

# International Exchange Alumni Newsletter

## Issue 11, Spring 2018

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

Welcome to the International Exchange Alumni Newsletter of the U.S. Embassy, Ankara where you hear 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)



#### **ACCESS Alumni Leadership Summit in Antalya**

On January 29, 2018, over 130 ACCESS alumni from nearly 30 different cities in Turkey arrived in Antalya to participate in the week-long ACCESS Alumni Leadership Summit. ACCESS is a U.S. Department of State funded English-language program targeting disadvantaged communities throughout Turkey. Led by a team of four U.S.-English Language Fellows (ELFs), 15 ACCESS teachers, and 12 Future Star mentors, alumni participated in a series of hands-on workshops that focused on global citizenship skills such as life-long learning, career development, and critical media skills. Groups developed projects that identified a local issue with global implications and resolved the issue by establishing and financing a non-governmental organization. Topics focused on leveling the educational playing field, combatting myths around leukemia, and supporting sight impaired individuals. The week culminated with groups pitching their community service plan to other students and being judged by a jury of summit leaders.

For ELFs, ACCESS teachers, and the Regional English Language Office (RELO) team, the program began three days in advance of the summit, with a teacher education component focusing on project-based learning. Teams comprising of a single ELF and four to five Access teachers developed workshops focusing on conflict resolution, resume and “visume” building skills, and public speaking. The teams later collaborated on delivering their workshops to alumni. In addition, the RELO delivered workshops on reflective practice and feedback so that the group presentations could evolve through peer involvement during the long week.

Public Affairs Officer Scott Weinhold opened the summit by thanking the TED school network for their outstanding management of the ACCESS program in Turkey, as well as the Future Stars team for their oversight of English immersion off-site experiences for ACCESS students, including annual summer camps and a previous alumni summit focusing on entrepreneurship. He noted that the group of alumni, “are the future of U.S.-Turkey bilateral relations, contributing each in their own way to strong, peaceful communities and prosperity,” and that the, “skills they learn this week should prepare them to play active roles in shaping not only Turkey’s future, but also in addressing regional and international challenges. U.S. Embassy staff shared educational opportunities through Education USA and Fulbright, spurring on interest in graduate

studies in the United States. Dr. Ismet Barutcugil, one of Turkey's key authors on the topic of leadership, gave an engaging plenary on the true meaning of leadership in a global context and passed out signed copies of one of his more recent books. The RELO gave an interactive plenary on the topic of life-long learning, emphasizing that learning a language, as much a native tongue as a foreign one, requires an ongoing commitment.

Almost all attending alumni group are undergraduates seeking degrees in almost all subject areas, including the STEM fields, medicine, architecture, psychology, and business, among many others. About twenty of the group are studying to become future English teachers, and several stated that the Access program inspired them to do so. The motivational aspect of the Access program cannot be understated, as other alumni spoke of how the program gave them the confidence they needed to apply and get accepted into some of the country's most prestigious universities and majors, where many are now playing leadership roles in their faculties and on their campuses.

Info about ACCESS Program: [The English Access Microscholarship Program \(ACCESS\)](#) provides a foundation of English language skills to talented 13-20 year-olds from economically disadvantaged sectors through after-school classes and intensive sessions. Access gives participants English skills that may lead to better jobs and educational prospects. Participants also gain the ability to compete for and participate in future exchanges and study in the United States. Since its inception in 2004, approximately 95,000 students in more than 85 countries have participated in the Access Program.

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### **Fulbright Reception at U.S. Consul General's Residence**

The Consul General Jennifer L. Davis and the Turkish Fulbright Commission Executive Director Prof. Dr. Ersel Aydınli hosted a reception honoring returning Fulbright Exchange Program scholars and alumni on February 9, in Istanbul. About 200 people attended the reception.

Consul General Davis encouraged Turkish students to study in the United States, noting that the diversity of American universities and their commitment to freedom of expression are among the reasons why American universities are ranked as the world's best universities. Dr. Nermin Abadan Unat (97 years old Turkish Fulbright scholar in 1952) was among the guests and was a source of inspiration with her enthusiasm for education and people-to-people connections.

At the end of the night, Pervin Kaplan from Haberturk interviewed the Consul General Davis. Click [interview](#) for a link.



