

# TURKISH COALITION *of* AMERICA



# 2015 Annual Report



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# Executive Summary

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**Turkish Coalition of America (TCA)** was founded in 2007 as an educational, charitable organization with a mission to:

- Foster friendship, understanding, and cooperation between the United States and Turkey.
- Expand Turkish American outreach to American public and private entities.
- Promote and advance the interests of the Turkish American community and Turks.
- Protect the character and ensure a realistic portrayal of Turkey and Turkish Americans in the media and the arts.
- Identify and recognize the achievements of Turkish Americans in academia, arts, business, education, government, public service, and science.

TCA's work is undertaken by a professional team, interns, and volunteers from offices in Boston; Washington, DC; and Istanbul.

## TCA LEADERSHIP

**YALCIN AYASLI**, Chairman

**G. LINCOLN MCCURDY**, President

**BASAK KIZILDEMIR**, Vice President, Turkey Representative

## TCA STAFF

**LIZ CLARK**, Project Coordinator

**KATE COSTELLO**, Project Coordinator

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**GULHAN OZKAN**, Executive Assistant, Turkey

**LOUETTE RAGUSA**, Executive Assistant, Washington, DC

**DAVID SALTZMAN**, Counsel

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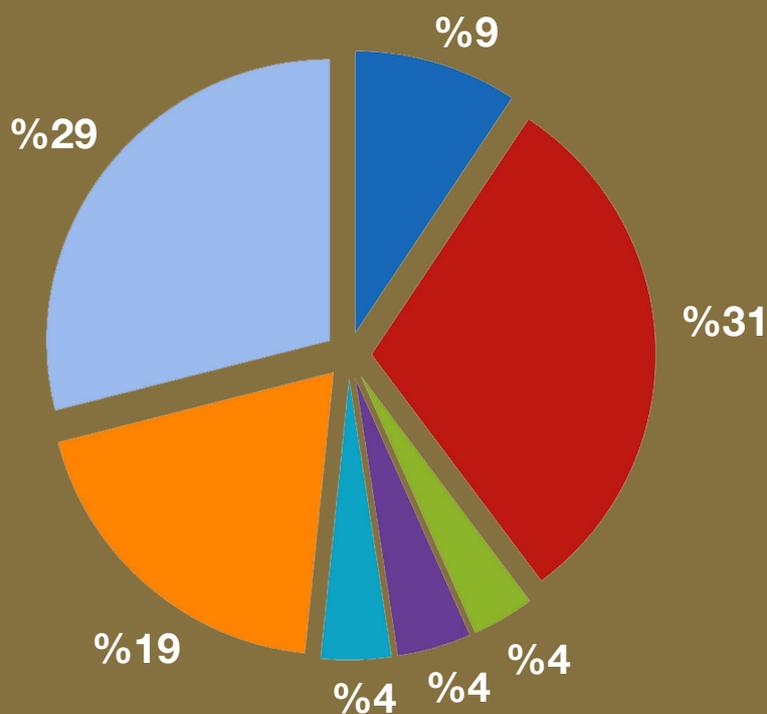
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# Financial Statement

Turkish Coalition of America invested a total of **\$1,956,477.00** in 2015 to pursue its mission and implement its programs. The following is a categorized breakdown of all TCA administrative and program expenses.

<span style="color: #0070C0;">■</span> PUBLIC EDUCATION	\$182,108
<span style="color: #C00000;">■</span> YOUTH AND EDUCATION	\$596,703
<span style="color: #92D050;">■</span> HERITAGE AND HUMANITARIAN GRANTS	\$69,575
<span style="color: #6A329F;">■</span> CIVIC ENGAGEMENT	\$82,909
<span style="color: #00B0F0;">■</span> CONGRESSIONAL OUTREACH	\$78,435
<span style="color: #FF8C00;">■</span> SPECIAL PROJECTS	\$379,668
<span style="color: #ADD8E6;">■</span> ADMINISTRATIVE	\$567,079



# Educating the Public

Through outreach efforts and a proactive strategy, TCA works to ensure accurate and balanced media portrayals of Turkish Americans and Turkey.

The collage consists of three distinct images. On the left is a screenshot of 'THE HILL' Congress Blog, featuring an article titled 'Turkey's safe harbor' with a sub-headline 'While the term "nation of immigrants" is most readily associated with the United States, an American strategic ally on the other side of the globe can claim the same distinction dating back centuries.' The middle image is a screenshot of the Turkish Coalition of America website, showing the 'U.S.-Turkey Relations' section with a sub-headline 'The mutual ties between the U.S. and Turkey were formalized with the 1947 Economic and Technical agreement...' and a 'TCA Issue Papers' section. On the right is a screenshot of the TCA Facebook page, displaying a group photo of TCA members and a post about the 'Turkish Coalition of America'.

Throughout 2015, TCA's team monitored American, Turkish, and international media. TCA staff engaged with journalists through in-person meetings and by providing fact sheets and information about both history and current events regarding Turkish Americans and Turkey.

TCA has held numerous background meetings with senior reporters, editors, and contributors from some of the world's largest publications and news agencies. These meetings provide an open forum for reporters and editors to learn more about U.S.-Turkey relations, Turkey's role in global affairs, and current issues facing Turkey and Turkey's region. Through these dialogues, TCA also gives journalists information about TCA's initiatives and views on relevant issues. TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy's "Turkey's Safe Harbor" Op-Ed was published by The Hill in 2015.

TCA Issue Papers provide opinion leaders and members of Congress with information and analysis on current issues related to Turkey. In 2015, TCA released 16 Issue Papers and statements that detailed current affairs related to Turkey and TCA's positions.

