



*elin pelin*  
FOUNDATION

# 2022-2023 REPORT

Overview of Elin Pelin Foundation  
activities and finances between  
June 1, 2022 and May 31, 2023.

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## Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends of Elin Pelin Foundation:

As some of you know, after the passing of Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Rayna Levakova stepped in as the new principal of the First Bulgarian School in Houston Elin Pelin. Under Mrs. Levakova's leadership, the school grew and is now not only online, but also in three cities with four physical locations. We have more than eighty registered students for 2022-2023. The school year was a complete success in every branch.

Having said that, Elin Pelin Foundation had a somewhat unusual year, where our expenses exceeded the contributions. That is not surprising to us since the school grew as much as it did in such a short period of time. Additionally, it has never been a secret that the school as a project cannot survive only by the subsidies and tuition alone. We need all the financial support we can get; hence more social events and fundraisers should be organized to raise the needed funds. Our reserve contribution from past years was there to fill the gap, but today I plead to all members to help us find more corporate donations which would be a great aid when it comes to paying for building, school supplies or other school expenses.

This past year we celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary in a formal manner and at this black-tie event I announced the launch of an Annual Scholarship of \$1000 in honor of the memory of Dimitria Dzarbova. While this project is still in progress, I will continue to do everything in my power to raise more funds and ensure its succession for the next 10 years. As you see, help is needed not only when we talk about the success of the Bulgarian school, but also for any charitable cause that is dear to your heart.

I will end my address with the usual invitation to all members to consider becoming part of The Board or an Officer 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. The Board of directors is elected anew by the foundation members on an annual basis. An officer position would be for the purpose of helping actively in a particular project. 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 2023***

# Bulgarian School

## School Year 2022 – 2023 86 Total Enrolled Students in Three Locations

Under Mrs. Rayna Levakova's leadership the foundation now represents three branches of Elin Pelin School in three cities with a total of four physical locations.

The Bulgarian Teachers in Austin joined Elin Pelin Foundation and established an Austin Branch of Bulgarian School Elin Pelin. We are very happy to be working with such an enthusiastic faculty. We hope the parents from Austin will recognize the efforts all of us in the foundation and school put into improving the quality of instruction and will want to help us in the future by finding more donors or themselves sponsoring future school and foundation related events.

The quick progress of Austin branch and the dedicated online instruction, and the in-person Folk Dance classes attracted parents from San Antonio to request opening a San Antonio in-person branch. With the help of Mrs. Svetlana Markova, Elin Pelin Foundation Received a grant of \$2000 which greatly helped in the process of renting a temporary location for the FBS Elin Pelin San Antonio. We are happy to announce that the second semester included in-person lessons for the San Antonio population. We are currently in the process of renting a more permanent space for the needs of our San Antonio branch.

***Ms Rayna Levakova – principal, dance instructor, teacher***

***Ms Diana Angelova – assistant principal, teacher***

***Mrs. Diana Angelova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva, Ms. Rayna Levakova, Mrs. Desislava Evans, Mrs. Tsvetomira Lyubenova, Mrs. Viliyana Mahvelat, Mrs. Neli Rabb, Mrs. Ofeliya Tzitzkova, Mrs. Boryana Veneva, Ms. Petya Petkova – teachers***

***Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT support***

## Folk Dances for Children – October 2022

Initiated in the middle of October by Mrs. Mariya Shumareva for Houston and Rayna Levakova for San Antonio, the dancing lessons took off successfully. Several kids attended the dance instructions and learned some new Bulgarian Folk Dance steps.

***Mrs. Mariya Shumareva, Mrs. Rayna Levakova – instructors***

***Mrs. Vanya Kolarova - volunteer***

## Open-Door Lesson - Bulgarian Ceramics from the Ancient Years to Today – December 2022

As a part of the Extracurricular Activities for Elin Pelin Bulgarian School for the 2022-2023 year was the proposed and coordinated by Ms. Petya Petkova (who is an artist herself) the open-door lesson and interview with Yana Yanakieva. Ms. Yanakieva introduced the students to the unique Bulgarian designs of ceramic plates, bowls and other pottery objects. The students



were inspired to create their own art and later presented their work for the End-of-Year celebration. The project consisted of several online presentations and in-person instruction.

