 elementary students go home, because this school has been shut down due to few neighbors' intolerance.

Let me correct some facts. The Bienvenidos Center has a total lot size of 144,183 sq. feet, or 3.3 acres, not 2.6 as indicated in their flyer, it also is composed of 8 separate buildings with a total useable space of 35,646 sq. feet. Per L.A. County codes, you can have 1,000 students in that space, (35sq. feet per student), we decided to put 800 in our application, however, please remember, we only have 400 students on two campuses, 250 on Palm Street, 150 on Maiden Lane, the 800 is just a number we put, to be ironed out later on, as our CUP goes through the hearing process. This number is definitely negotiable.

Please understand, we are talking about a Christian school, and appreciate a little civility and common decency in this discourse. References about "school officials saying one thing and doing another" is uncalled for. We will never knowingly misrepresent facts or misguide any of you. If you have noticed something I definitely would like to know and hear about it.

Also a little background will explain to you SMACS (Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Christian School) Board's position.

SMACS is a fully accredited school by ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) and WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) for their maximum tenor of six years, we have been looking for a temporary location to lease until our CUP is approved, as a matter of fact we have been looking for about 10 years for a suitable sight, until Bienvenidos became available. Any one who is involved in finding suitable sights for schools can attest, that it is extremely difficult. We have considered some 50 properties throughout the years, each with its set of problems. There are simply no properties in Altadena/Pasadena.

Our students come to us from Pre-school and stay with us all the way to High school. For a moment put yourself in our shoes, nine qualified Board members, who all volunteer their time.



Within weeks after purchase of Bienvenidos Center, we submitted a complete CUP package in May 2008.

At that point the Board had two choices; shut down several classes, and operate only in Maiden Lane, with all the negative consequences of losing students and interrupting their education, or open on Bienvenidos Center prior to our CUP approval.

We decided on the second alternative. To us, the uninterrupted continuation of our children's education took priority.

Many of you have children. Like our parents, you want the best education for your children, and you want that within your neighborhood, not 30-40 miles away. Our aim is to have the best Armenian American Christian School, morally, spiritually and academically. Having an excellent relationship with our neighbors and community is part and parcel of our goal. In due course, many of you will see the tremendous positive support that we will bring to the community and will embrace us, we are ready to do just that. We want to listen and find common ground.

We already have delivered to city officials last week over 1,400 names and addresses of parents and local supporters, by the end of this week, we will have two to three times more. However, we do not want to create us vs. them mentality, we do not want an environment of either losing or winning, instead, we want a win-win environment, so that we can live together in harmony and peace.

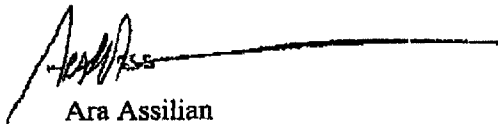
As we contemplate about this, please also consider the positive impact our school will have on your home values. Our parents would love to buy houses closer to the campus on Palm Street so that their driving time is reduced. Very helpful during this depressed real estate market.

The most important strength SMACS has, is the presence of the Holy Spirit within the school. We know the Lord is in control and He has a reason why certain things happen. **MAY HIS WILL BE DONE.** Our aim is to provide the best education to our children and lead them to Christ. A calling worth fighting for. How does it compare with your calling? Traffic is not an issue, a little noise in the morning one hour a day, considering that there is no county noise ordinance that we are violating, and of course quality of life which is also important to us. What kind of quality of life can we have without our children? **CAN YOU PLEASE SEE MORALLY WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?**

We are saving the State of California some \$4,000,000.00 in tuition costs they do not have to pay, and employing 55 teachers on both campuses with a total salary, tax and benefits of \$2,000,000.00. Not a small accomplishment in our turbulent economic times. Again the best thing we can do now is meet and have a civil discussion. We are not as bad as you think we are or we have been portrayed to be.

We are praying for the peaceful resolution of this matter and very much appreciate all those who support us in that endeavor.

Sincerely,



Ara Assilian
Chairman of the Board