



elin pelin
FOUNDATION

2021-2022 REPORT

Overview of Elin Pelin Foundation
activities and finances between
June 1, 2021 and May 31, 2022.

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Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends of Elin Pelin Foundation:

This past year was rocky and challenging as we lost not one but two friends. Mrs Dimitria Dzarbova, principal of Elin Pelin School and Mrs Mihaela Araktchieva, legacy member of the board of directors. Both ladies were great contributors to the Bulgarian-American Society in Houston.

Words fail to describe the grief we all felt when we lost Dimitria in September 2021. A beloved mother and wife, a devoted teacher and principal, she went above and beyond in everything she did. Because she gave so much of herself, the loss of her created a vast gap in our hearts and in the Bulgarian community. They say 'time heals all wounds'; we are yet to see if that is true. While still grieving, the best we could do is keep the Bulgarian school successful as we all know that is what she would have wanted. Ms. Rayna Levakova and Ms. Diana Angelova stepped up as principal and assistant principal of Elin Pelin Bulgarian School. The staff of the Foundation and Faculty are grateful for their help with this transition. On a personal level, I have promised myself to remain close to both her children – Lily and Alex Manchev and give them my sincere love and care. I will do everything in my power to keep that promise, because this is the only way for me to repay the kindness and good, Dimitria has done for all of us.



Mrs. Mihaela Araktchieva passed away in March 2022. Mihaela will be missed by her family and her many friends in the Bulgarian-American community. Mihaela was an invaluable asset to the Elin Pelin Foundation in its beginning years. In her 5 years of dedicated work, she created and contributed to establishing the Elin Pelin Library. After her sudden departure in March 2022, the Bulgarian-American community gathered enough funds to ensure she will be sent home with the honor and style she deserved. As a member of the Araktchiev family, I must thank everyone who donated. Without your help, this sad moment in our lives would have been devastating. We are all eternally grateful for your support!



Despite these sad events, Elin Pelin Foundation had a successful year. Our reserve contribution has never been higher. To me that is a sign that establishing an Annual Scholarship, or a Grant would be a logical next step. It is time to put Elin Pelin Foundation alongside with other foundations where we could contribute to the success of talented individuals and community members. After all our company is nonprofit organization dedicated to support education, arts, cultural enrichment programs and to provide cross-cultural experience.

This year is also special because our Foundation is celebrating its 10th year Anniversary. I could not be any prouder with our accomplishments. Some of the oldest members may remember that a couple of years

after the creation of Elin Pelin Foundation, the members had to step up to the board and keep the newly accomplished status of the Foundation as a Public Charity. Today that status has been defended time and again. The company's financial situation has been on a steady climb since 2014. Everyone whether a member or an officer of the Foundation should feel responsible for this success. This is not the time to be shy and modest. Without your contributions, however small, there would have been no Elin Pelin Foundation. What better way to celebrate our success than with a formal and exclusive Gala event? To add value to the membership, we will make the event free only to members of Elin Pelin Foundation. We hope you will encourage your relatives and friends to become members the foundation and attend this special event.

In conclusion I would like to invite all members to consider becoming part of The Board or Staff of Elin Pelin Foundation. The Board's main tasks are to search and/or provide funds and lead projects. A director's position is a one-year commitment with some very reasonable requirements and expectations. Any idea which benefits the community could be turned into reality if you are willing to dedicate your time and efforts. Elin Pelin Foundation can provide you with a team to split the workload and to help find sponsors. The Board of directors is elected anew by the foundation members on an annual basis. A Staff position is a lengthier commitment, but the hiring process is done by The Board members – not through elections. If interested in applying, please talk to any representative of The Foundation. Anyone from our team would be happy to answer your questions and help you apply.



Sincerely,

Gergana Araktchiev

President, Elin Pelin Foundation

31 May 2022

Bulgarian School

School Year 2021 – 2022 46 Enrolled Students

After the sudden passing of Mrs. Dzarbova the Faculty was understandably in shock; it took us few weeks to regroup and be ready for the schoolyear to come. Despite that rocky start, First Bulgarian School in Houston Elin Pelin opened its doors in October 2021 for another successful school year. With hybrid classes at two locations and Zoom classrooms; with responsible and skilled teachers and our newly assigned principals Ms. Levakova and Ms. Angelova our school-year passed smoothly. Over 40 students were signed up and graduated.