TCA received consistent coverage in U.S. media outlets in 2015 and was a primary reference for reporters to consult for a Turkish American perspective. TCA was quoted or featured in several press publications, including The New York Times, Hurriyet, Hurriyet Daily News, Milliyet, The Hill, Daily Sabah, Indian Country Today Media Network, and others in the U.S. and Turkey.

Another source of information for the general public is the [TCA website](#), which features topical as well as in-depth information on issues concerning Turkish Americans and U.S.-Turkey relations. The website features an extensive compilation of reference materials, talking points, and resource and reading lists on Turkey. In 2015, the TCA website received 1,354,456 hits.

In 2015, TCA continued its social media campaign to expand its online presence. In the last year, TCA's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) profiles reached thousands of people.

## Investing in Youth and Education

TCA is proud of its pillar programs for youth that are designed to enrich Turkish American participation in public affairs and to foster future generations of Turkish American leaders.



2015 TCA Washington Summer Interns with former members of Congress Dan Maffei (D-NY) and Ken Kramer (R-CO)

### TCA WASHINGTON SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The [TCA Washington Summer Internship Program](#) provides young Turkish American college students and recent graduates the opportunity to work in Washington, DC as interns with members of the U.S. Congress and select governmental and non-governmental organizations. The program aims to foster young Turkish Americans' interest in public affairs and service as well as enhance their knowledge of American political life. It also seeks to prepare future Turkish American political and community leaders.

Since the TCA Washington Summer Internship Program began in 2007, it has provided a total of 146 internship opportunities to Turkish Americans, with 13 Turkish Americans participating in the 2015 program. Outside of the Washington Summer Internship Program, TCA also had six other interns, including one Bosnian American.

In Congress, the 2015 TCA Turkish American interns worked in the offices of Representatives Brendan Boyle (D-PA/13th), Frank Guinta (R-NH/1st), Alcee Hastings (D-FL/20th), Bill Pascrell (D-NJ/9th), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL/27th), and the Democratic National Committee. In addition, TCA placed interns at the American Turkish Association of Washington, DC (ATA-DC), American Turkish Council (ATC), Assembly of Turkish

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*I am thankful to TCA for selecting me as one of the 2015 summer interns and helping me out in interning at the Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East at the Atlantic Council. **I am the first Turkish intern at the Hariri Center and my experience here has been great.** I would highly recommend that enthusiastic young Turkish Americans seriously consider a position at the Hariri Center and the Turkish Coalition of America.”*

*- Eyup Civelek, 2015 TCA Washington Summer Intern, Atlantic Council*

## Investing in Youth and Education

American Associations (ATAA), Atlantic Council, Middle East Institute (MEI), Quality Trust, and the Washington offices of the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD) and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB).

As a part of the 2015 Washington Summer Internship Program, TCA hosted the annual TCA Summer Intern Orientation Session at its Washington, DC office. Interns gathered for a day of professional development and briefings with the Embassy of Turkey, representatives from Turkish American organizations, and former TCA summer interns. Orientation participants also met with two former members of Congress, Dan Maffei (D-NY) and Ken Kramer (R-CO), who discussed activism and political engagement. The day culminated in a meeting with Dr. Kemal Kirisci of the Brookings Institution and Dr. Kadir Ustun of SETA Foundation, who discussed U.S.-Turkey relations and Turkish politics.

In 2015, TCA also began a new partnership with the Atlantic Council to provide Turkish Americans with educational opportunities in global affairs and public policy through TCA internships at the Atlantic Council. Opportunities for the Atlantic Council internship through TCA were available throughout the year.



2015 TCA Washington Summer Interns at the Jazz in the Garden Series at the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden

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*My internship with TCA was very educational, fun, and reassuring. It allowed me to come out of my comfort zone. I gained firsthand practice and knowledge about politics in DC; U.S.-Turkey relations; and how we can make a difference in our home states. The meetings, debates, and seminars taught me how important it is to listen both sides of an issue. Overall, it was very educational for those of us who are interested in politics, international relations, and public relations. I am very grateful to TCA for giving me these opportunities to make critical professional contacts, learn and exercise office skills, and witness diplomatic relations in the U.S. capital.”*

- Cemre Efe, 2015 TCA Washington Summer Intern

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*Being part of TCA's 2015 Summer Internship Program has been a truly rewarding experience. My internship with the Middle East Institute, one of the oldest institutions dedicated solely to the study of the Middle East, has helped me gain new insights on the tumultuous situation in the region and has been a true eye-opener for the potential challenges that might change the dynamics in the region. I believe that my research experience will embellish me with necessary skills to be one of the Turkish American leaders active in American political life.”*

- Gizem Korkmaz, 2015 TCA Washington Summer Intern, Middle East Institute



Top: 2015 TCA Washington Summer Interns with TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy; Center: 2015 TCA Washington Summer Interns with Congressman Steve Chabot (R-OH/1st), who visited TCA offices to discuss the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Syrian refugee crisis, and the 2016 presidential elections; Bottom: 2015 TCA Summer Interns with TUSAID Senior Fellow and Director of the Center on the United States and Europe's Turkey Project at the Brookings Institution Dr. Kemal Kirisci and Executive Director of the SETA Foundation at Washington, DC Dr. Kadir Ustun

## Investing in Youth and Education



2015 TCA Youth Congress delegates outside of the U.S. Capitol building

### TCA TURKISH AMERICAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONGRESS

A new addition to the TCA flagship programs for Turkish American youth is the [Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress](#), which was held in Washington, DC on November 5-8, 2015.

The TCA Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress is open to undergraduate students, graduate students, and young professionals of Turkish American heritage who wish to become active in American civic and political life, contribute to U.S.-Turkey relations and the Turkish American community, and advance the TCA mission.

Every fall through this program, participants have the opportunity to expand their knowledge of U.S.-Turkey relations and the political systems of both countries; meet members of Congress, diplomats, and policy experts; and network with peers from across the U.S. Since the program began in 2014, 59 Turkish Americans have attended the Turkish American Youth Leadership Congress. Applications for the Youth Congress open every year in July.

