

# International Exchange Alumni Newsletter

## Issue 10, Fall 2017

### U.S. Embassy, Ankara – Public Affairs

Welcome to the International Exchange Alumni Newsletter of the U.S. Embassy, Ankara where you hear the success stories of 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 the Alumni Coordination Office at [usaturkeyalumni@state.gov](mailto:usaturkeyalumni@state.gov)



### **Turkish Alumni Participate in Hiking and Environmental Cleanup Event**

Turkish alumni of U.S.- sponsored exchange programs, Summer Work and Travel (SWT) Participants, and Embassy staff participated in a hiking and environmental clean-up event at Ankara's Eymir Lake September 30, 2017 to show their environmental sensitivity and appreciation.

Program partners included PAS, Middle East Technical University (METU), and Youth Exchange Program Alumni (YES) Association. More than eighty attendees hiked the 8 km length of the lake and picked up nearly 200 kilos of trash.

During opening remarks Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer Saad Bokhari asked volunteer to think globally and act locally for the benefit of the environment. YES Alumni Association Coskun Islek added that volunteering was critical to improving local communities. Participants divided into smaller groups and hiked along the 12-km lake collecting 200 kilos of trash at Eymir Lake. Dozens of visitors and tourist thanked participants for their efforts to make Eymir Lake a more pristine place.



### **U.S. Exchange Alumni Celebrate the Global Entrepreneurship Week**

To celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week, U.S. Consulate General, Istanbul hosted events under the tag line "Bring Your Ideas to Life" with key partners across sectors to advance entrepreneurship in Turkey and investment in the United States.

In partnership with the Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation (Turkonfed), a business network of more than 40,000 Turkish small and medium businesses, Consul General Davis hosted a networking event on November 13, highlighting eight youth entrepreneurs from a Public Affairs-funded summer STEM camp.

The event showcased the young entrepreneurs' prototypes to more than 30 key guests including investors, business leaders, and the Consulate's Global Entrepreneurship Program Alumni, to expand the young entrepreneurs' access to mentors and ability to move to the next rung on the project development ladder.

The Consulate's Foreign Commercial Service, Political/Economic, and Public Affairs Sections also expanded their network as a result of the event, including an invitation from the Turkish Exporters Assembly to offer a United States booth at the "Turkey Innovation and Entrepreneurship Week" expo in cooperation with Turkish Ministry of Economy. The Public Affairs Section filmed short interviews with the young entrepreneurs featured on the Mission's social media platforms.

On Wednesday, November 15th, CS-Istanbul partnered with the State Department's Public Affairs section to host a "Connecting Turkish Entrepreneurs with US Opportunities" event. The event was held at the Workinton, a small business incubator in Istanbul, and was part of Mission Turkey's Global Entrepreneur Week outreach.

More than 50 attendees interacted with panel speakers to learn about the benefits of working with the US Commercial Service, joining an upcoming IBP delegation to the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) and investment assistance that SelectUSA provides to entrepreneurs.

Panelists consisted of CO Neil Pickett, three Turkish entrepreneurs that have attended CES or SelectUSA, and MEET, a consulting agency focused on helping growth companies enter the US market. Following the presentations, CS-Istanbul's team networked with the entrepreneurs, fielded targeted questions and to scheduled in-depth consultations.

**Video link:** [https://youtu.be/Qxy1Y\\_9sq4E](https://youtu.be/Qxy1Y_9sq4E)



### **Turkish Alumni at TAA's Thanksgiving Dinner**

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Scott Weinhold celebrated Thanksgiving with the U.S exchange alumni, the Turkish American Association staff, and guests at the Turkish American Association (TAA) in Ankara November 23, 2016. Alumni enjoyed the traditional thanksgiving meal and shared their Thanksgiving memories back in the U.S with each other.



### **DCM Philip Kosnett Meets with YES Alumni**

On, July 18, U.S. Embassy Ankara DCM Philip Kosnett met with the president and members of Kerry-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Abroad (YES) Alumni Association in Izmir. They discussed the impact of this exchange program and how to further collaborate and promote this program. Mr. Kosnett emphasized its significance in strengthening the U.S.-Turkish relations and conveyed his support for the [YES Alumni Association Turkey](#).



### **YES Alumna Reflects on her Year in North Carolina**

In October 2017, Deniz Kaarayan (YES 2011-12, Turkey, hosted with AFS in North Carolina) flew to Chapel Hill on her way to Boston to deliver a presentation on her medical research at the Harvard School of Public Health. The purpose of her stop in Chapel Hill was to reunite with Gene and Margaret Johnson, her former AFS Host Parents with whom she lived during her exchange year. Please click on this link for the rest of the article



### **YES Alumni Run at the 2017 Istanbul Marathon**

The marathon started near the July 15 Martyrs' Bridge in Altunizade district early Sunday on November 12. 15 YES Alumni and U.S. Embassy staff joined the athletes from all over the world and local runners to cross the July 15 Martyrs' (Bosphorus) Bridge together.

