

International Exchange Alumni Newsletter

Issue 5, Summer 2015

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



Farewell reception for outgoing Turkish Fulbright grantees

U.S. Ambassador John R. Bass hosted a reception in honor of the 2015 Turkish Fulbright grantees on Wednesday, June 24 in Ankara. Fulbright alumni, Fulbright Jury members, Fulbright Commission personnel and Embassy staff attended the reception. During the reception, the alumni attendees shared their exchange experience with the outgoing grantees and suggested ways to make their study in the USA more beneficial, both professionally and personally.



Alumni Networking Event and Jazz Concert

Turkey's U.S. Exchange Programs (USEP) Alumni Association organized a networking event on Friday, May 22 at a coffee shop in Ankara. Around sixty alumni from various Turkish educational, governmental and non-governmental organizations and staff from the U.S. Embassy participated in this networking opportunity.



After the networking event, the alumni attended U.S. Embassy sponsored jazz concert featuring American tenor sax legend and Grammy award winner Ernie Watts, performing with the famous Turkish jazz musician Kerem Görsev and his trio.



Alumni Attend the 3rd Open Dance Studio Performance

The 3rd Open Dance Studio Performance sponsored by the U.S. Embassy and organized by Tork Dance Art took place on Wednesday, April 22 at the Hacettepe University Cultural Center in Sıhhiye, Ankara. Many Turkish alumni of various U.S. exchange programs attended the performance.



Turkish Alumni at the Cedric Watson & Bijou Creole Band Concert

Cedric Watson & Bijou Creole Band performed at Voodoo Blues Bar in Ankara on Thursday, April 2, 2015. Many Turkish alumni of various U.S. exchange programs participated in the concert and some brave alumni took the stage with the band for a jam session.

News about Alumni Projects

Young Turkey Young America Program Alumnus Ihsan Karayazi Completes His Project Called “Cook for Peace”



On June 20th, 2015, people from several different backgrounds and beliefs came together around an iftar table in Kars. They broke their fast with a menu consisting of a selection of delicious food prepared by Armenians and Turks together, representing both nations’ kitchen and culture.

Under the Project “Beraber Az mı Tuz Ekmek Yedik”, conducted by Young Turkey Young America Program Alumnus Ihsan Karayazi, women from Gyumri and Kars took turns hosting each other in their respective countries.

Ihsan Karayazi and his project team visited homes around Gyumri and Kars, met with the women, listened to their stories, held conversations with the local cooks about the project and got to taste the dishes made by the women participating in the project.

The first cooking workshop was held in Gyumri last month. At the event, women from Kars were guests in the kitchens of the women from Gyumri. The same cooking workshop was held again, this time in Kars, between June 19 and 20. Accompanied by experts in cooking and officials working on the project on their way to Kars, the women participants from Gyumri shared common recipes for an Iftar dinner event in Kars.

“Beraber Az mı Tuz Ekmek Yedik”, a saying that exists both in the Armenian and Turkish languages that roughly translates to ‘How many meals have we shared together?’, points out the unity, friendship and shared experiences of the two cultures. The project underlines the similarities between Turkish and Armenian cuisine, with the goal of building bridges between the two peoples. . The project, which has the motto “Peace starts in the kitchen”, also includes the production of a documentary film. All the stories and recipes will also be published in a book. The project, which was conducted by Kars City and Culture Research Association (KASKA), is sponsored by International Alert, German Marshall Fund, the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, the Swiss Embassy and Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.



Young Turkey Young America Program Alumni Yasemin Eda Erdal and Frieda K. Edgette Implement Their Project “Capacity Building for Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Effectiveness” in Izmir

Yasemin Eda Erdal and Frieda K. Edgette, Young Turkey and Young America Program alumni, received a grant from the U.S. Embassy to support their project “**Capacity Building for Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Effectiveness**”.

Training and a networking event took place on Monday, May 2, 2015 at Yasar University in Izmir. Frieda K. Edgette shared the best practices from successful entrepreneurial ecosystem leaders in the San Francisco Bay Area and other parts of the United States. Afterwards, participating entrepreneurial leaders from techno parks, technology transfer offices, start-ups and incubators discussed openly the barriers and possible solutions on balancing resources, collaborating between academics and industry and creating innovative environments that support success. On Monday, June 29, the participants received follow-up web training from Lisa Chacon, Co-Director & COO of Impact HUB Oakland.



Fulbright Alumna Elif Karsli Carries out Her Project “Building Bridges in Education: Syrian Children and Families in Turkey’s School System” in Mamak

Elif Karsli, a 2010 Fulbright alumna, received a grant from the U.S. Embassy. She implemented her project at Nedim Inal Primary School, which has 10 Syrian students studying with Turkish students.

During the workshop, the principal and teachers of the school shared some insights from their conversations with Syrian mothers and classroom observations of Syrian students. They discussed several alternative methods for teaching diverse students and investigated curriculum materials, including a book on Syrians in Turkey. They also had a brief Arabic language session with the support of a translator to learn basic introductory phrases which could help teachers improve their communication skills with Syrian students. Ms. Karsli plans to collect all best practices and submit to the Turkish Ministry of Education and relevant institutions.

Alumni share their U.S. exchange experiences through video clips



[Please click on the photo to watch video]

Zeynep Barak, an alumna of Youth Study of Exchange Program, shares her experience on life with a disability in the U.S.

Exchange Program Announcements

[Please click on the links to obtain more information for application]

Fulbright Turkey: Visiting Scholar Program: The Visiting Scholar Program is designed for academic scholars who would like to conduct a full-time research project in their academic field, in the U.S. Scholars will be granted a research scholarship by the Turkish Fulbright Commission for the 2016-2017 academic year. **The application deadline is October 30, 2015.**

Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program Announcement: The Turkish Fulbright Commission will be accepting Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program applications for the 2016-2017 academic year. **The application deadline is Friday, August 21, 2015.**

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.