



Raindrop Turkish House and Azerbaijanian American Cultural Alliance has organized the annual Turkic Cultures and Children's Festival on November 7th and 8th at Hermann Square, in front of Houston City Hall, to celebrate the rich heritage of such Turkic sister nations as Turkey, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and countries such as Albania, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Ahiskan Turks. The Turkic Fest also invited Greece and Pakistan as guest countries of this year, which added lively color to the festival.

Raindrop presented an authentic Turkic weekend which pleased the whole family's eyes, ears and palates. This year, the festival drew over 25,000 participants of all ages. Among the festival's distinguished guests were Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, Houston mayoral race contender Gene Locke, Houston's First Lady Andrea White, Consul General of Turkey, Akil Öktem, and Consul General of Pakistan, Mohammad Aqil Nadeem.

The festival is organized to display all aspects of the Turkic cultures and to revive artistic and cultural traditions, hence contributing to Houston's celebration of its multicultural heritage. Moreover, the Turkic Fest is another way of celebrating and building upon universal human values shared by the Turkic and American peoples. The festival emphasizes what we have in common by fostering public appreciation and honoring of our differences as well as collaboration on mutually beneficial projects.

The highlight of the festival was the parade of the Ottoman Military Band, which is the oldest one of its kind in history. Families, who attended this fantastic weekend event, had an opportunity to have their portraits taken in historical costumes in the exotic traditional Ottoman Tent, visit the Rumi tent, listen to Sufi music and authentic Turkic music, view a model of Blue Mosque and watch memorable live performances of Bursa Fasil Group, Turkic singers, musicians, and folk dancers. Being invited to Houston by AACA 7th International Turkish Olympiad gold medalist, Gülizar Ferecova and bronze medalist, Muhammed Memmedov, performed the best of Azeri and Turkish music. More than 50 art displays included Ebru - the art of water marbling, calligraphy, illuminations, hand-made ceramics and pottery, gilding, oriental rugs, throws, bags, decorative pillows, traditional jewelry, and handicrafts. Ladies attended an authentic henna night ceremony.

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