



BRINGING TOGETHER THE TWO GEORGIA'S

ATSCC continues its partnership with OPEN WORLD PROGRAMS

The ATSCC and the National Peace Foundation hosted a delegation from the country of Georgia for the Open World Program. The purpose of this visit was to let Georgian Judges observe the jury trial process in criminal cases, since their country is adopting a jury trial system for its criminal courts.

Participants included: Gocha Kalandadze, the Chief of Court Marshals; Valerian Tsertsvadze, Head of Court of Appeals; Giorgi Darakvelidze Judge in City Court of Kutaisi; & Zaza Meishvili, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court. The group was facilitated by Tamar Khulordava.

The ATSCC planned an extensive schedule for the delegation that included visiting with Federal Judges, observing the jury selection process in Federal Court, visiting a jail in Lake City with the City Manager, Jerry Garr; discussions with criminal attorney Buddy Parker with the firm of Maloy, Jenkins and Parker; visiting the Georgia Supreme Court and the Georgia Court of Appeals; and attending an evidence class at the Emory University School of Law.

The visit was full of hard work but the delegation also had the opportunity to visit the National Museum of Patriotism, the High Museum of Art, the Georgia Aquarium & Atlanta Hawks basketball game where they met fellow countryman Zaza Pachulia. Overall the visit was a great success and wonderful friendships and business opportunities have developed through this collaboration.



Zaza Meishvili & Valeri Tsitsadze
visiting State Court of Georgia



Guests visit Federal Court in
Atlanta



Guests visit the Georgia Aquarium

**REMINDER: ATSCC meeting on Thursday, January 14 at 6:30 PM;
Atlantic Center Plaza, 1180 West Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 900, Atlanta, Georgia,
30309. Please RSVP Nina@atscc.org**

2nd Annual Taste of Georgia Fundraiser



Dr. Walker, John Hall,
Archil Undilashvili, Sandra Roelofs,
Batu Kutelia, Nina Perteneva,
Zaza Pachulia

On September 19, the ATSCC held the second annual "Taste of Georgia" fundraiser to benefit relief efforts in the country of Georgia. The evening was a great success, full of wonderful friends from both Georgia's and tasty Georgian dishes prepared by local Georgian community members.

The evening's menu featured a selection of Georgian cuisine, including khachapuri (cheese bread), eggplant with walnut sauce, dishes prepared with local Georgian spices, and wine bottled in Georgia. Atlanta's Besharat Gallery displayed a selection of paintings by Georgian artist, Merab Gagiladze, while a local jazz band entertained the guests.

Sandra Roelofs Saakashvili, the First Lady of Georgia, and Zaza Pachulia, born in Tbilisi and now an NBA player with the Atlanta Hawks, were recognized as the 2009 ATSCC Persons of the Year for their efforts in helping to build relationships between the two Georgia's. Georgia's ambassador to the United States, Batu Kutelia, also received a certificate of recognition for his work benefitting Georgia and the U.S. Dr. Ken Walker was the 2008 ATSCC person of the year.



City Hall during the Fundraiser

Other notable attendees included Major General William T. (Terry) Nesbitt, the Adjutant General of the Georgia National Guard, and John E. Hall, Jr., current chairman of the ATSCC. One of the founding partners of Atlanta law firm Hall, Booth, Smith & Slover, P.C., Mr. Hall was recently appointed as Honorary Consul to the nation of Georgia.

The Taste of Georgia event raised a total of \$7380 a portion of which will be used to assist Georgians who lost their homes in last year's conflict. When war broke out a year ago between the Russian Federation and the country of Georgia over the territory of South Ossetia, the conflict grabbed international headlines. While the hostilities have since subsided and the media's attention has largely moved elsewhere, Georgia still struggles with the humanitarian problem of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). According to a report of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, as of July 2009 there were roughly 37,000 Georgians who had fled South Ossetia that were still unable to return to their homes.



John Hall, Chairman of ATSCC

As part of its mission to build relationships between the state and the country of Georgia, the Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee (ATSCC) supports a variety of charitable efforts. Allied with Georgia to Georgia, Inc., another non-profit organization dedicated to aiding needy children in Georgia, the Committee's current emphasis is on fundraising for relief programs that provide care for children and families who have been directly affected by the 2008 conflict.

ATSCC & GA 2 GA disburse Funds for Georgia IDPs

In response to the continuing needs of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) left homeless after the August 2008 Conflict, the Atlanta-Tbilisi Sister City Committee held its second Annual Fundraiser for their assistance. Some of the IDPs have been resettled into new settlements provided by the government, but many new (2008) and previous IDPs (those who escaped from Abkhazia in 1992) live in dire conditions at IDP Collective Centers in the city of Tbilisi itself. These centers lack even the most basic living infrastructure and daily needs.

The funds raised were divided into three segments.

The majority of the funds were used for one of these centers located in a former state building in Tbilisi. The building (as is the case for most of these collective centers) has no central water, electricity or sewer. The basement is full of waste which flushes from the three (single) Turkish bathrooms which serve 67 families.

On November 19th we distributed essential hygiene items to these 67 families. Given the spread of the HINI virus and threat of a pandemic outbreak expected in early winter, we felt that this was the most urgent need. We supplied them with a six month supply of laundry powder, soaps, shampoos, dish-washing liquids, toothpaste, personal hygiene items and other everyday essential items in hopes of preventing illness and to meet basic needs.

A second portion of the Aid provided by the ATSCC went to the non-profit Hellenic Aid Society, which delivers free and minimal cost medical aid to the IDPs in Tbilisi and the outer regions. The Organization has a mobile medical unit which travels to the various sites and renders medical services to the most disadvantaged of Georgia's population. The Hellenic Aid has an excellent, qualified and long-standing reputation as being one of the most committed agencies devoted to serving this vulnerable group.

The third portion of the funds raised provided winter outerwear to the special childcare institution of Kitski, which serves 154 children and youth in a remote mountainous region of western Georgia. These children are from families which are unable to even feed or provide basic medical care for their children. This institution receives very limited state funding and we made the decision to purchase warm winter coats and vests for the children. Winter can be extremely harsh at Kitski and this institution has limited heat (just small space heaters).

You will never know the gratitude of these people who are in direst need ~ the most socially vulnerable in Georgia – from the very young to the elderly. As winter approaches you are providing life-essential assistance.

Didi Gmadloba!

As Tamuna Grigolia, who oversaw all the purchasing and delivery of the items in Tbilisi, wrote: *“Endless Gratitude towards the Wonderful People from the far Atlanta, Georgia who stretched their hands to support and opened their hearts to help.”*