In 2015, 30 young Turkish Americans came away from the TCA Youth Congress inspired to take a more active role in local and national politics and become effective representatives of the Turkish American community. While in Washington, DC, delegates attended meetings and briefings with Turkish policy experts, congressional staffers,

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*The TCA Youth Congress was really a great experience and training on the issues that the Turkish American community faces. At the same time, it showed the state of bilateral relations between the U.S. and Turkey with comprehensive training on American politics. The event was perfectly organized: TCA thought of every single detail — including tea prepared with the Turkish tea pot (semaver). Meeting other Turkish Americans from all around the U.S. made it such a nice opportunity for networking and creating new friendships thanks to the TCA Turkish American Youth Congress. Thank you!”*

*- Nuri Ali Tabir, Austin, TX, 2015 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate*

## Investing in Youth and Education

former members of Congress, political activists, and leaders in the Turkish American community. The participants also had the opportunity to network with leaders in U.S.-Turkey relations and with other young Turkish Americans. Throughout the weekend, delegates engaged in an active dialogue on the state of U.S.-Turkey relations and specific issues important to Turkish Americans. They also learned about the role of citizens in policymaking and the steps they could take to be successful advocates.

The delegates also toured the U.S. Capitol and visited the Turkish Ambassador's historical residence, where they received a briefing by Turkish Embassy staff. Their visit to the nation's capital was topped off with a jazz concert at the Kennedy Center, a tour of the monuments on the National Mall, and a visit to the National Portrait Gallery.

For the Youth Congress, TCA received video messages from the Co-Chairs of the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans: Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC/5th), Congressman Ed Whitfield (R-KY/1st), Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-VA/11th), and Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN/9th); two prominent Turkish Americans: Cenk Uygur, co-founder of the Young Turks Network and a leading Turkish American political commentator, and Judge Jay Karahan, Harris County/Texas Criminal Court and the highest elected Turkish American official; and Turkish German Parliamentarian Belit Onay, a member of the Green Party in Germany.

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*TCA's Youth Congress is a great way to get young Turkish Americans involved in the U.S. political system. As a participant in the program, I learned the value of connecting with my elected officials and voicing my opinion on matters that impact Turkish Americans. I made contacts with whom I will stay in touch for a long time and participated in sessions with many great speakers. I'm delighted to have been selected to participate in this conference.”*

*- Emine Kasapoglu, Wayne, NJ, 2015 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate*

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*The delegates all came from different places, backgrounds, and occupations. TCA's Turkish American Youth Congress reminded us that despite all these differences, despite our affiliation with politics or lack thereof, we all share a great role in U.S. politics as the Turkish American community.”*

*- Ozan Akpinar, Rochester, NY, 2015 Turkish American Youth Congress Delegate*



2015 TCA Youth Congress delegates in the TCA conference room



Top: 2015 TCA Youth Congress delegates at a briefing in the TCA conference room; Center: 2015 TCA Youth Congress delegates at the Turkish Ambassador's residence; Bottom: 2015 TCA Youth Congress delegates at the concluding breakfast

## Investing in Youth and Education



*The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*, by Gunter Lewy, recently translated into Russian and published

### TCA - UNIVERSITY OF UTAH TURKISH STUDIES PROJECT

In 2015, TCA continued to fund the [Turkish Studies Project](#) at the University of Utah, which is directed by University of Utah Professor Dr. M. Hakan Yavuz. TCA provided this major [multi-year grant](#) to the University of Utah in 2009 to establish an academic program to examine the origins of modern ethnic cleansing, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of nation states in the Balkans and the Caucasus. The grant was renewed in 2015 with an expanded geographical focus entitled “The Origins and Contemporary Challenges of Turkic Peoples.” Under the current grant term, the Project aims to explore the past histories and shaping of contemporary Turkic-majority states and their relationships with modern Turkey via scholarly work, community participation, social media, and support for new research.

The Turkish Studies Project in 2015 provided fellowships to graduate students and scholars who are undertaking research about Turkic peoples and states and their relationships with modern Turkey. The program also provided support for them to attend and present at conferences in the U.S., Turkey, and Europe and to translate scholarly material to English. In addition, the Turkish Studies Project held its own conference in Brussels, Belgium to bring together the best scholars in the field. The conference covered two topics, the first of which was Jadidism and its socio-political implications for the Turkic peoples. The second was the nation-building process in the Balkans, with a focus on ethnic cleansing and massacres of the Ottoman population.

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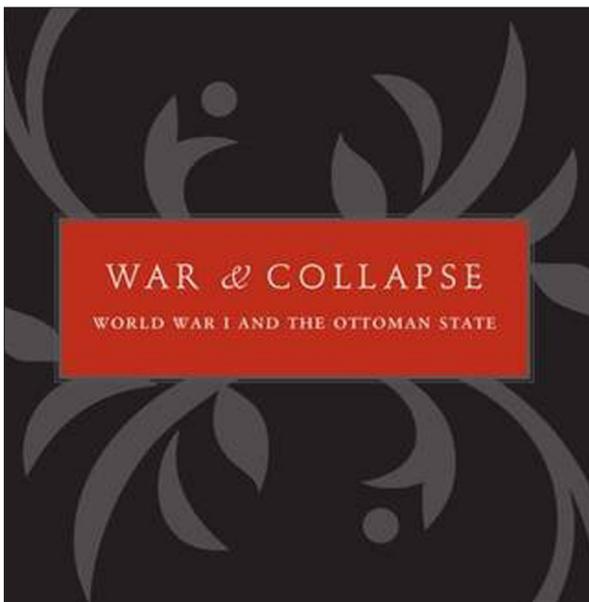
*The Turkish Studies Project has been much more than just a provider of financial support throughout my graduate studies at the University of Utah. It has been a source of general intellectual growth, a venue to network with renowned scholars and specialists, and an excellent opportunity to expand academic boundaries in several directions. In short, **the Turkish Studies Project has been essential to my advancement as a scholar and has enabled me to make new and original contributions to the study of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans, and Turkey.**”*