Ms Rayna Levakova – principal

Ms Diana Angelova – assistant principal

Mrs. Diana Angelova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva, Ms. Rayna Levakova, Ms. Valentina Kamburova, Mrs. Boryana Veneva, Ms. Petya Petkova – instructors

Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT support

In-Person Christmas Celebration and Virtual Presentation – December 2021

This year's Breakfast with Santa event was replaced by a celebration at our North Houston Location and a virtual presentation by the students of Bulgarian School Elin Pelin. They recited poems, sang songs and danced on a pre-recorded video. After the heartwarming video, Sergeant Radoslav Mihailov from the Houston Police Department gave out Christmas Presents to all in-person students on behalf of the Bulgarian American Police Association. The kindness of the officers of B.A.P.A. made us feel the Holiday Spirit as we watched our children play with the donated toys.



Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT & coordinator of Virtual Presentation
Mrs. Boryana Veneva, Ms. Rayna Levakova, Ms. Diana Angelova,
Mrs. Valentina Kamburova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva – instructors
Sergeant Radoslav Mihailov – volunteer

Extracurricular Activities – November 2021 & February 2022

This year's extracurricular activities included crafts focused on learning about traditional Bulgarian embroidery patterns.

In November 2021 Mrs. Valentina Kamburova arranged a lesson with the artist Kina Bagovska. Together they held an online class, and Ms. Kina Bagovska taught the students of two schools simultaneously.

In February 2022 Mrs. Mariya Shumareva and Ms. Martha Kasabova took the project to heart. Mrs. Shumareva prepared craft kits and information on the different Bulgarian Folklore embroidery patterns. Ms. Martha Kasabova helped with the instruction. All teachers helped the students learn different terms and symbols meanings.



At the end of the schoolyear an exhibition of drawings, crafts, and embroidery was presented by the students.

In tone with the school's project, and to mark the upcoming International Women's Day Ms. Petya Petkova (history teacher at Elin Pelin Bulgarian School and a skillful artist) created and donated handcrafted jewelry with Traditional Bulgarian Folklore Embroidery Patterns to all the ladies Staff and Faculty of Elin Pelin school and foundation.

Mrs. Valentina Kamburova, Ms. Rayna Levakova – coordinators

Ms. Rayna Levakova, Mrs. Diana Angelova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva, Mrs. Valentina Kamburova, Mrs. Boryana Veneva – instructors

Mrs. Mariya Shumareva, Ms. Martha Kasabova – volunteers and board members

Ms. Petya Petkova – artist and volunteer

Springtime Festivities – February & March 2022

To celebrate the Spring (1st of March), the Bulgarian Independence Day (3rd of March) and Bulgarian Mother's Day (8th of March), the students crafted greeting cards and learned about some of the most famous Bulgarian Revolutionaries and National Heroes. Elin Pelin Foundation distributed martenitsas made and/or donated by Ms. Petya Petkova.





Ms. Diana Angelova – coordinator
Ms. Diana Angelova, Ms. Valentina Kamburova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva – In-person instructors
Ms. Rayna Levakova, Ms. Petya Petkova, Mrs. Boryana Veneva – Online instructors
Ms. Petya Petkova – artist
Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – volunteer

Online meeting with Antonina Duridanova – May 2022

For the last school day of 8th grade, Ms. Petya Petkova, history teacher at Elin Pelin Bulgarian school invited a special guest to talk to the students and tell them her memories of living under the Communist regime in Bulgaria and her immigration to the United States. Mrs. Duridanova is the author of *New Beginnings: From behind the iron curtain to America*. After hearing her speak, the team of Elin Pelin Foundation is enthused to invite her for a live talk and book signing at Elin Pelin Library.

Ms. Petya Petkova – coordinator
Mrs. Antonina Duridanova – author



End of the school year – Graduates – Class of 2022

A week before the last school day, our first graduates – eight graders had a prom-like evening at La Centerra in Katy TX. The evening included fine dining and live music. At the end of the evening the class received beautiful gifts with a Bulgarian-Texan theme. Hopefully our graduates will feel inspired to pass on the love for Bulgaria by remaining a part of the school and foundation in the years to come.

Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator and driver

Mrs. Mintcho Araktchiev – Event Photographer and driver

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova, Mrs. Melissa Iliev – volunteers and drivers

Ms. Petya Petkova – pendants artist



End of the school year – Outdoor Celebration – May 2022

This school year ended with an outdoor celebration. The students of First Bulgarian School in Houston Elin Pelin recited poems, danced, and presented the exhibition of their crafts. The outdoor celebration included several outdoor games with prizes. There were sandwiches, pizza and cookies and other treats for the hungry. The event was a great success with presence of students from different cities and even states.