**Ms. Yana Yanakieva – designer of modern Bulgarian ceramics**

**Ms. Petya Petkova – instructor, coordinator**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev-IT support**

## Christmas Celebrations and Crafts – December 2022

In all three cities, the students gathered and recited poems, sang songs and danced. After their performances, Santa gave away presents. The students had plenty of time for games and fun Christmas crafts.

A special recognition is due to the students of Elin Pelin Bulgarian school in Austin for participating in ABSA initiative “To Kindle the Christmas Spirit Together” by creating and displaying their handmade lanterns.



## 150 Years since the hanging of Vasil Levski – February 2023

On 19 February Bulgarians pay homage to Vasil Levski. The Apostle of Freedom was hanged on 18 February 1873 in Sofia after he was betrayed and condemned to death by an Ottoman court of justice. Levski created a powerful clandestine revolutionary network aimed to plan and carry out an uprising to gain Bulgaria’s independence from the Ottoman Empire. He is Bulgaria’s most popular national hero, a legend for his valor, agility and wisdom. To commemorate the great hero, our sixth and seventh grade students created a video telling the story of Vasil Levski.

**Petya Petkova – instructor, coordinator**



## Springtime Festivities – March and April 2023

To celebrate the Spring (1<sup>st</sup> of March), the Bulgarian Independence Day (3<sup>rd</sup> of March) and Bulgarian Mother’s Day (8<sup>th</sup> of March), the students made their own crafts and entered several competitions.

In a competition for the most beautiful martenitsa little Nichole from FBS Elin Pelin Houston won with her craft of white and red flowers.





Kalina Rabb a student of FBS Elin Pelin Austin won first place in a competition for best drawing Free Bulgaria with her drawing of the Apostle of Freedom Vasil Levski.



In April the schools also painted eggs and made crafts for Orthodox Easter and the American Mother's Day.

**Rayna Levakova – principle, coordinator**

## End of the school year – Outdoor Celebration – May 2023

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 pottery crafts. The outdoor celebration included several outdoor games with prizes. There was pizza and other treats for the hungry. The event was a great success. The schools in San Antonio and Austin had their own celebrations. The celebration in Austin made the news in a publication by Eurochicago.com.

**Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – coordinator and host of outdoor celebration Houston**

**Mr. Petar Gerdzhirov – Sound Engineer and DJ**

**Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – volunteer**

**Mr. Denitza Zinsmeister – Event Photographer**



## Social Events

### Elin Pelin Library Meet the Author

#### Antonina Duridanova – September 2022

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of September Mrs. Antonina Duridanova author of *New Beginnings: From behind the iron curtain* visited Houston and shared with the members of Elin Pelin Foundation her unusual adventures as an emigrant. She read passages from her book, published in both Bulgarian and English languages. We were able to purchase signed copies to share with friends and family.

**Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – coordinator**

**Nevena Nikolova – volunteer**



### Foundations of Programming Seminar – September 2022

SoftUni the biggest source of continued education in Programming in Bulgaria initiated a Free Online Seminar for the Bulgarians in USA. Elin Pelin Foundation helped popularize the event and attended the seminar.

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Elin Pelin Foundation representative**

### Bulgarian Parliamentary Election – October 2022

Bulgarian citizens, residing in Houston and other Texas cities had the opportunity to cast their vote for Bulgaria's parliamentary elections on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Along with the representative of the Bulgarian Embassy, a team of local volunteers opened the polling station. A total of 114 people exercised their right to vote.

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

**Mrs. Nevena Nikolova, Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev, Mr. Alexander Petsanov, Mr. Ivaylo Djambov, Mrs. Ginka Kyurpova – polling staff members**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT Support**





## Elin Pelin Foundation 10th year Anniversary – October 2022

Elin Pelin’s 10<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated in a most formal manner and attire. A magician made sure the guests are well entertained. Taffeta and lace dresses, suites and bowties,



everyone looked like movie stars at the Oscars. The Gala was an event to be remembered and hopefully repeated soon. The Elin

Pelin Scholarship was announced, and it is currently being worked on. The initial funds for the first two years were gathered successfully and as we work on the rules and requirements, we will be organizing more fundraisers to ensure once cast, the initiative will be there to last until our 20-year Anniversary.



