American Turkish TV is the brainchild of Hurriyet Ok. It was conceived in 2004 and now draws upon a large group of talented volunteers. Broadcast in both English and Turkish it brings us coverage of the many Turkish events going on in the community. From the mesmerizing Turkish dancers at the Turkish festival, to the art of cooking delicious Turkish food, to the in-depth interviews with prominent individuals, it never fails to pique our interest in all Turkish affairs both local and outside of the US. We are talking today with Hurriyet about this monumental achievement.

Why did you decide to create a TV station featuring Turkish-American lives and Turkish culture?
We originally came up with the idea of broadcasting a TV program in 2004 to share with the wider community the concert videos of Turkish Music and the Choral Society in Washington D.C. We aired our first show in September 2005, called “Turkish-American Hour”, with a short coverage of a public concert. We also included interviews with prominent Turkish-Americans and short documentaries about Turkish Art and Culture.

What are the goals for producing programs featuring Turkish Culture through a public station?
Our Turkish speaking audience is more interested in documentaries covering historic and touristic areas of Turkey, music videos, and cooking shows. We feature fine examples of performing arts, music, and local events related to Turkish-Americans for our viewers to appreciate the richness of Turkish Cultural Heritage. Nega Zeytinyagli vegetarian dishes. Everyone who tried the recipe told us that it was delicious, ready prepared and consistently tasty. We are thankful to Zeynel Uzun, the chef and owner of Kazan restaurant. He was our studio guest a number of times, and he demonstrated unique Turkish cooking styles, including “Zeytinyagli” vegetarian dishes.

Who are your core viewers? What’s your message?
There are over 2 million people who have access to cable television in our broadcasting area in greater Washington DC. All of them are our potential viewers. We also have viewers across the United States and the whole world through our free on-demand streaming video over Internet. Based on our email, Facebook and Tweet subscriptions, Turkish-Americans are the main people who follow our programs. We love to hear the opinions of our followers through Facebook and receive feedback from our viewers by email. We are open to suggestions to produce programs that interest our community. We would like our viewers to spread the news that they have a voice in their community through TATV. Our contact information: producer@turkishamericantv.org www.turkishamericantv.org facebook.com/TurkAmericanTV twitter.com/TurkAmericanTV

How many volunteers work with you?
Gökhan Carey and Ozge Ovun Sert host our shows on a regular basis. Erju Ackman and Somahat Demir cover special topics in their expertise areas. Co-producer Ibrahim Turk also edits the shows and prepares for production release in addition to camera recoding of most field productions. Sefik Cardak who has many years of experience in audio/video helps us tremendously as production advisor. Deniz Mehmed, Caskun Usta, Nihat Subasi, and Selim Yargici are production assistants in the control room. Sihik Kazanci is our graphics artist, Atef Yargici’s music and jingles are the cheerful mood setters. Pinar Walter helps with communications, and Gizeh Salcigil-White is the marketing and social media advisor. Emre Saglam is the backbone of our Internet area. Our programs are also available free on the Internet through streaming video.

How can people volunteer? Do they need to have any experience with broadcasting or media?
You can send an email to producer@turkishamericantv.org and express your area of interest and come to one of our studio production sessions in Merrifield, VA. You do not need any prior experience. However, there is a requirement by Fairfax Public Access (FPA) that you attend a free “Orientalization” class, become a member of FPA, and take at least the “Production” course to volunteer in the studio. You can also help with non-studio activities, such as, scriptwriting, editing, assisting with the camera in the field, sharing the TATV news in social media, as well as, becoming a sponsor of a particular program or entire season.

One of the most viewed programs was the one with the recipe for “yogurtlu kebab”. Everyone who tried the recipe told us that it worked and that the dish was super delicious, easily prepared and consistently tasty. We are thankful to Zeynel Uzun, the chef and owner of Kazan restaurant. He was our studio guest a number of times, and he demonstrated unique Turkish cooking styles, including “Zeytinyagli” vegetarian dishes.

How can people watch your programs on TV/online?
TATV programs are aired by public access stations on Cable TV in Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon, Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties, all in the Greater Washington DC area. Our programs are also available free on the Internet through streaming video.

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