*-Perparim Gutaj, Turkish Studies Project Fellow*

## Investing in Youth and Education

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In 2015, a number of academic and journalistic writings composed under the Turkish Studies Project were published or selected for future publication. These works included several chapters of *War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz with Feroz Ahmad and since published by the University of Utah Press. In addition, Ph.D. fellow Tal Buenos published numerous newspaper articles and several scholarly works, including an article in *Review of Armenian Studies* entitled “Historiography and the Future of Multiculturalism in Europe: Perincek v. Switzerland.” Post-doctoral fellow Brad Dennis secured the publication of his work, “Ideas of Cultural Cleansing from the Balkans to Eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus: How the Balkan Wars Influenced Armenian Revolutionaries.” Another fellow, Perparim Gutaj, conducted archival research and made progress on his dissertation, “Patterns of Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans.” Also with Turkish Studies Project support, Hakan Erdagoz successfully completed and defended his Ph.D. dissertation, which explored the construction of Turkophobia in Europe by tracing historically shifting discourses of religious diversity in a comparative study of France and Russia. In addition, the Turkish Studies Project supported and promoted a number of other publications and translations in 2015.



*War and Collapse: World War I and the Ottoman State*, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz with Feroz Ahmad, recently published by the University of Utah Press

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*The Turkish Studies Project at the University of Utah has had a tremendously positive impact on my career. It has enabled me to build my network with scholars, businessmen, and politicians in Turkey and the United States, publish my research in peer-reviewed academic journals, build my credentials, teach students about Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, and give me leverage in opening up other doors in academia and business to enhance relations between Turkey and the United States. I have chosen to pursue a path that gives back. I have been in touch with History and Political Science Department at Utah Valley University, and they have been working with me to establish a Middle East and Turkish Studies Program that will help orient students in careers related to Turkey, integrate more Turkish students into U.S. academic programs, and work to integrate Turkey and the Ottoman Empire into teaching about Middle East history and world history.”*

*- Brad Dennis, Turkish Studies Project Post-Doc Fellow*

## Investing in Youth and Education



Canadian Youth Congress participants at the conference

### TURKISH CANADIAN YOUTH CONGRESS

For the sixth year in a row, TCA provided a grant to support the Council of Turkish Canadians (CTC) Annual Turkish-Canadian Youth Congress. The 8th Annual Turkish Canadian Youth Congress was held October 16–18, 2015 in Toronto, Canada and was entitled, “Participating in Canadian Democracy.”

Over 700 young Turkish Canadians have participated in the annual youth conferences thus far and the 2015 Congress attracted over 50 participants. The event provided a platform for young Turkish Canadians to meet each other and work towards a better understanding of Turkish heritage and history. During the forum, participants gained guidance to make effective contributions to Canada and received tools and information necessary to address and resolve issues important to Turkish Canadians.

Speakers at the 2015 Congress included Turkish Ambassador to Canada Selcuk Unal, retired Ambassador and former member of the Turkish Parliament Dr. Onur Oymen, and former Canadian Ambassador to the UN Paul Heinbecker. Other speakers included Dr. Christopher Gunn of Coastal Carolina University, Dr. Ozay Mehmet of Carleton University, and Ergun Kirlikovali, past president of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA). Youth delegates also made presentations. TCA Project Coordinator Kate Costello spoke at the event about the programs of TCA and TCF, congressional outreach, and Turkish American political participation.



Canadian Youth Congress participants discuss issues at the conference

## Building Bridges

TCA has enhanced its educational mission by sponsoring a diverse collection of scholarship programs.



2015 TCA scholarship recipients from Spelman College visit a kervansaray (Seljuk caravan stop) during their summer program in Turkey

### SCHOLARSHIPS AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES

#### • TCA Study Abroad Scholarships for American Students of Minority and Heritage Communities

Through the [TCA Study Abroad Scholarships for American Students of Minority and Heritage Communities program](#), TCA provides up to **100 scholarships per year** for **American students of African, Armenian, Bosnian, Filipino, Hispanic, Macedonian, and Native American** descent who have been accepted to a study abroad program in Turkey, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, or Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2015, TCA awarded a record 90 scholarships, bringing the total number of scholarships awarded to 469 since this program's inception in 2008. American minority students who receive the TCA Study Abroad Scholarship studied in subject areas ranging from engineering to art history, with the most popular subjects being international relations, political science, and history.

Scholarship recipients came from American colleges and universities across the country, the most widely represented institutions being Duke University, Georgia State University, San Diego State University, Spelman College, Syracuse University, the University of California Santa Barbara, the University of Texas at Austin, and Valdosta State University. Finally, the most common Turkish institutions chosen by the students for their study abroad programs were Bahcesehir University, Bogazici University, Koc University, Middle East Technical University, and Yeditepe University.