## Friendsgiving Happy Hour - November 2022

Organized by Ms. Martha Kasabova, The Friendsgiving Happy Hour is a project, meant 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. This project has shaped up to be a yearly event for Elin Pelin Foundation. Thanks to this year’s initiative additional funds for the Scholarship were gathered.

***Ms. Martha Kasabova – coordinator, Facebook correspondent***

## **Bulgarian as a Second Language Classes – November 2022**

This has been an ongoing project of the foundation which has had a moderate success throughout the years. Enough people were interested this year for us to organize bi-weekly classes. The students are most often spouses or friend of Bulgarian members, who are interested in learning enough Bulgarian to be able to communicate while visiting the country. The class began in the middle of November and ended in April of 2023. We are currently open for enrollment for the school year 2023-2024.

***Mrs. Silvia Lewis – Instructor***

***Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – volunteer***

## **Doni & Dara Concert - March 2023**

For the first time in the history of Elin Pelin Foundation an event was planned in a different city. San Antonio and the Bulgarian owned Europa restaurant hosted a concert of Doni & Dara, well known and followed Bulgarian singers. Dara – a rising star from X Factor with multiple music awards and Doni – a Bulgarian music legend visited San Antonio for the first time, and with the help of both Elin Pelin San Antonio and Houston teams they performed for the San Antonio crowd.

***Ms. Rayna Levakova – coordinator***

***Mrs. Hristina Pavlina - Facebook and e-mail correspondent***

***Mrs. Svetlana Markova – assistant coordinator, volunteer***

***Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – volunteer***

***Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Event Photographer***



## **Bulgarian Representatives Election– April 2023**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2023 Bulgarian citizens, voted for Bulgaria representatives' elections. As usual, 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 106 people exercised their right to vote.

***Mrs. Nevena Nikolova, Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev, Mr. Alexander Petsanov, Mrs. Ginka Kyurpova – polling staff members***

***Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT Support***



## Sensation of Love - April 2023

In this production love was described through world famous artwork of all times – writers, composers, artists like Shakespeare, Tennessee Williams, Renouard, Gogol, Petrarka, Robert Burns, Michelangelo, Bocaccio, Emily Dickenson, Picasso, Rilke, Verdi, Lorca, Chopin and many more. The guests enjoyed a glass of wine and discussion of the artwork and performance as a whole.

**Mrs. Rumiana Shumanova – volunteer and sponsor**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – coordinator, Event Photographer, and e-mail correspondent**



## Gergiovden with Svet Radoslavov – May 2023

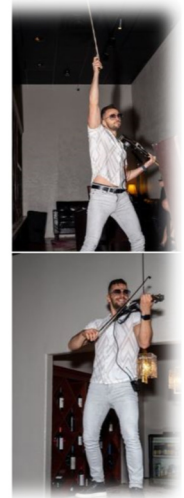
Organized by Gergana Araktchiev, Gergiovden is not just another name-day but also a Bulgarian National Holiday which celebrates bravery.

This year's celebration included a glass of wine at the Memorial Wine Cellar and a live performance of the famous and magnificent Svet Radoslavov.

The guest enjoyed all time favorite musical pieces performed in a unique way – Svet Radoslavov played his electrical violin and made us remember how proud of our Bulgarian heritage we all are. The event won the hearts of the Foundation's fans and critics alike.

**Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator and volunteer**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Event Photographer**



# Website and Upcoming Events

## Website and Newsletter

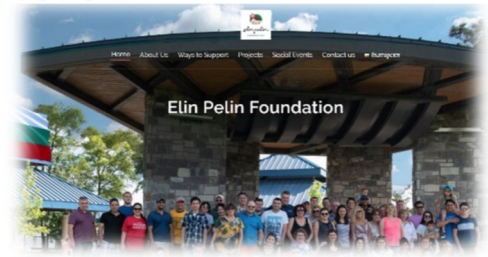
Please visit our website [www.elinpelin-houston.org](http://www.elinpelin-houston.org) to find out more about our projects, events, and school curriculum.

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](mailto: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 си да присъстват всички настоящи и бъдещи членове на Фондацията.