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – coordinator and host

Mr. Petar Gerdzhikov – Sound Engineer and DJ

Mrs. Diana Angelova, Ms. Valentina Kamburova, Ms. Rayna Levakova – instructors

Mrs. Hristina Pavlina, Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – volunteers

Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Event Photographer



Fundraisers, Grants & Social Events

Reliant Gives – 2021

Reliant, an NRG company maintained its position as the most significant corporate supporter of Elin Pelin Foundation for 2021-2022. With several charitable programs, their contributions of more than \$3,000 have funded our social and school events and the latest order of T-shirts.

Mrs. Gergana Aratkchiev – grant coordinator

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – social events coordinator and host

Mrs. Hristina Pavlina, Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – T-shirt coordinators



Bulgarian Parliamentary Election – July 2021

The newly elected parliament could not find the necessary votes to form a cabinet. The president of the republic assigned a temporary cabinet and new elections were scheduled for July 11th, 2021. The Polling station was once again at Elin Pelin Library.

Bulgarian citizens, residing in Houston and other Texas cities had the opportunity to cast their vote for Bulgaria’s parliamentary elections. Along with the representative of the Bulgarian Embassy, a team of local volunteers opened the polling station. A total of 93 people exercised their rights to vote.

Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – coordinator, Facebook and e-mail correspondent

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova, Mrs. Mihaela Aratkchieva, Mr. Vladislav Manchev, Mr. Venelin Pavlin, Mr. Ivo Konstantinov – polling staff members

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – volunteer

Mrs. Ana Toneva – reserve

Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT Support



Bulgarian Presidential Election and Ballotage – November 2021

Отворихме!



On the 14th and the 21st of November 2021 Bulgarian citizens, voted for Bulgaria’s presidential elections. Just as before a team of local volunteers and a representative from the Bulgarian Embassy opened a polling station at Elin Pelin Foundation’s main office. A

total of 60 people exercised their rights to vote.



Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – coordinator, Facebook and e-mail correspondent

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova, Mr. Hrabar Alexiev, Mr. Vladislav Manchev, Ms. Anelia Alexandrova, Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – polling staff members

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – volunteer

Ms. Maria Velikova – reserve

Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT Support

Friendsgiving Happy Hour - November 2021

Organized by Ms. Martha Kasabova and held at Kirby Ice House Memorial, The Friendsgiving Happy Hour was a project to gather members of the Bulgarian-American community for a casual drink and a friendly conversation. Professionals and busy individuals can get together after work at a brewery or bar. Topics for discussion usually include Elin Pelin Foundation’s upcoming events and information on more opportunities for volunteers. We are looking forward to making this Elin Pelin Foundation project a monthly event in the upcoming year.

Ms. Martha Kasabova – coordinator, Facebook correspondent

Bulgarian Consulate Days – December 2021

On the weekend of December 18th and 19th 2021 Bulgarian citizens had the opportunity to renew their passports and IDs without having to travel to Washington DC or Chicago.

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – coordinator

Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – Facebook and e-mail correspondent

Mr. Marin Nikolov – volunteer

Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT Support



Blato Zlato Concert - March 2022

Event sponsored by Holy Christmas Lights and ARA Computers and Consulting Inc.

Based in New Orleans, Blato Zlato has gained a loyal international following after touring in both the U.S. and Europe. The group has been featured several times on Bulgarian National Television and Radio and has appeared on Folk Radio UK, NYC Radio Live, and the Village Voice. This talented group captivated our ears and souls with beautiful Bulgarian harmonies. We were honored to welcome the band to Houston, TX just days after their appearance at Southwest (SXSW) Festival in Austin, which was one of the biggest music festivals and conferences in Texas celebrating tech, film, and music industries!

The concert was held on Sunday, March 20th,

2022 at 4PM in Katy, TX! Bulgarians and Americans danced hand in hand, forming a traditional Bulgarian horo.

Ms. Martha Kasabova – coordinator, Facebook and e-mail correspondent

Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – assistant coordinator, volunteer



Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – volunteer
Mr. Petar Gerdzhikov – Sound Engineer
Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Event Photographer

We, the Bulgarians! Vladi Aprilov and Vasil Vasilev

Хюстън, нямахме проблеми! Ние
Българите се случи пред феноменална
публика и в препълнена зала!



Zueka - April 2022

This humorous theatrical performance helped gather funds for a little boy in need - Simeon Antoniov Miroslavov. More than eight thousand dollars were donated by the audience in USA. The two comedians made us laugh and cry while filling our hearts with nostalgia, hope, and longing for the motherland – Bulgaria.

**Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – coordinator,
Facebook and e-mail correspondent**
Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – assistant coordinator
Mrs. Mariya Shumareva – Newsletter coordinator and volunteer
Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Event Photographer



Easter Picnic – April 2022

To celebrate Bulgarian Orthodox Easter, a picnic was organized by volunteers. Dozens of people spent a beautiful sunny day outside, comparing colorful eggs and delicious Easter breads. Kids and adults played games and sports and danced Bulgarian Folk Dances.

Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator
Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – volunteer

Светли Великденски празници!



Gergiovden – May 2022

Organized by Gergana Araktchiev, Gergiovden is not just another name-day but also a Bulgarian National Holiday which celebrates bravery.

One of the most iconic dishes served at such event is roasted lamb.

On this evening, few members had the opportunity to renew their membership and make a small donation to Elin Pelin Foundation.

Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator and volunteer

Other

Website and Newsletter

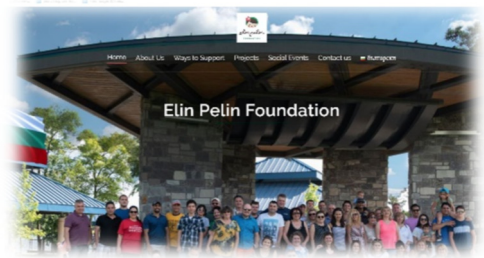
Please visit our website www.elinpelin-houston.org to find out more about our projects, events, and school curriculum.

If you wish to be included on our mailing list for our newly designed Newsletter, please send us your e-mail address to newsletter@elinpelin-houston.org or click [here](#) to subscribe.



Скъпи членове и приятели,

- Фондация „Елин Пелин“ ще направи годишната си среща на 6-ти юни, събота от 10:00 до 12:00 часа като ZOOM среща.
- Добре дошли са да присъстват всички настоящи и бъдещи членове на Фондацията.



Mrs. Mariya Shumareva – Newsletter coordinator
Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT Support

2022-2023 Upcoming Social Events

Elin Pelin Library Meet the Author – Fall 2022

“I am not a writer,” confesses Antonina Duridanova in the first line of her memoir, but during her retirement party, she promised a friend that she’d write a book about her life. *New Beginnings: From Behind the Iron Curtain to America* (Fulton Books) proves that the author keeps her promises.

Born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1949, Duridanova immigrated to the United States during the Cold War in 1970, which, she notes, was a time “when it was difficult for even birds to fly over the Iron Curtain.” *New Beginnings* spans her early childhood in Bulgaria, her escape to the west at age 20, and her life and career in America through her retirement in 2014 — over 50 years in total (including a brief time jump to discuss 2020). That may seem like an exceptionally lengthy timeframe for one book to cover, but Duridanova has thoughtfully curated the selection of memories she shares in an effort to demonstrate “the meaning of courage, sacrifice, endurance, perseverance, and love for family and friends.”

Elin Pelin team is excited to meet and learn from Antonina Duridanova about her book *New Beginnings: From Behind the Iron Curtain to America*. A book signing event will be announced in the Fall of 2022.

Elin Pelin Foundation 10th year Anniversary – Fall 2022

As one of the first member exclusive events, our foundation’s 10th birthday will be celebrated with a gala. Formal wear or your Sunday’s best will be required. The event will be ticketed, yet it will be free to Elin Pelin Foundation members. More information will be given in the Fall of 2022.

Bulgarian School “Elin Pelin” in Austin – Fall 2022

The Bulgarian Teachers in Austin have requested to eventually join Elin Pelin Foundation and become an Austin Branch of Bulgarian School Elin Pelin. Nothing is final yet but we, the staff and faculty, are excited and look forward to working with the ladies from Austin.

Elin Pelin Annual Grant Proposal– 2022-2023

The foundation and all its projects have been quite successful. As the Reserve Contribution shows Elin Pelin Foundation maybe able to afford creating a project for supporting young deserving people in a form of an annual grant or scholarship. The proposal is yet to be voted on by the new board of Elin Pelin Foundation.

