

International Exchange Alumni Newsletter

Issue 3, Fall 2014

U.S. Embassy, Ankara – Public Affairs

Welcome to the International Exchange Alumni Newsletter of the US Embassy, Ankara. Here you will learn about the success stories of your fellow alumni, information about Embassy programs and events, and training and job opportunities offered exclusively to our alumni. Have an idea for an alumni project or event? Have a success story or useful tip you want to share? Write to Alumni Coordination Office at usaturkeyalumni@state.gov



Alumni Speed Networking Event

Alumni Office of the U.S. Embassy organized an alumni speed networking event at Public Affairs Officer Jonathan Henick's residence on Friday, December 5, in Ankara. Seventy alumni and Embassy employees attended.

There were several tables divided by sector. The participants began the networking at their choice of sector. At each table there was also an American diplomat from the Embassy who works on sector-related policy issues. After alumni spoke with each person at their sector's table, they then moved to any table they wished in order to continue networking. The event concluded with an informal networking reception.

This event provided a platform for alumni to connect with other U.S. Exchange alumni, learn more about the U.S. mission in Turkey from American diplomats, and meet potential partners in personal or professional endeavors.

Gathering of U.S. Exchange Program Alumni

On Friday, September 19, a gathering of U.S. exchange program alumni took place at a local restaurant in Ankara. Around fifty alumni and ten Embassy employees attended.

The gathering allowed Turkish alumni to reunite with their program fellows, make new friends, establish professional networks and interact with Embassy officials. The participating alumni also talked about the impact their exchange experience on their career and personal growth. They also emphasized the importance of using the knowledge and lessons learned while on the program upon their return to Turkey, as well as their unique position in promoting mutual understanding between Turkey and the U.S.

The alumni expressed their desire to come together more often on similar occasions.



Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program Alumni Dinner

The new Public Affairs Officer Jonathan Henick met with Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program Alumni at a dinner on Friday, November 14. Eighteen Humphrey Alumni and several Embassy employees attended. The attendees exchanged ideas about furthering mutual understanding between the U.S. and Turkey and talked about their U.S. experience and its impact on their career.

SUSI Alumni meet in Gaziantep

U.S. Embassy Cultural Attaché Katherine Van de Vate and Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders program alumni met at a dinner in Gaziantep on Wednesday, December 3. During the dinner, SUSI alumni shared their stories on how the exchange program has impacted both their personal and professional lives.



Best Director award goes to “Across the Sea” co-directed by Fulbright Alumna Nisan Dağ at Adana Altın Koza Film Festival

On Thursday, September 25, Fulbright alumnae Nisan Dağ and Esra Saydam were jointly awarded the best director award for their movie “Across the Sea” at the 21st Adana Altın Koza Film Festival. The film won five more awards, including best actor, actress, cinematography, music and editor.

Ms. Sedef Dağ studied film directing at Columbia University through a Fulbright scholarship in 2013. She has written several scripts and directed short movies screened at film festivals in the U.S. Her first movie, “Across the Sea,” is a Turkish-American co-production shot in New York and Ayvalık. It premiered in Turkey at the Istanbul Film Festival in April 2014. Please click on the link to learn more about her movie:

https://www.facebook.com/denizseviyesifilm/info?ref=page_internal#!/denizseviyesifilm/info?tab=page_info

Alumni share their U.S. exchange experiences through web stories and video clips

[Please click the links to watch videos]



[Legislative Fellowship Program 2013 Participant Baris Urhan Shares His Experience](#)

2015 Alumni Small Grants Program

January 15, 2015, is the deadline for the Alumni Small Grants Program. Its main objective is to support innovative, small-scale, cutting-edge projects developed and implemented by U.S. Department of State exchange alumni, especially in women's empowerment, workers' rights, migrants, refugees and migration, freedom of expression, and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation. Please click on the link for the application form and guidelines:

http://turkey.usembassy.gov/alumni_small_grants_program_2015.html

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2014 Alumni Small Grants Competition Winners:

'Crossing': A Theatre Project for Mardin

Nilüfer Ovalıoğlu, a 2002 Fulbright Alumna, has launched a theatre project to bring opportunities to the youth of Mardin. Her play 'Crossing' highlights the importance of cultural diversity and tolerance. In collaboration with Mardin Artuklu University's Storytelling and Theatre Association, Ovalıoğlu will host weekly workshops to collect stories of everyday life in Mardin, which will become the subject of her theatrical sketches. The stories are expected to help reveal the genuine challenges faced by the people of Mardin, beyond gender, race, language, and politics. Five female and five male students aged between 21 and 30 will take roles in the play, which will consist of personal monologues. The play will be performed in and around Mardin as well as at the Mardin International Theater Festival for Children and Youth. A DVD of the play will be produced and catalogued in the Library of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Mardin Artuklu University. A final draft of the play will be offered to several publishing houses for publication.