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*I am so happy I took this opportunity to come to such a beautiful country. It opened my eyes to so many cultural differences and similarities and really made me appreciate America a tad bit more. I am **blessed that I received support from the Turkish Coalition of America for helping me even get here to experience this amazing country.** This trip was one of a lifetime and I am really grateful that I was able to be a part of it all.”*

*- Morgan Robinson, Spelman College, 2015 TCA Scholarship Recipient*



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*Being afforded the opportunity to study abroad in such a culturally rich place is indescribable. **Turkey's immense history, beauty, and uniqueness shined through in every place that I visited.** Likewise I was able to immerse myself in pertinent, engaging academics at the beautiful Bogazici University. Visiting Turkey allowed me to make the world my classroom.”*

*-Christina Williams, Duke University, 2015 TCA Scholarship Recipient*



Top: 2015 TCA scholarship recipient Arnela Iseric of James Madison University in front of the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) during her summer semester at the American University of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, BiH; Bottom left: 2015 TCA scholarship recipient Grace Diaz of San Diego State University enjoys the city during her fall semester at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul, Turkey; Bottom right: 2015 scholarship recipient Trudy Dadzie of SUNY Albany shops for a Turkish carpet during her fall semester at Bahcesehir University

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***Traveling to Turkey was an experience like no other.** I learned about the rich history and culture of an amazing country that now holds a special place in my heart.”*

*-Isabella Moreira, Florida State University, 2015 TCA Scholarship Recipient*

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*It's something I'll never forget. All the sights were so beautiful! **Looking back I wish I could have stayed longer, I feel like Turkey is going to be a part of me forever.**”*

*-Kelly Camacho, SUNY Buffalo, 2015 TCA Scholarship Recipient*

## Building Bridges



2015 TCA Study Tour Grant recipients from Texas A&M University visit the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul

### • TCA Study Tour Grant Program

The [TCA Study Tour Grant Program](#) was established in 2011 to support educational travel programs to Turkey by American universities and educational institutions. It subsidizes participation costs for students and provides a general incentive for institutions to choose Turkey as a study tour destination.

After receiving a record number of applications in 2015, TCA awarded **nine Study Tour Grants** to faculty-led study tour programs organized by American universities. The recipients were SUNY Buffalo State, Evergreen State College, University of Arkansas, Texas A&M University, University of Colorado, University of Nevada-Reno, and the University of Minnesota-Duluth. In total, TCA provided **\$41,350** to benefit **105** students from across the nation who participated in these tours and learned about Turkey through various disciplines including history, art, architecture, and religious studies. This brings the total number of participants to 281 since the program began in 2011.

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*In the summer of 2015 I was one of the lucky students to travel to Istanbul, Turkey, to take an intensive two-week tour to learn about Turkish culture and politics. It was the most amazing experience. **It was the trip of a lifetime because I learned so much.** I have traveled to many countries, but this experience cannot be topped by any other great experiences. I felt very safe, and people were very friendly. I recommend this experience to all students!”*

*-Blanca Leon, the University of Nevada-Reno, 2015 TCA Study Tour Participant*

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*Through the generous support of TCA, our 20 students from Texas A&M University were afforded opportunities to experience many of the most important and significant representations of both the Turkish culture and the contemporary landscape of Turkish political affairs. **The assistance of TCA helped us extend the range of exposure our students were given to the crucial interaction of historical heritage, cultural imagination, and political discourse currently shaping one of the world's most important nation-states.** The students simply couldn't get enough of Istanbul, its breathtaking beauty, its complex social, cultural and political atmosphere, or its abundant and endless supply of hospitality to their American visitors. TCA was a valued and highly respected partner to us during our program, making the experience even more rewarding and enriching for our students. The application process for our grant support was easy, all questions promptly and clearly answered and all inquiries addressed thoroughly and always with the utmost degree of professionalism and politeness. The students in my group from Texas A&M were transformed by the experience, and TCA was in a very significant way responsible for this superb and unique educational opportunity.”*

**-Dr. John Robertson, Texas A&M University,  
2015 TCA Study Tour Leader**

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*From the second you land in the airport, you know that Istanbul is one of the most unique places you will have the opportunity to explore. You are truly immersed in the culture with this program and quickly learn the customs that make the culture so uniquely beautiful. **The people you will meet, the things you will see and do — there is absolutely no experience that compares to the Turkey Study Tour.***

**-David Campos, University of Nevada-Reno,  
2015 TCA Study Tour Participant**



2015 TCA Study Tour Grant recipient University of Minnesota Duluth students visit the TCA Istanbul office for a briefing by TCA Vice President Basak Kizildemir



2015 TCA Study Tour Grant recipients from Texas A&M University visit the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul

## Building Bridges

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### HERITAGE PARTNERSHIPS

TCA established special [partnerships](#) with the Bosniak and Macedonian communities in the United States to enhance the historical heritage and contemporary bonds of friendship that the Turkish people have with their Balkan neighbors. Over the years, TCA has provided support to the Advisory Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ACBH) and to the United Macedonian Diaspora (UMD) to help the two organizations hire professional staff, institute new programs and events, and build their memberships and donor bases.

UMD has grown into an influential voice in the U.S. and globally, representing the interests of Macedonians worldwide. Similarly, TCA's support to ACBH has allowed the organization to grow its presence in Washington, DC. TCA's partnership with ACBH has made it possible for young Bosnian Americans to intern in high profile offices in Washington, DC.

Both UMD and ACBH share offices at TCA's headquarters in Washington, DC. This close proximity allows for the organizations to continue to host joint programs and foster the partnership spirit that Turkish, Macedonian, and Bosnian Americans have developed over the years.

