



A.G.B.U. ALEXANDER PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Cnr Thuddungra and Namba Roads
Duffys Forest NSW 2084
Phone: 486 3266



Paul Kalinian addressing Alexander School children

A MEMORABLE VISIT FOR ALL

At the invitation of the students and staff of Alexander Primary School, Mr & Mrs Paul Kalinian graced our school with their presence on Wednesday, 19th June when they attended a special concert in dedication to the famous American-Armenian writer William Saroyan.

During this term, upper primary students have been studying the life and works of Saroyan as well as other well-known, modern Armenian writers including Silva Gaboudikian, Barouyr Sevag and Hovannes Shiraz. The research of these notable twentieth century writers has given students an understanding of different styles of writing; the influences and circumstances that surround the thoughts of a writer. The study of biographies of notable Armenians is part of a language unit in our school's Armenian program.

William Saroyan is without doubt, characteristically different from his counterparts and unique in his own right. Mr Kalinian's explanations however, shed a different light to the Saroyan we have grown to understand. Despite the fact that Saroyan only wrote prose in the English language, his writings (which Saroyan notes himself) have been from an Armenian heart reflecting his proud Armenian spirit. And through Mr Kalinian's recount of the cherished years he spent befriended to this extraordinary man, we began to understand the true sense and ideals of Saroyan. He was passionate about his writings and extremely protective of commercial exploitation. Hence the image of a harsh, profound and intimidating person.

During the assembly, students paid tribute to the American born writer by reading his biography and reciting, what is possibly regarded as his most famous prose "The Armenian and the Armenian". The children then performed a variety of items showing how two different cultures can blend in harmony. The visitors delighted in the display of Australian folklore, with an Aboriginal corroboree performed by the younger students and an oration of Dorothea Mackellar's "I Love A Sunburnt Country". Emotions were intense however when the children performed songs and recitations clearly and distinctly in the Armenian language. And in the words of Saroyan, we witnessed "our own New Armenia". In his address, Mr Kalinian pointed out, how in each and every student he saw the spirit of Saroyan and if his friend could see what he saw today, he would feel very, very proud indeed.

Mr & Mrs Kalinian enjoyed the warmth and inspiration of the Alexander School ambience. They delighted in the creative talents of our students and expressed their joy and pleasure for a lovely afternoon. We are sure the Kalinians will return to Fresno, California, with fond memories of their visit to the AGBU Sydney Chapter.

The staff and students of Alexander School thank the AGBU for this rare and impressionable opportunity. ■