## Alumni Speaker Programs:



### Utku Çakıröz, 2008 Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program alumnus, Speaks at EEI's Global Leadership Forum

Mr. Utku Çakıröz, Hubert Humphrey Program Alumnus and Eskisehir deputy of TGNA, delivered a speech on freedom of press at the Global Leadership Forum of the International Institute of Education (IIE) in Washington, DC on October 31, 2017. Addressing more than 160 Humphrey fellows who are executives and journalists coming from more than 100 countries, he talked about his own Humphrey experience as well as the transformative impacts of the program on his personal and professional growth, eventually leading to his journey from journalism to politics.

In his speech, Mr. Çakıröz recommended Humphrey fellows travel a lot and be part of community activities as much as possible to gain maximum benefit from the program as well as increasing their professional knowledge and improving their leadership skills through academic work. He also pointed out that the program, due to its multicultural nature, would enhance their negotiation and dialogue skills. Therefore, they should take their part in development efforts of their own countries.

At the last part of his speech, Mr. Çakıröz focused on the importance of freedom of press for democracy and negative consequences of restrictions imposed on freedom of press. He concluded his speech underlying the fact that free press is an indispensable component of democracy.



### Mesut Şenol, 2000 Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program alumnus, speaks at the International Peacebuilding Conference in Islamabad, Pakistan

Pakistan US Alumni Network (PUAN) and US Embassy Pakistan jointly organized the International Peacebuilding Conference: Together for Peace between August 3 and 7, 2017 in Islamabad. PUAN has more than 2000 members and is the largest network in the world in its own category. The conference brought together the representatives of all regional PUAN chapters as well as a number of alumni from regional countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal and Turkey.

On the behalf of Turkish alumni community, Mesut Şenol, 2000 Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program alumnus, along with Gülşah Baştürk, 2016 Study of the U.S. Institutes alumna, attended. Mr. Mesut Şenol made a presentation on peace and served as a panelist at some sessions of the conference.

## **Alumni Community Service Projects:**



### **Alumni Project: Climate Simulation Program**

Ramazan Oguz Tosun, a SUSI Alumnus, organized a training program for student leader trainees on climate change on September 25, 2017. Twenty students selected out of a pool of 320 applicants from various universities across Turkey were the participants of the workshop. The participants learnt more about how to use the climate simulation programs and the systems thinking tools which were launched by an American NGO Climate Interactive and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



### **Alumni Project: Computer Coding for Disadvantaged Youth**

A group of Fulbright alumni consisting of Gülcan Yayla, Emre Şarbak and Deniz Gündoğan organized 6 boot camps in 3 Istanbul, Urfa, and Bursa. At these boot camps they trained 102 socio-economically disadvantaged young people selected through tests and online interviews. Besides the boot camps, they matched participants with mentors from the IT sector. As a result, 80% of the participants either found their first job in the technology sector or increased their income within only 3 months upon completion of the courses.



### **Alumni Project: Take My Hand I Am with You**

Hasan Bedir, American English E-Teacher program alumnus, implemented a social integration project for fifteen Syrian refugee students currently enrolled at Cukurova University in Adana. With a peer mentoring program, the project helped Syrian students socialize to the university and community so that they become active members of a learning community and have a sense of belonging to the university culture. Social media and mobile messaging services were used for keeping in touch and chat with their peers. Seminar given by a psychological counselor provided an opportunity for the peers to share solve their problems. A trip to a neighboring city Tarsus, a town famous for its historical places and beautiful nature helped socializing and developing well-being.

## Two Proposals from Turkey are among the 2017 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) Winners

- A Bus to Unimaginable Achievement - A team of university students and instructors with expertise in different subjects will visit schools in rural areas to provide equal opportunities to socio-economically disadvantaged students by allowing them to take part in different hands-on activities and discover their potential in STEM fields. The activities will include science experiments, mathematics applications, robotics and verbal skill development workshops. One two-day trip for two schools in Canakkale and one-week trip for eight schools in Bingol will take place during the 2017-2018 academic year. As a result, students will broaden their horizons and create a mentor-mentee relationship with the project's volunteers. In addition, teachers in these schools will attend workshops conducted by university faculty members that will empower them and help their professional development.
- JİYAN: Songs of Displacement - This project will address the urgent need to preserve and document the songs and oral histories of migrant and refugee women in Istanbul, Mardin, Mersin, and Berlin. An almost-all female alumni team of musicians and activists will meet and record songs and stories of these women that illustrate their perspectives of living in areas of conflict and war and the challenges of seeking acceptance in a new society. Through a series of events, panels, workshops, and performances, the team will share their work with a diverse audience that will help connect and strengthen migrant communities, while dispelling negative stereotypes and misunderstandings about the migrant communities and cultures.

