



TAA Newsletter Volume 3, Issue 11

November 2013

Dear Friends,

During this month of thanksgiving, the Turkic American Alliance is so grateful for your kindness, support and generosity that enables us to come together in friendship, in dialogue and in community.

Thanksgiving is a unique tradition in this country, though its essence is a universal one--gathering with loved and dear ones over delicious food, all the while giving thanks for life's bounty and blessings. It is a tradition that is not confined to any one religion or ethnicity in the United States--a true hallmark of this country's many great freedoms and humanitarian values. We are so grateful to be part of this remarkable mosaic.

The First Annual Kyrgyz American Convention was the highlight of the month, and the Rethink Institute published a related report, entitled "Two Decades of U.S.-Kyrgyz Relations." The publication is available at [www.rethinkinstitute.org](http://www.rethinkinstitute.org). Various TAA member organizations, such as ones from Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska and Vermont, have organized Friendship & Dialogue Dinners and Award Ceremonies that hosted high-level local government officials such as Governors, Attorney Generals, Lieutenant Governors and Mayors. Additionally, member organizations around the U.S. organized Thanksgiving food drives to assist those in need during this holiday season.

Currently, there is an ongoing debate in Turkey about the government's plan to shut down private preparatory schools, or dershanes, which hundreds of thousands of high school graduates attend in order to pass Turkey's rigorous national college exam. For most students who cannot afford high quality private schools, prep schools are the only reliable and guaranteed way of entrance to higher education. Despite these many benefits, however, the Turkish government is deliberating over the closure of these dershanes and is doing so without much consultation of its many stakeholders. Furthermore, the public learned of the plan only after it was leaked to the press. We believe that the plan as it stands contradicts the democratic culture, pluralism, free enterprise, and freedom of education that is guaranteed in the Turkish Constitution and in other international charters to which Turkey is a signatory country. We strongly hope that the Turkish government will give heed to the massive public outcry that has ensued and drops this ill-advised plan.

Finally, be sure to read about the ways in which two sister organizations are providing relief services in the Philippines in the aftermath of the devastating Typhoon Haiyan. We hope and pray that the Philippines

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recovers quickly from this devastating natural disaster and that those most in need are able to receive aid and relief as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Faruk Taban, Ph.D.  
President

## Hizmet Relief Efforts in the Philippines



**November 10th, 2013**

Typhoon Haiyan, or Yolanda as it is locally known, struck the Philippines with unprecedented ferocity in the early morning hours of Friday, November 8. With winds of up to 160 mph, water surges up to 23 feet and infrastructure little equipped to handle such conditions, parts of the country

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## Meeting with Congressman Mo Brooks at TAA



**November 12th, 2013**

On Tuesday, November 12, 2013, Congressman Mo Brooks (R), representing Alabama's 5th Congressional District, visited TAA offices with his wife, Martha Jenkins Brooks, for a dinner meeting. During dinner, Congressman Brooks and staff from TAA and the Turkic American Federation of Southeast (TAFS) discussed a variety of topics, ranging

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## TUSKON Breakfast Meeting with U.S. Members of Congress



**November 13th, 2013**

On Wednesday, November 13, TUSKON and TAA staff met with U.S. Members of Congress at the Capitol Hill Hotel in downtown Washington for a breakfast meeting. Congressman Pete Olson (R-TX-22), Congressman Mike Doyle (D-PA-14), Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA-48) and former Congressman Lincoln Davis of Tennessee attended the meeting. From

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## Kyrgyz American Convention Opening Luncheon at TAA

**November 19th, 2013**



On Tuesday, November 19, a distinguished delegation from Kyrgyzstan attended the opening event of the Kyrgyz American Convention at the Turkic American Alliance headquarters. The delegation included the Honorable Kanybek Imanaliev, Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs of the Kyrgyz Parliament; Ulukbek Kochkorov, Vice President of the Ata-Jurt Party

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## First Annual Kyrgyz American Convention a Huge Success



**November 20th, 2013**

On Wednesday, November 20, the First Annual Kyrgyz American Convention continued with signature functions at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. The event was organized by the Turkic American Alliance (TAA), the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic to USA and Canada, the Turkic American Federation of Midwest (TAFM)

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## Kyrgyz American Convention Luncheon at Hyatt Regency



**November 20th, 2013**

The First Annual Kyrgyz American Convention continued on Wednesday, November 20, at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. Wednesday's program opened with a Luncheon at noon that saw over 200 guests. Lamija Silajdzic of the Turkic American Alliance served as emcee for the event. Before lunch was served, guests directed

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## Panel I: U.S.-Kyrgyz Relations



**November 20th, 2013**

The Forum Session of the First Annual Kyrgyz American Convention opened with Panel I, which addressed the topic of U.S.-Kyrgyz Relations. The Forum Session formed the academic and policy component of the Kyrgyz American Convention and was organized by the Rethink Institute, a nongovernmental and nonpartisan research institution located

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## Panel II: Why Invest in Kyrgyzstan?

**November 20th, 2013**





The second segment of the Forum Session addressed the question, "Why Invest in Kyrgyzstan?" The moderator was Vladimir Fedorenko, a Research Fellow at the Rethink Institute. The first panelist was the Honorable Kanybek Imanaliev, Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs, Member of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz

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## Kyrgyz American Convention Gala Reception



**November 20th, 2013**

The First Annual Kyrgyz American Convention's final event of the day was the signature Gala Reception. The Gala took place on Wednesday, November 20 during the evening at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill. About 250 guests attended the reception, including 3 Kyrgyz Parliamentarians; 13 members of U.S. Congress,

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## Thanksgiving Food Drives



**November 28th, 2013**

During this season of thanksgiving, three organizations-the Peace Islands Institute in Philadelphia, the Pinnacle Academy in Fairfax, Virginia, and the Turkish Cultural Center of Staten Island, generously served their local communities through food drives. On November 1st, Peace Islands Institute (PII) jointly organized a food distribution program with State

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## Friendship and Dialogue Award Ceremonies around the U.S.



**November 30th, 2013**

During the month of November, TAA member organizations have kept busy hosting annual Friendship and Dialogue Award Ceremonies. They included the Turkish Cultural Center in Maine, the Peace Islands Institute in Massachusetts, the Niagara Foundation in Nebraska and the Turkish Cultural Center in Vermont. In Maine, the Turkish Cultural

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