



# COMMUNITY TELEVISION THAT MATTERS

*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-dept 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 DC.. 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.

Two years later, in 2007, we launched another program called TAT in the Turkish language. TAT programs feature Turks living in our community in the U.S. and their life stories.

## What are the goals for producing programs featuring Turkish Culture through a public station?

The United States is a cultural melting pot.

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. Negative publicity against Turkey and Turks in the media was also influential for us in producing cultural programs on Community TV. We aim to present intriguing and uplifting examples from Turkish-American life to our viewers to show that people from Turkey also contribute positively in building the great American cultural mosaic.

## What types of programs are generating more interest?

Our Turkish speaking audience is more interested in programs related to their lives in the United States and special events such as 23 Nisan and Turkish Festival celebrations. Americans and English speaking viewers are more interested in documentaries covering historic and touristic areas of Turkey, Pop Music videos, and cooking shows.

## How does Public Access TV work?

Public access TV is the perfect forum where individuals can express their opinions and perspectives to the community through cable television. Each public access TV station is an independent and non-profit organization serving their community. With a nominal fee for annual membership any resident can produce a TV show with help from the training departments of the public access stations.

Public access TV makes the use of visual media possible for groups that are underrepresented, or not heard or seen at all in conventional broadcast television. TATV production facilities are provided by Fairfax Public Access (FPA) in Fairfax, Virginia. Our programs are also aired by Arlington Independent Media (AIM), Montgomery Community Media (MCM), Prince George's Community TV (PGTV), and Public Access Corporation of the District of Columbia (DCTV). All these facilities provide studio and professional video recording and broadcasting equipment as well as training

courses on how to operate studio camera, video editing, and create Radio/TV productions for their members.

## You are an award-winning community TV.

We are very thankful that TATV got recognized with many awards for its public service by different organizations. We received a Community Service award from the American-Turkish Association of Washington, DC (ATA-DC) in 2007, and Community Access Magic (CAM) Award in the International Category from Prince George's County Community TV (PGCTV) in 2007 and 2008. In the beginning of 2011, the Washington D.C. chapter of the Middle-East Technical University (METU) Alumni Association named Turkish-American Television the winner of its annual Turkish-American Community Service Award. The most recently, Fairfax Public Access (FPA) presented us with "Top Producer of the Quarter" Award in September 2011.

## 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 Tweeter 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 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.

## How many volunteers work with you?

Goksin Carey and Ozge Ovun Sert host our shows on a regular basis, Erju Ackman and Semahat 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, Coskun Uslu, Nihal Subasi, and Selim Yargici are production assistants in the control room. Sitki Kazanci is our graphics artist, Alper Yargici's music and jingles are the cheerful mood setters. Pinar Walter helps with communications, and Gizem Salcigil-White is the marketing and social media advisor. Emre Saglam is the backbone of our Internet and web presence. Although 3 or 4 of us get together to produce a particular episode, at

least fifteen production crewmembers volunteer for TATV on a regular basis throughout the year. There have been many more contributors and volunteers to make the production possible over the years. Last but not least, we are very grateful to our underwriters who support us financially and have helped keep the shows going since 2005.

## 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 session 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 "Orientation" class, become a member of FPA, and take at least the "Production Assistant" 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.

## We would like to thank you for your interview and we wish you many more years of broadcasting.

