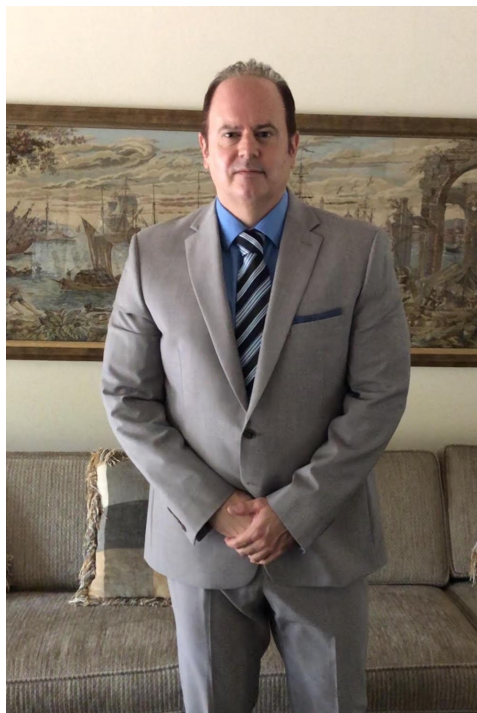


B LOS ANGELES **BEIRUT** SISTERS CITIES COMMITTEE

extended community. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented period impacting our current generation, and we haven't seen the magnitude of something like this before as we seek ways to prevent, protect, and persevere. I

hope and pray each and every one of you remained safe and careful in these trying times as we are currently exhibiting our resiliency to achieve a sense of normalcy once again. The Beirut port blast on August 4th ripped the city to shreds and reopened old wounds for a fragile population already facing civil unrest, an ongoing socio-economic crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout these times of uncertainty, our Los Angeles Beirut Sister Cities board has been in communication and remained engaged in activities compliant to our mission statement. As the tragedy of August 4th occurred, LABSC took immediate action that day with helping our sister city, Beirut, in a targeted need. As the days went on, we received a lot of media coverage locally and in different markets as we illustrated our LA-Beirut alliance. We told our story, and communicated the important work our board does. It took an act of misfortune to convey our goodwill message to the extended community, but LABSC continues to serve our diaspora and beyond, promoting the many good things these two cities have to offer. See below for some of the positive things we've done, and you'll hear soon about some of the other future activities and initiatives we will be working on. It's been an honor serving this board and the community as its president (currently in my 3rd year) and I'm looking forward to informing you and communicating what's to come!



Sincerely,
Tommy J. Tedros
President, Los Angeles Beirut Sister Cities Committee

Feed the Hungry Initiative

During most of year 2020, LABSC collaborated on a "Feeding Hungry Families" program that was operated by the Lebanese Food Bank. They packaged and distributed boxes filled with groceries and got them to families in need. The LA Cedars Rotary Club organized the details, and we partnered with the World Lebanese Cultural Union and Lebanese Rotary Clubs on these efforts. As the ongoing political and economic crisis have tragically reduced a decent way of life, providing food to families in need was a priority. The events of August 4th only added to the severe needs of each and every Lebanese. We were able to assist the various organizations in their mission to fight against hunger. Each box created provided food to feed one family of four for a month. Towards the end of last year, over \$156,000 was sent to Lebanon for investment purposes and over 1 million meals have been distributed. Click [here](#) to donate to the campaign today.



Arab American Heritage Month

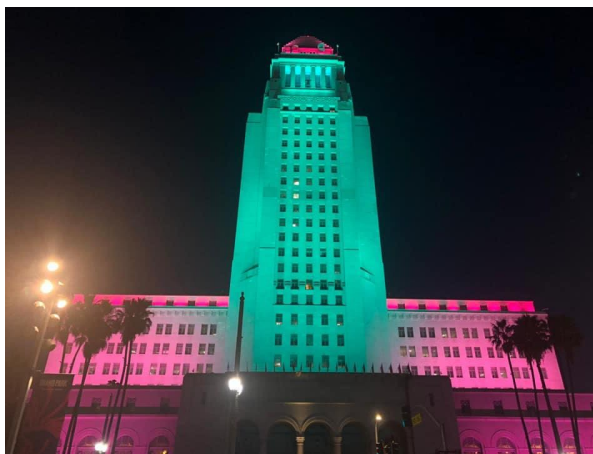
April marks National Arab American Heritage Month. It celebrates the rich Arab American heritage and culture and



pays tribute to the contributions of Arab Americans and Arabic-speaking Americans. LABSC Committee took the lead along with other local organizations, and with the assistance of Los Angeles city departments, in working on a widespread awareness of these achievements made by our local Arab American community. On April 28th, a proclamation was issued during the LA City Council meeting noting that the month of April will be officially recognized throughout the city of Los Angeles as Arab American Heritage Month. Watch [here](#).

Fundraising Campaign for AUBMC

On August 4, 2020, Beirut was rocked by an explosion that had killed nearly 200 people and injured at least 6,000. We felt it was our duty, as sons and daughters of Lebanon, to assist in providing aid and financial relief somehow to those who can best administer it to the people affected by this calamity. The monetary aid and the procurement of 5,000 surgical gowns were directly donated to the American University of Beirut Medical Center. We wanted to assist in alleviating the issues that had arisen as a result of the massive influx of wounded. A special



LABSC committee was established the afternoon of August 4th to target these specific needs and established the GoFundMe campaign that netted well over \$50,000. We were extremely fortunate in having that publicized in the local media that night and, subsequently, for the weeks that followed. On August 6th, Los Angeles City Hall was lit up with the Lebanese flag in a sign of solidarity with its sister city related to the explosions in Beirut on August 4th. City Councilman Mitch O'Farrell spoke on behalf of the local representation at the steps of City Hall during a brief ceremony, as he has been a friend of our community for many years now. We worked on the acquisition of the gowns in the following months as they were finally sent out and received by AUBMC last December. Additionally, we donated the remaining funds, that same month, for the use on critical care patients at AUBMC.

LABSC Webinar on Preserving Cultural Heritage

LABSC Committee hosted a webinar last December where we discussed the preservation of Lebanon's cultural heritage, rehabilitation of some of Lebanon's most famous and iconic architectural buildings, and restoration identity of these and other symbolic points of interest in Beirut and other



surrounding communities. The featured speaker was Ms. Joumana Chahal Timery, Co-Founder and CEO of École Supérieure Internationale de Paris. Timery is devoted to heritage preservation, and advocating the promotion of the heritage of Lebanon in France and around the world with the Lebanese diaspora.

What was covered during this webinar consisted of the following:

1. Showed that the heritage question defines the history of Lebanon, the economy of Lebanon, as well as the ever-so-resistant identity of Lebanon.
2. Discussed the identity issue being at the heart of the heritage issue. We, Lebanese in the diaspora, have to take on this mission to raise awareness regarding this issue.
3. Analyzed the way corruption is a key factor hampering the safeguarding of this heritage.

Student Exchange Program Alumni Meetup

Last October, LABSC Committee held a Zoom reunion with the students from Lebanon that participated in our previous engineering students exchange programs here in Los Angeles. We had full attendance from the three different student program groups, 12 students total.



Discussion centered around what each student has been doing since their Los Angeles experience, what they learned while here locally, what they achieved at their respective universities, and the type of professional jobs they currently have (whether it's in Lebanon or another location in the Middle East). Several of the former participants have entered entrepreneurial ventures and have capitalized on what they learned in LA and applied it to their local infrastructures. It was the first time we held a reunion and will continue to chart their progress with future online visits.

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