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## Alumni Small Grants Program Winners

U.S. Embassy Alumni Programs Office gave out over \$19,000 in funding during the second leg of the 2017 Alumni Small Grants Program competition. The competition's main objective is to support innovative, small-scale, cutting-edge projects developed and implemented by U.S. Department of State exchange alumni. The following alumni projects received a grant:

- Children Are The Hope – The Ihsan Dogramacı Bilkent Primary & Middle School in partnership with two additional rural Ankara schools and Children Are The Hope, Inc. of Wisconsin, USA, will coordinate and implement a synchronized, interdisciplinary and academic year-long experience including artistic collaboration, social engagement, peer instruction, language and environmental studies, and diversity-focused collaborations that will engage and connect elementary and middle school students in Turkey and Wisconsin. Turkish students will discover Wisconsin's cultural and natural resources through teacher- and peer-instruction, as well as technology-based interactions with Wisconsin students, cultural artifacts, and art in its many forms. Budget: 4,175 USD. Implementing partner: Emel Oya Kerman (Fulbright Foreign Teacher Program Alumna, 2002)
- Cook to Feed Hearts – This project will fully establish and safeguard a Turkish Syrian kitchen providing free, meals for vulnerable women and children at a new community center in Izmir. By providing free daily food the kitchen will be at the heart of a community center that provides work, schooling, daycare, support, safety and local integration for vulnerable families and in particular, single women with children. Budget: 4,970 USD. Implementing partner: Uğur Gönül ( Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange and Study Program Alumnus, 2012).
- International Conference on Combating Violence Against Refugee and Migrant Women – Under the auspices of the Şirin Tekeli Foundation, this international conference will offer an opportunity to convey important experience of experts from the U.S. who work with refugee women, especially those who have been subjected to violence. At the same time, several speakers from Turkey will also discuss the legal and sociological dimension of the issue. Thus, the audience will hear from the U.S. and Turkish experts about

how women are responding to a problem faced by women. The panel will be open to all, especially groups working with refugee women in Turkey, activists from the feminist movement and women's movement, scholars from Şirin Tekeli Foundation and refugee women. Budget: 2,000USD. Implementing partner: Güneş Engin (IVLP alumna, 2017).

- **The International Workshop on the Health-care Waste Management**– The project will create the public awareness about the “integrated health-care waste management”. The decision makers/staff/laborers of the municipalities and health-care institutions of the East and South-Eastern Anatolian regions will get training on legal responsibilities, criteria for the selection of the final removal method of health-care wastes, while the staff, laborers and local people will get training on the risks of the health-care wastes, minimization of the generation and segregation, proper handling, collection, transportation and final removal of the health-care wastes. Thus, the municipalities and health-care institutes of the region will have the opportunity to find trained laborers to employ while the local people will have the opportunity to be employed by the local institutions. The book of the Workshop will be made available to the all municipalities and the health-care institutions in Turkey. Budget: 5,000USD. Implementing partner: Günay Kocasoy (Fulbright alumna, 2001).

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### Alumni Success Story



#### **Interview of the Turkish Fulbright Commission with Günay Evinch, 1991 Fulbright Alumnus on International Law**

Please click on the following link to read interview:  
<http://fulbright.org.tr/en/basarioyku/gunay-evinch-2/>

**NOTE:** We would like to highlight the accomplishments of our alumni, help them to engage with the larger community, and organize collaborative programs. Please share your success story with us at [usturkeyalumni@state.gov](mailto:usturkeyalumni@state.gov) or 0312 457 7204.

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### Newcomers at the U.S. Mission, Turkey



#### **Scott Weinhold, Counselor for Public Affairs**

Scott Weinhold has been at the U.S. Embassy in Ankara since August 2017. He joined the Foreign Service in 1992 and in his career he served in Beijing, Chengdu, Taipei, Ho Chi Minh City, Ulaanbaatar, Canberra, and Tokyo. His most recent assignment was as Consul General at the U.S. Consulate General in Shenyang, China. He graduated from the University of Virginia with a BA in History and African Studies. He speaks Chinese, Vietnamese, Mongolian, Turkish and basic Japanese. He is married and

has three children.

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### Open Vacancies at U.S. Mission, Turkey

Please click on the link to see available vacancies at U.S. Mission in Turkey  
<https://tr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/jobs/jobs/>

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

Register to become a member of International Exchange Alumni Website: <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 that they can discuss application processes, programs, and living abroad.

### **Facebook**

Get connected with international exchanges!

### **Facebook: Summer Work and Travel Turkey**

The U.S. Consulate General in İstanbul's SWTTurkey Facebook page! On this page you will find recent news, videos and photos distributed by the Consulate's Consular Section.

### **Twitter**

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

### **Tumblr**

International Exchange Alumni on Tumblr.