



The 7th Annual Turkish Language Olympiad, organized by Raindrop Foundation, was held at Arena Theater in Houston on Sunday, March 24, 2013. Over a thousand viewers enjoyed this festive atmosphere where students, parents, teachers and guests enjoyed live performances in different languages including English, Turkish and Spanish. The MC of the program was ABC 13's Miya Shay together with two students, Anthony Beltran and Phillip Munoz who made announcements in Turkish.

Mr. Okumus, president and CEO of Raindrop Foundation welcomed the guests and pointed out the importance of the value of knowing additional languages and how crucial it is to organize events that motivate students to learn foreign languages.

The program where students received their awards for their hard work and success in several categories featured singing in English, Turkish and Spanish, poetry recitations, traditional Turkish, Colombian and Chinese dances and talent shows.

Like in previous years, this year's event also hosted distinguished guests. Congressmen Al Green and Henry Cuellar, Congresswoman Shelia Jackson Lee, Texas State representatives Dr. Alma Allen and Gene Wu, Consul General of Turkey Cemalettin Aydin, Houston city council member Mike Laster and Harris County Sheriff Adrian Garcia were in attendance. Congressman Al Green and Congresswoman Shelia Jackson Lee presented congressional proclamations to Raindrop Foundation for organizing the event that promotes education, culture and living together.

Congressman Al green expressed his appreciation for the contribution of Raindrop to the community. He also recognized Mr. Mehmet Okumus, President of Raindrop Foundation and Mr. Kemal Oksuz, President of Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians for their commitment to serving their community.

Congresswoman Shelia Jackson Lee expressed that Turkey plays a significant role in peace building in its region and thanked Mr. Henry Florsheim, president and general manager of KTRK / ABC 13 for showing the efforts of Turkish community on their network. Mr. Florsheim received Turquoise Media Award for contribution to Turkish culture.

Other recipients of Turquoise awards were Congressman Henry Cuellar for contribution to Turkish-American relations and Dr. John Roberts, Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences of the University of Houston for contribution to academic study and promotion of Turkish language.

A number of awards were presented to students in several categories and Maria Cardona, Alexis Allen, Dallas Folk Dance Team and Sam Koxyn won the gold medal award in poetry, singing, folk dance and talent categories respectively. For language category, there were three winners, Antonio Beltran, Emmanuel Lopez-Salinas and Phillip Munoz.

The program ended with the awarded students' dance on the stage. All in all, the program offered a great time in an exciting ambiance to the audience and depicted the multicultural and diverse face of city and our nation.

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