



ZORYAN INSTITUTE OF CANADA, INC.

255 Duncan Mill Rd., Suite 310

Toronto, ON, Canada M3B 3H9

Tel: 416-250-9807 Fax: 416-512-1736 E-mail: zoryan@zoryaninstitute.org

www.zoryaninstitute.org

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Megan Swan

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Tel: 416-250-9807

Zoryan Institute Launches Pilot Program of High School Essay Contest on Genocide

Toronto, Canada—The Zoryan Institute is pleased to announce the “Aram Aivazian High School Essay Contest on Genocide.” In this program, grade 11 students are asked to give written answers to broad and thought-provoking questions about genocide. Prizes for the best essays will be awarded as follows: 1st \$1,500, 2nd \$1,250, 3rd \$1,000. The prize money is intended to help students with their university tuition.

The essay is in two parts. The first part contains a series of questions about genocide, its definition, and several case studies, that every contestant must answer. In the second part, students can choose one of several subjects to answer in depth. The entire submission is expected to be approximately 4,000 words. The deadline for submitting essays is the end of April 2009. Essays will be graded by a team of the Zoryan Institute’s specialists. Prizes will be awarded at the end of May in a special ceremony. Every contestant will receive a gift from the Institute for their efforts.

In August 2007, the Ontario Ministry of Education approved a grade 11 curriculum for the teaching of Genocide and Human Rights (CHG38M). As a result, the Toronto District School Board adopted its own curriculum in June 2008, and the A.R.S. Armenian School in Toronto was one of the first schools in Ontario to teach the approved curriculum in the fall of 2008. With this in mind, the Zoryan Institute decided to run the competition as a pilot project. The Institute’s objective is to test the program at the A.R.S. School, with a view to expanding it to Armenian schools across North America, once financial sponsors for the program in each locale are secured. Zoryan welcomes inquiries from educators, parents and sponsors about bringing this program to other schools.

“We are especially pleased to name this program in memory of Aram Aivazian, a successful businessman, author of a book and numerous articles, and ardent campaigner against denial, who believed firmly in the importance of education and raising awareness of human rights in youth,” stated K.M. Greg Sarkissian, President of the Zoryan Institute. “It is therefore very appropriate to name this program in his honour,” Sarkissian concluded.



Aram Aivazian

Armen Martirosian, Principal of the A.R.S. Armenian School, expressed his appreciation for the program this way. “We are very pleased to have the Zoryan Institute launch their pilot program here. This program will facilitate students engaging themselves in this challenging subject. Zoryan’s comparative approach demonstrates how the Armenian Genocide is part of the larger story of genocide in human history, and helps students be more aware of its universal lessons. This comparative study of genocide helps our youth understand not only their history and identity, but also the connections they have to their fellow human beings.”

Roger Smith, Chairman of Zoryan’s Academic Board of Directors, commented, “I see that the issue of human rights has become global in scope, and the challenge of understanding these rights has never been greater. I am very pleased that the A.R.S. School has adopted this curriculum and this pilot project, whose objective is to encourage students in grade 11 across Canada and the US to take a deeper interest in genocide and human rights studies. It is my hope that the program will help sensitize and motivate Armenian students to make these subjects a lifelong pursuit.”

The Zoryan Institute is the parent organization of the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, which runs an annual, accredited university program on the subject and is co-publisher of *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* in partnership with the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the University of Toronto Press. It is the first non-profit, international center devoted to the research and documentation of contemporary issues with a focus on Genocide, Diaspora and Armenia. For more information please contact the Zoryan Institute by email zoryan@zoryaninstitute.org or telephone (416) 250-9807.