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*For nearly a decade, UMD and TCA have built an excellent partnership based on mutual respect which has helped benefit and strengthen U.S. engagement within the region. **We cannot be more grateful for the mentorship, friendship, and strong support that TCA has shown for UMD and Macedonia and look forward to continuing to strengthen ties between both our organizations and our respective homelands of Macedonia and Turkey.***

*- Metodija A. Koloski, Co-Founder and President, United Macedonian Diaspora*

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*“The Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina (ACBH) is deeply grateful for TCA’s longstanding support and friendship. **With TCA’s help, ACBH has been able to provide Bosnian American students with life changing internships and take members of Congress and over 50 Congressional staffers to Bosnia and Herzegovina.** These trips have immensely contributed to highlighting the importance of continued U.S. engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Southeast Europe region. ACBH commends TCA’s leadership and its staff who have been instrumental in assisting in the continuing growth and development of ACBH and we are deeply grateful for TCA’s involvement in fostering peace and economic development in Southeast Europe.”*

*-Mirzeta Hadzikadic, President, Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina*



Left to right: First Counselor and Spokesman of the Turkish Embassy Aydan Karamanoglu, NCAEID President and CEO Gary Davis, and TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy at the Global Trade Reception

## TCA – NATIVE AMERICAN RELATIONS

The Turkish-Native American partnership began in 2008 with TCA's [Study Abroad in Turkey scholarships](#) for Native American students, which TCA continued to provide in 2015. This partnership has been strengthened over the years as a result of several special projects, both economic and cultural, spearheaded by TCA. Overall, TCA's Native American outreach aims to foster ties between Indian Country, Turkish Americans, and Turkey.

As part of this outreach, TCA promoted Turkey-Indian Country ties by participating in the 2015 Reservation Economic Summit in Washington, DC (RES DC), June 15-18. Organized by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED), the summit brought together members of Congress, corporations, federal agencies, and tribal businesses. The 2015 theme for RES DC was "Advancing American Indian Enterprise for Growth in U.S. and Global Markets."

TCA sponsored the Global Trade Reception part of RES DC, which featured the Kardelen Turkish Dance Ensemble. TCA also coordinated additional Turkish participation in RES DC on the part of the Turkish Embassy, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), and the Turkish Heritage Organization (THO). The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) sponsored a two-page advertisement in the conference magazine about grants given by TIKA to Oregon's Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS) and to Indian farmers in Guatemala, Peru, and Bolivia.



Members of the Kardelen Dance Ensemble with First Counselor and Speaker of the Turkish Embassy Aydan Karamanoglu, Kate Boyce of NCAIED, and TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy at the Global Trade Reception

## Building Bridges



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy at the Viransehir refugee camp



G. Lincoln McCurdy meets with directors at the Viransehir camp

### TCA ENGAGEMENT WITH REFUGEES IN TURKEY

TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy visited camps for Syrian refugees in Viransehir and Midyat, Turkey in June 2015 with a view to highlighting how Turkey is confronting the challenges of one of the worst man-made humanitarian crises facing the world. At the time of McCurdy's visit, Turkey had taken in over 1.7 million refugees fleeing violence in Syria and the surrounding region. Of these refugees, over 200,000 were living in one of 25 temporary protection camps, while 1.5 million were living in Turkish towns and cities. The numbers have continued to increase since that time.

On June 1, McCurdy visited the Prime Ministry Disaster & Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) Viransehir refugee camp. The camp, which opened in August 2013, is built on Turkish government land located near the Ceylanpinar border crossing with Syria. The camp provides various services, including electricity, running water, schools, language lessons, community centers, computer facilities, sewing and weaving centers, grocery stores, and hospitals.

On June 2, McCurdy visited the AFAD Midyat refugee camp, which opened in 2013 and provides similar services to those of the Viransehir camp. While in Midyat, McCurdy toured the camp and surrounding area and met with the camp director. Originally constructed for Assyrian Christian refugees from Iraq, the camp housed over 5,000 Syrian refugees and Iraqi Yazidis at the time of McCurdy's visit.



TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy with Syrian refugee children

## In the Community

Since its founding, TCA has supported Turkish American and Turkish Canadian organizations in their efforts to strengthen the Turkish voice in North America through education and civic participation.



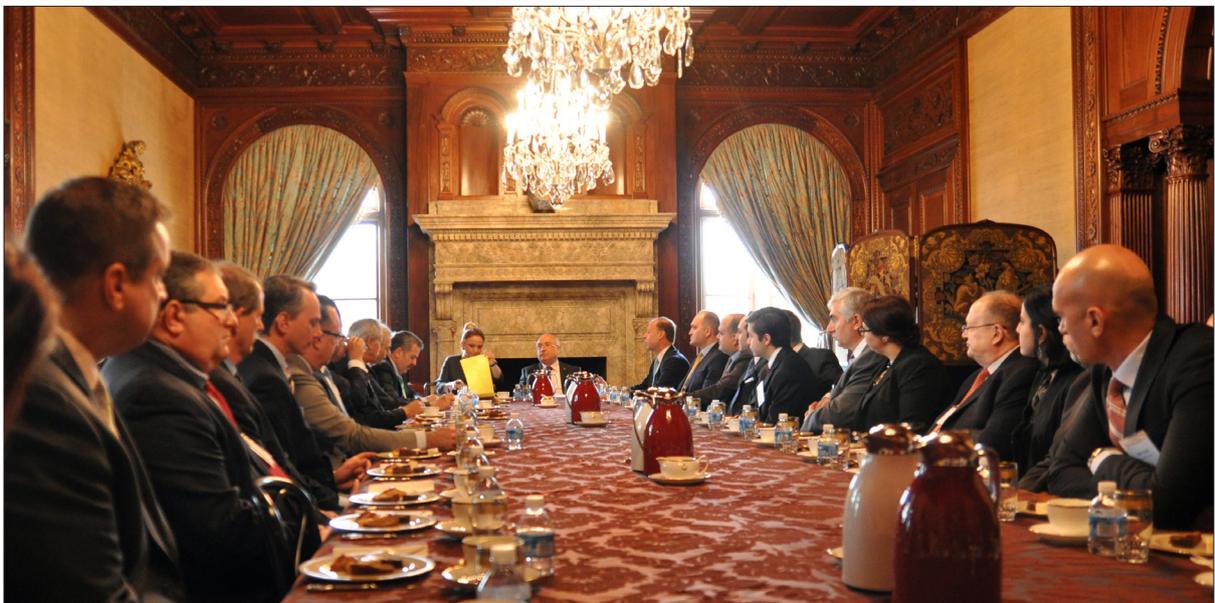
TCA Forum participants with members of Congress on Capitol Hill

### FORUM FOR BUSINESS EXECUTIVES

In March 2015, TCA hosted the first ever business forum on the American political system in Washington, DC for executives of Turkish-owned companies in the U.S., major Turkish American businesses, and interested American companies. Over 30 representatives from companies and business associations took part in the program, which provided an opportunity for participants to learn how to effectively communicate their business issues and interests to elected officials.