Women's Empowerment Bootcamp – Advocacy Training for Avcılar NGOs

Selcuk Sariyar, a 2012 Young Turkey Young America alumnus and advisor with Avcılar City Council's Women Parliament, and Nick Carter, also a 2012 YTYA alumnus and Public Affairs manager with Planned Parenthood, plan to advance women's empowerment in Avcılar and the greater Istanbul area through a women's empowerment boot camp. The women's empowerment boot camp will be a multi-day training program facilitated by organizers from the U.S. and Turkey and operated in conjunction with the Avcılar City Council Women's Parliament. The camp will incorporate best practices from successful American NGOs and electoral campaigns tailored to creating more effective women's empowerment campaigns in Turkey. The grant, which will have its own dedicated blog, will be used to strengthen organizations tackling issues such as violence against women, domestic violence, women's rights in the workplace, health care access, and civic participation.

Cook for Peace: Turkish-Armenian Culinary Workshop, İhsan Karayazı (2008 Young Turkey Young America Alumnus)

Karayazı İhsan, a 2008 YTYA alumnus and president of the Kars Urban and Culture Research Association (KaKa), plans to empower women to build bridges of cooperation with their Armenian neighbors. The project is uniting local women from the border cities of Kars (Turkey) and Gyumri (Armenia) in a peace-making initiative to raise awareness of cross border regional cooperation, peaceful coexistence, and mutual understanding.

The participants will come together in one kitchen to cook the food of the region, which they will then share with the public to further project the message. Women are expected to share their positive experiences with their friends and to pass on their experiences to their children. Following the workshop, a bilingual booklet capturing some traditional recipes and a glossary of common terms used in the local dialects of the two cities will be published and disseminated among the stakeholders.

U.S. Exchange Alumni Promote Habitat Awareness

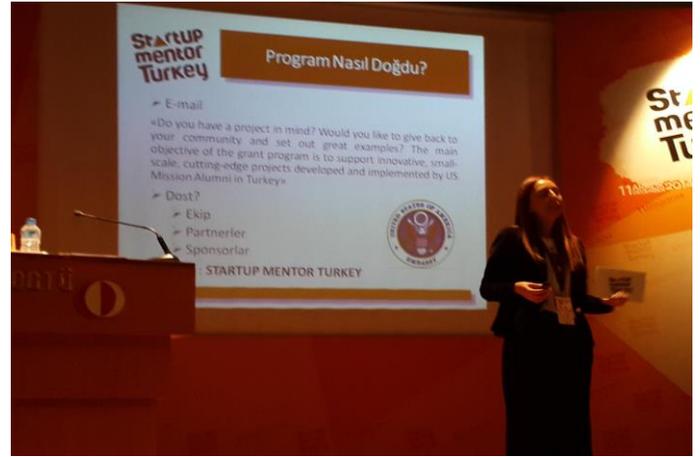
2012 Fulbright Alumna Armagan Ateskan promotes a habitat awareness program. For more information, please see the following section.

Entrepreneurship Project: Start-up Mentor Turkey

Sinem Ulutürk-Cinbiş, a 2011 International Visitor Leadership Program alumna and experienced business networking coordinator, organizes a mentorship program for up and coming start-up entrepreneurs in Turkey. For more information, please see the following section.

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News about Alumni Projects



U.S. Exchange Alumni Promote Habitat Awareness

Armagan Ateskan, a 2012 Fulbright Alumna, along with two other colleagues, conducted a workshop at Bilkent University on Saturday, November 29. The participants were biology teachers, six of whom were U.S. Exchange alumni.

