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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **CONTACT**: Beth Broussalian

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**MER DOON RESIDENT RECEIVES MASTER’S DEGREE**

*For the First Time Since its Inception,*

*A Resident of Mer Doon Earns Her Master’s Degree*

**Echmiadzin, Armenia** – Mer Doon is proud to announce that one of its residents, Margarita Grigoryan, has received her master’s degree with honors from Yerevan State University. Margarita studied Cultural Studies and wrote her thesis on “The Culture of Tourism in the City of Echmiadzin.” What’s more impressive is that Margarita was born with a vision impairment that has been an ongoing physical challenge.

Mer Doon is a home in Echmiadzin for young women (18 and over) who have outgrown the orphanage system or come from at-risk households. Mer Doon offers a college education as well as a loving and compassionate family environment, promoting the transition to independent living and mainstream society.

Margarita said, “I truly love to learn. Because of my persistence and commitment, and because of all the support from Mer Doon, I was able to continue my studies and obtain my master’s degree.”

“Margarita was able to beat the odds and be our first Mer Doon resident to achieve a graduate degree. She is bright, conscientious, and hardworking, and will be a great asset to any company,” stated Tigranoohi Karapetyan, Mer Doon Executive Director and Co-Founder.

Margarita, who is now 23, entered the orphanage system at age 11. She was sent to the orphanage because her father had gone missing, and her mother was declared mentally and physically disabled. Her two younger sisters, Marieta and Arpi, entered the orphanage with her because of the family’s dire circumstances. She received her bachelor’s degree (also known as a Red Diploma) at Vanadzor State Pedagogical Institute named after Hovhannes Toumanyan, majoring in Socio-Cultural Activity.

Margarita’s career aspiration is to work in the tourism industry. She has already received a certificate to be an official tour guide. She would love to work not only as a guide, but also to develop tour packages and proudly represent Armenia to foreign travelers. In addition, she is fascinated with Indian culture and would like to use her education to promote this passion in Armenia.

Mer Doon will engage its Job & Internship Program to help Margarita obtain the position of her dreams. The program provides Mer Doon residents with experience in a professional environment to teach them skills for permanent employment. The program offers numerous benefits to Armenian society. First, it introduces into the workforce a new pool of well-educated, experienced employees. It also promotes new partnerships between Mer Doon and the organizations, businesses, and companies that operate in Armenia and abroad. Perhaps most importantly, it gives young Armenian women, who have grown up in the orphanage system, hope for the future.

Mer Doonprovides orphaned and disadvantaged young women (ages 18-24) a loving and nurturing place to call “home.” Our mission is to educate and empower them with skills to live independently in mainstream society. The organization’s Co-Founder and Executive Director, Tigranuhi Karapetyan, manages the daily operations of the program. Mer Doon is located in Echmiadzin, Armenia. It is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the State of Connecticut and a nongovernmental organization registered in the Republic of Armenia. Tax-deductible donations can be made by going to [www.Mer-Doon.com](http://www.Mer-Doon.com) and clicking on “Donate”. For information, please email merdoonarmenia@gmail.com.

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