As part of the event, Turkish Ambassador Serdar Kilic hosted TCA forum participants and Turkish parliamentarians for a roundtable discussion with Speaker of the Turkish Parliament, H.E. Cemil Cicek. Afterwards at TCA headquarters, Dr. Kemal Kirisci of the Brookings Institution gave the luncheon keynote. Forum participants also had briefings about the 114th Congress, the Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans, legal perspectives on corporate political activism, and the activities of Turkish American grassroots organizations. They also heard a presentation from Coca-Cola about how to be good corporate citizens in their communities and the importance of being engaged in the political process.

The group met with eight members of Congress at the U.S. Capitol, including the Co-Chairs of the Turkey Caucus. The group then attended the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress 18th Annual Statesmanship Awards Dinner, of which TCA was a major sponsor.



Top: Members of Congress, including Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL/27th) and Congressman Ed Whitfield (R-KY/1st), address TCA Forum participants on Capitol Hill; Middle: Speaker of the Turkish Parliament H.E. Cemil Cicek addresses TCA forum participants at a roundtable discussion hosted by Turkish Ambassador Serdar Kilic at the Turkish Ambassador's residence; Bottom: TCA Forum Participants at a briefing in the TCA conference room

## In the Community



Bahcesehir University American Studies Program students during their visit to TCA's offices for briefings before their tours and meetings on Capitol Hill

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROWTH AND CIVIC CONTRIBUTIONS

In 2015, TCA continued to support the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), one of the leading Turkish American grassroots organizations. TCA provided a \$20,000 grant to sponsor the ATAA 35th National Leadership Conference in Washington, DC on March 12-14, 2015. Hundreds of Turkish Americans from across the United States participated in the conference, which also included an opportunity for attendees to visit congressional offices.

The U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress (USAFMC) held its 18th Annual Statesmanship Awards dinner on March 25, 2015. TCA supported this event, which brought together hundreds of guests, including former and current members of Congress, ambassadors, corporate and think tank representatives, and Administration officials.

TCA continued its partnership with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) by supporting CHCI's 38th Annual Leadership Conference held in Washington, DC on October 6-8, 2015. CHCI's programs serve more than 1,500 Latinos annually. TCA has worked closely with CHCI for years to promote Turkey as a study abroad destination for Hispanic American students and to increase the number of Hispanic American recipients of TCA's Study Abroad in Turkey Scholarship Program. TCA promoted its scholarships in 2015 at a Study Abroad Panel hosted by CHCI in Washington, DC.



TCA Project Coordinator Liz Clark introduces the ATA-DC Future Leaders Series, which was hosted and sponsored by TCA in 2015

## In the Community



Participants in the ATA-DC Future Leaders Series, which was hosted and sponsored by TCA

TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy and staff also attended the Turk of America Gala in New York City. At the gala, which honored prominent Turkish Americans, McCurdy accepted an award on behalf of TCA founders Drs. Yalcin and Serpil Ayasli honoring them for their contributions to the Turkish American community.

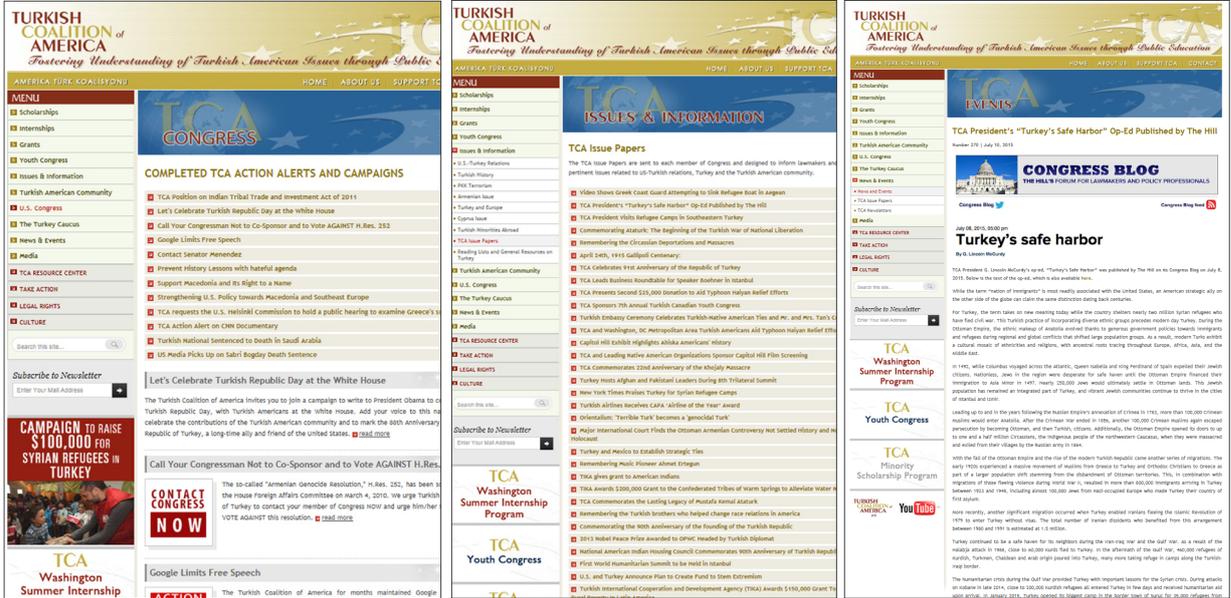
TCA also lent support and expertise to other groups in 2015. TCA briefed a delegation of students from the American Studies program at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul on the American political system during the group's trip to the U.S. TCA also arranged for the Bahcesehir students to tour the U.S. Capitol and organized meetings with members of Congress and their staff. In addition, TCA was a partial sponsor of Turkish Night, hosted by the Turkish Students Association at George Washington University. TCA also supported the American Turkish Association of Washington, DC (ATA-DC). TCA was a co-sponsor and host of ATA-DC's Future Leaders Series, which consisted of several workshops for young professionals about how to utilize social media for personal branding.