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

## Turkish Robotics Club – Summer & Fall 2023

## New Permanent Building in San Antonio – Fall 2023

## Shkumbata spectacle – Fall 2023

## A Shout Out to Our Biggest Supporters:



- **C.H. Guenther & Son** – Corporate Donation of \$2,000 or more – Through our corporate giving program, Guenther Gives, we look to address challenges faced by the communities where we operate. Guenther Gives focuses on Food Security, Health & Well-Being, and Education
- **Borislav Tchakarov** – Individual Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Gergana & Mintcho Araktchiev** – Individual Donation of \$800 or more
- **Stela Tomova** – Individual Donation of \$500 or more
- **First Federal Bank** – Corporate Donation of \$450 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
- **Nadia Zlatkova** – Individual Donation of \$300 or more
- **Network for Good** – Fundraisers of \$400 or more
  - **Araktchiev Family** – Raised \$1,000 or more by initiating 10K for 10Y Elin Pelin Foundation
  - **Martha Kasabova** – Raised \$400 or more by initiating Friendsgiving
- **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. *(Program is cancelled in Spring 2023)*
- **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

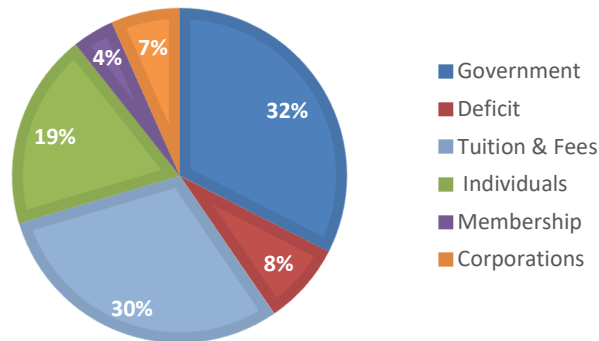
*The recognition of our generous community is important to us, and we have worked hard to ensure that all information is included and accurate. If you find any errors or omissions, please contact us at 713-715-8101.*

# Finance

## Unaudited Financial Data Summary for 2022-2023

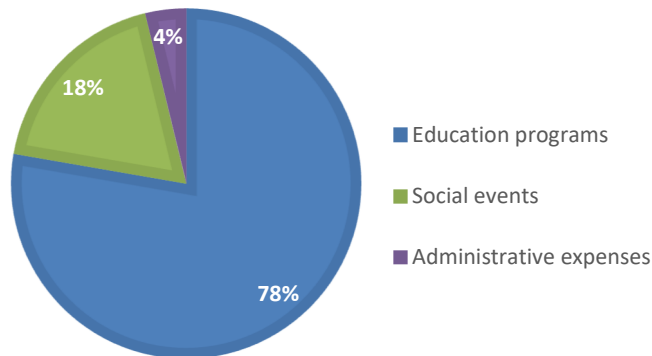
### *Inflow*

<i>Government</i>	\$ 29,440	32%
<i>Deficit</i>	\$ 7,151	8%
<i>Tuition &amp; School Fees</i>	\$ 27,123	30%
<i>Individuals</i>	\$ 17,131	19%
<i>Membership</i>	\$ 3,650	4%
<i>Corporations</i>	\$ 5,995	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 90,490</b>	<b>100%</b>



### *Expenses*

<i>Education programs</i>	\$ 69,905	78%
<i>Social events and Fundraisers</i>	\$ 17,094	18%
<i>Administrative expenses</i>	\$ 3,491	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 90,490</b>	<b>100%</b>



The financial summary includes gifts and activities between June 1, 2022, and May 31, 2023, 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 2022-2023

Svetlana Markova.....	Director
Gergana Araktchiev.....	Director
Rayna Levakova.....	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
Desislava Evans.....	Teacher
Tsvetomira Lyubenova.....	Teacher
Neli Rabb.....	Teacher
Viliyana Mahvelat.....	Teacher
Ofeliya Tzitzkova.....	Teacher
Diana Angelova.....	Teacher
Daniela Kashukeeva.....	Teacher
Rayna Levakova.....	Teacher
Boryana Veneva.....	Teacher
Petya Petkova.....	Teacher