### **Hubert H. Humphrey Alumni Association Holds its Annual Reception at Turkish Alumni Association**

The Humphrey Alumni Association held its annual dinner April 27 at Turkish American Association. Demonstrating support from alumni colleagues and organizations throughout Turkey, representatives from YES Alumni Ankara Representative, Fulbright Turkey Office Representative, Istanbul Fulbright Alumni Representative and U.S. Embassy staff were in attendance. Together alumni provided a supportive atmosphere to the new Humphrey Fellows who will travel to the United States shortly. Humphrey Alumni Association President Aysegül Çerçi and U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Counselor Scott Weinhold highlighted in their remarks the importance of Humphrey Alumni to furthering mutual understanding between Americans and Turks. After the remarks, the participants talked to each other about their recent accomplishments including upcoming new books and business travels.

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### **YES Alumni Turkey hold 3rd Annual Brunch**

On April 29th, YES Alumni Turkey held the 3rd Annual YES Brunch with more than 120 alumni and volunteers from Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program. Representatives from Fulbright Alumni Association and Humphrey Alumni Association joined the festivities. YES Brunch is an annual event held on the last Saturday of April and brings alumni from different cities and exchange years together. YES Brunch is also an amazing gathering for alumni to discuss their new project ideas and learn about upcoming projects with the help of different project stands. Volunteers got the chance to sign up for the upcoming projects such as Bir Otobüs Dolusu Hayal – a project that brings STEAM activities to schools in Bitlis and Balıkesir in April and May. With all the activities, YES Brunch helps YES Alumni Turkey to gain more new members and volunteers and as well as helping alumni get involved within the community better. This traditional gathering will continue through years as YES family keeps growing rapidly in Turkey.



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

Turkish alumni of U.S.- sponsored exchange programs joined U.S. Embassy staff for a fun day of hiking and environmental clean-up at Ankara's Eymir Lake. Organized by YES alumni volunteers, the annual event demonstrated how community spirit and civil society play a role in environmental stewardship.

In his opening remarks, U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Counselor Scott Weinhold highlighted the importance of people to people connection between Turkey and the United States, appreciated YES alumni for their recent community service projects and thanked participants for their contribution to making the Earth better and cleaner place.

Following the opening remarks, more than 40 participants divided into smaller groups and hiked along the 10-km length of the lake and collected around 100 kilos of trash.

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### **Alumni share their U.S. exchange experiences with video clips:**

2011-12 YES alumna Deniz Karaayan shared her exchange cultural story. Please click on this [link](#) to watch.

## Alumni Community Service Projects:



### Alumni Project: A Bus to Unimaginable Achievement

A team of YES alumni, university students, and instructors with expertise in different subjects visited eight schools in Bitlis to provide equal opportunities to socio-economically disadvantaged students. Students took part in different hands-on activities and discovered their potential in STEM fields. The activities included science experiments, mathematics applications, robotics and verbal skill development workshops. As a result, students broadened their horizons and created a mentor-mentee relationship with the project's volunteers.



### Alumni Project: Cook to Feed Hearts Program for Syrian Refugees

YES alumni established a kitchen that provides free, nourishing meals at a new community center for vulnerable women and children in a district of Izmir that harbors tens of thousands of Syrian Refugees. On January 25, a dozen of volunteers prepared and served foods from Turkish and Syrian cuisines to around 150 Syrian refugees and Turkish residents. Various activities such as live music performance, wall painting, and games took place in order to encourage Syrian and Turkish women to mingle.



### Alumni Project: 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, coordinated and implemented a synchronized, interdisciplinary and academic year-long experience including artistic collaboration, social engagement, peer instruction, language and environmental studies, and diversity-focused collaborations that engage and connect elementary and middle school students in Turkey and Wisconsin. Turkish students discovered 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.



### **Alumni Project: International Conference on Combating Violence against Refugees and Migrant Women**

On April 21, 2018, Ms. Güneş Engin, International Volunteer Leadership Program alumna on Women Leaders: Promoting Peace and Security, organized an international conference on combating violence against refugee and migrant women at Istanbul Bar Association.

About 200 people attended the conference, including many young university students. The Women Refugee Commission Director Joan Timoney, journalist Fariba Nawa, Asst. Prof. Emel Coskun, lawyers Meriç Eyüboğlu and Beril Eski and Miriam Klinkenberg from United Work and Syrian refugee Pervin Bouzi were the speakers of the conference who discussed refugees and migrant women's issues, governments' policies and possible solutions.

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### **Alumni Success Story**



### **Interview of the Turkish Fulbright Commission with Ülkü Rowe, 1995 Fulbright Alumna on Computer Science and Technology**

Please click on this [link](#) to read interview.

**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.

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

Please click on the [link](#) to see available vacancies at U.S. Mission in Turkey

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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.