Left to right: Leyla McCurdy, Honorary Turkish Consul General for the State of Michigan Nurten Ural, and TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy

# In Congress

A significant component of TCA's mission is to enhance understanding of the importance of U.S.-Turkey relations in Congress.



## STRENGTHENING THE VOICE OF TURKISH AMERICANS

One of TCA's primary objectives is to strengthen the voice of Turkish Americans in public affairs. TCA works to monitor legislation and issues discussed in Congress that concern the community, and it activates the TCA Action Alert Center to prompt Turkish Americans to contact their members of Congress when necessary.

The TCA [Action Alert Center](#) is available free of charge to Turkish American organizations and partners of TCA. TCA also regularly provides information and analysis to members of Congress and their staff on issues related to Turkey and U.S.-Turkey relations through TCA Issue Papers sent via fax and email bulletins as well as through face-to-face meetings. In 2015, 16 [TCA Issue Papers](#) were published.

## In Congress

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Left to right: Congressman Frank Guinta (R-NH/1st), TCA President G. Lincoln McCurdy, Majority Whip Congressman Steve Scalise (R-LA/1st), and TOBB President Rifat Hisarcikloglu

### SUPPORTING THE TURKEY CAUCUS ON U.S.-TURKEY RELATIONS AND TURKISH AMERICANS

TCA works with the Turkish American community to increase the membership of the **Congressional Caucus on U.S.-Turkey Relations and Turkish Americans** (the Turkey Caucus).

In 2015, the [Turkey Caucus](#) expanded its membership to **148**, representing **42 U.S. states** and all **six territories**. With members from both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, it is the second largest bicameral ethnic/national caucus in Congress.

TCA engaged members of the Turkey Caucus on a regular basis throughout the year. It sponsored numerous events relating to the mission of the Turkey Caucus, including facilitating the participation of Turkey Caucus members in Turkish American events, hosting meetings with members of the Turkish American community, promoting the work of its individual members, and integrating such TCA programs as its scholarship program and Washington Summer Internship Program into the members' own constituent services.

TCA also continued to publish a bi-annual bulletin specifically for members of the Turkey Caucus, meant to inform them of important developments in the U.S.-Turkey agenda and on issues of significance to the Turkish American community.

# Delegation Visit



Members of the 17th TCA Congressional Delegation to Turkey in Sultanahmet Square in Istanbul



Members of the 17th TCA Congressional Delegation to Turkey in the historic Pera Palace Hotel in Istanbul

## 17TH TCA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO TURKEY

Since 2009, TCA has taken more than 170 members of Congress and senior staffers to Turkey and surrounding countries and has become one of the leading organizations sponsoring foreign congressional travel.

TCA's 17th Congressional Delegation visited Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina from May 25-31, 2015. Two members of Congress participated on the trip, Congressman Sean Maloney (D-NY/18th) and Congressman Juan Vargas (D-CA/51st). Six Chiefs of Staff also participated from the offices of Congressman Tom MacArthur (R-NJ/3rd), Congressman Ryan Zinke (R-MT/At Large), Congressman Tom Emmer (R-MN/6th), Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-WI/6th), Congressman Carlos Curbelo (R-FL/26th), and Congressman Sean Maloney. The 2015 delegation first visited Istanbul, where participants held high-level meetings with U.S. and Turkish officials and also met with members of the press, academia, and the business community. The group also took a one-day trip to Canakkale and the sites of the World War I Battle of Gallipoli. Participants were briefed on the strategic and economic importance of the Dardanelles Straits. The group also commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli by visiting several key battlefields as well as the monuments dedicated to Turkish, British, Australian, and New Zealand soldiers who died during the battle. The visit highlighted the battle site's significance as a place of reconciliation, friendship, and international peace.

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*The staff at TCA put together a very high level and educational experience. **The caliber and diversity of meetings and experience is second to none.**”*

*- David Fitzsimmons, Chief of Staff for Congressman Tom Emmer (R-MN/6th)*

## Delegation Visit



From Istanbul, the delegation traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina and visited Sarajevo and the Maglaj region. The main purpose of the visit was to attend a ceremony marking the completion of a de-mining project in Bosnia. The de-mining project was undertaken by the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) with support from a \$100,000 [humanitarian grant](#) from TCA, which was matched by a grant from the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement of the U.S. State Department (PM/WRA).

Top: Members of the 17th TCA Congressional Delegation to Turkey and Timur Soylemez, Head of Department, Deputy Directorate General for the Americas, Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Bottom left: Members of the 17th TCA Congressional Delegation to Turkey at the minefield in Maglaj, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was cleared with a major grant from TCA; Bottom right: Members of the 17th TCA Congressional Delegation to Turkey in front of the Canakkale monument in Canakkale (Gallipoli)

## **Support TCA**

**The Turkish Coalition of America is a U.S. tax exempt public charitable organization and your contributions are U.S. tax deductible. TCA is supported entirely by private donations. Checks can be mailed to: Turkish Coalition of America, 1510 H St. NW Suite 900, Washington, DC 20005.**

## Turkish Coalition of America

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