A Shout Out to Our Biggest Supporters:



- **NRG Reliant** – Donation of \$3,000 or more – To encourage and reinforce employee contributions to those in need, NRG supports a variety of goodwill programs year-round such as Reliant Gives, Blackbaud Giving Fund, NRG Matching Gifts, and Volunteer Days
- **ARA Computers and Consulting Inc** – Corporate Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Holy Christmas Lights** – Corporate Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Gergana & Mintcho Araktchiev** – Individual Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Borislav & Tanya Tchakarov** – Individual Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Mathew Law Firm PLLC** – Corporate Donation of \$500 or more
- **First Federal Bank** – Corporate Donation of \$400 or more – Donor Advised Fund on behalf of their employee Nataliya Espey
- **Borislav Ganov** – Individual Donation of \$300 or more with Monthly Donations of \$25
- **Network for Good** – Fundraisers of \$300 or more
 - **Ana Toneva** – Raised \$300 or more initiated Birthday Fundraiser
- **Pledgeling Foundation** – Fundraisers of \$200 or more
 - **Mintcho Araktchiev** – Raised \$200 or more initiated Birthday Fundraiser
- **Kina Bagovska** – Donation of \$200 or more from project Traditional Bulgarian Embroideries
- **Hrabar Alexiev** – Donation of \$200 or more from project Bulgarian Presidential Elections
- **Amazon** – Recurring Quarterly Donations of about \$50 or more for a total of \$200 or more - AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to a charitable organization of the buyer's choice.
- **Kroger** – Recurring Quarterly Donations of about \$20 or more for a total of \$100 or more - Kroger is committed to helping our communities grow and prosper. Year after year Kroger supports local schools, churches, and other nonprofit organizations through Kroger Community Rewards Program

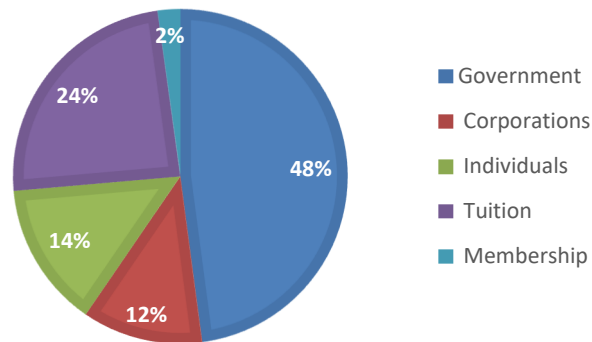
The recognition of our generous community is important to us, and we have worked hard to ensure that all information is included and accurate. If you find any errors or omissions, please contact us at 713-715-8101.

Finance

Unaudited Financial Data Summary for 2021-2022

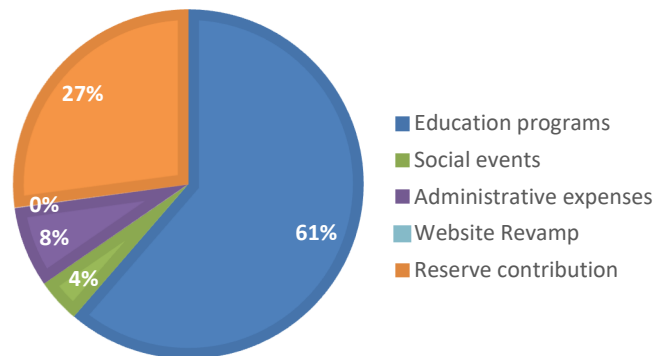
Inflow

<i>Government</i>	\$ 25,906	48%
<i>Corporations</i>	\$ 6,309	12%
<i>Individuals</i>	\$ 7,595	14%
<i>Tuition</i>	\$ 13,094	24%
<i>Membership</i>	\$ 1,175	2%
Total	\$ 54,079	100%



Expenses

<i>Education programs</i>	\$ 33,160	61%
<i>Social events and Fundraisers</i>	\$ 2,200	4%
<i>Administrative expenses</i>	\$ 4,009	8%
<i>Other</i>	\$ 45	<1%
<i>Reserve contribution</i>	\$ 14,665	27%
Total	\$ 54,079	100%



The financial summary includes gifts and activities between June 1, 2021, and May 31, 2022, and is produced internally by Elin Pelin Foundation. The recognition of our generous community is important to us, and we have worked hard to ensure that all information is included and accurate. If you find any errors or omissions, please contact us at 713-715-8101.

Elin Pelin Foundation Staff and Board

Board of Directors 2021-2022

Martha Kasabova.....	Director
Nedyalko Yankov.....	Director
Vessi Andreeva.....	Director
Hristina Pavlina.....	Director
Mariya Shumareva.....	Director

Officers

Gergana Araktchiev.....	President
Nevena Nikolova.....	Treasurer
Mintcho Araktchiev.....	Secretary
TJ Hayes & Co.....	Controller

Faculty

Rayna Levakova.....	Principal
Diana Angelova.....	Assistant Principal
Valentina Kamburova.....	Teacher
Diana Angelova.....	Teacher
Daniela Kashukeeva.....	Teacher
Rayna Levakova.....	Teacher
Boryana Veneva.....	Teacher
Petya Petkova.....	Teacher