The speakers highlighted the importance of citizen involvement in habitat preservation and how this helps to overcome a sense of powerlessness to prevent the environmental change resulting from global warming. Following the speeches, the bird education kit was demonstrated to participants, who also received a list of familiar birds to spot on the field trip the following day. Finally, the teachers examined the National Educational Ministry curriculum and identified relevant sections where they could integrate the bird observation classes.

The second day, participants took a field trip to Lake Mogan and Lake Eymir in Ankara to use the education

IVLP Alumna Organizes a Booth Camp for Start-up Entrepreneurs and Their Mentors

Sinem Ulutürk-Cinbiş, International Visitor Leadership Alumna, organized a boot camp called “Start Up Mentor Turkey” at Cultural and Congress Center, Middle East Technical University on Thursday, December 11.

Ms. Ulutürk made opening remarks and highlighted the importance of the U.S. Embassy Grant Program contribution to the realization of her project. Upon completion of her speech, each entrepreneur made a presentation about his newly-established business, and qualified mentors gave their expert opinions. Following the boot camp, a networking event took place to connect start-up entrepreneurs with prospect industry partners.

As her next step, Ms. Ulutürk plans to create a transparent national online pool where mentors and start-ups are matched. Every six months during the following next two years, a boot camp and

kit to observe birds. They spotted 16 different species in and around the lakes, including birds of prey, water birds and songbirds. The rainy and cold weather that day brought out one rare species, the bullfinch, which is normally very difficult to observe. The participants also learned about the habitats, migration patterns and nutritional needs of the birds they saw.

networking reception for selected fifteen start-ups and fifteen mentors will take place. She predicts that the number of entrepreneurs benefiting from this program will reach 210 by 2016.

Exchange Program Announcements

[Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders](#) (please click on the link for more information and application)

The Study of the U.S. Branch Office of the Educational and Cultural Affairs and the U.S. Mission to Turkey is pleased to invite nominations for the 2015 Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders. The deadline for receipt of applications is Wednesday, December 31, 2014.

[Community College Initiative Program](#) (please click on the link for more information and application)

The Community College Initiative (CCI) Program provides a quality academic program at U.S. community colleges intended to build technical skills, enhance leadership capabilities, and strengthen English language proficiency. The program also provides opportunities for professional internships, service learning, and community engagement activities.

Participants spend one academic year in the United States and may earn certificates in their fields of study. After completing the program, participants return home with new expertise to help them contribute to the economic growth and development of their country. The deadline for receipt of applications is Friday, December 26, 2014.

Newcomers at the U.S. Mission, Turkey

Ambassador John Bass

John Bass was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on September 17, 2014 as the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey. A career Senior Foreign Service officer, he served as Executive Secretary from 2012 to 2014 and U.S. Ambassador to Georgia from 2009 to 2012. He began his diplomatic career in 1988 and has also served in positions in U.S. missions in Iraq, Italy, Belgium and Chad.

In Washington, Ambassador Bass's assignments have included service on Vice President's Cheney's staff, as Chief of Staff and advisor to Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, as Director of the State Department's Operations Center, and in several assignments focused on European security issues. He has received numerous State Department performance awards.



The son of a public servant and a U.S. Air Force officer, Bass was born and raised in upstate New York. Prior to joining the Foreign Service, Bass worked as a newspaper editor and as a political campaign consultant. A graduate of Syracuse University, he speaks Italian and French. He is married to U.S. diplomat Holly Holzer Bass, and they share their home with "Tako," a Georgian Shepherd they adopted in Tbilisi.

Keep in Touch

[International Exchange Alumni](#)

International Exchange Alumni Website: a place where past and present U.S. government-sponsored exchange program participants find tools to advance their communities and our world. Benefits of joining: alumni directory, job center, grants, events, research tools. View benefits here:

<https://alumni.state.gov/about-international-exchange-alumni/benefits-joining>

Register to become a member of International Exchange Alumni Website here: <https://alumni.state.gov/>

ExchangesConnect Web Site

ExchangesConnect is an international online community managed by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs that connects potential, current, and former exchange program participants so they can discuss application processes, programs, and living abroad.

Facebook

Get connected with international exchanges!

Twitter

ExchangesConnect is the online community from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), U.S. Department of State.

YouTube

With YouTube individuals are able to document their personal experiences with other cultures and share it with online viewers.

Tumblr

International Exchange Alumni on Tumblr.