

## **ASSOCIATION FOR ESTABLISHING AND SUPPORTING NURSING HOMES (HUZUREVLERİ KURMA VE YAŞATMA DERNEĞİ)**

In the 1960s, there were various institutions such as associations, state organizations, municipal establishments, nursing homes, and Darülaceze (a shelter for the poor and elderly) that served the elderly. However, these institutions only dealt with elderly people who were financially disadvantaged or unable to care for themselves, such as the homeless elderly. There was no institution to serve elderly individuals who were capable of taking care of themselves and preferred to stay in a facility. Additionally, the existing facilities, both in terms of practicality and service quality, were quite inadequate compared to similar establishments in Europe and America. Likewise, services for the elderly were limited to care-related issues. Concepts like nursing homes, daycare centers, in-home care, and similar services had not developed sufficiently.

Seeing this practical and conceptual gap, a group of people came together, working not to wait for the state to address these needs but to tackle the issues of the elderly themselves and find solutions. Thus, the concept of a “nursing home” was developed, and a project to establish a nursing home was put forward.

The first step of this project was taken in 1960 through the joint efforts of the Women’s Solidarity Association and the Society for Assistance to Darülaceze. To raise funds for the project, the Society for Assistance to Darülaceze administrators researched options, and artist Melek, who was deeply saddened by Atatürk's death, designed a medallion in 1938 in Paris to express Turkish women's gratitude toward Atatürk. This medallion was sold nationwide in a large fundraising campaign.

Thousands of these medallions, minted at the Mint, were sold for 50 lira for the large ones and 10 lira for the small ones at various places, including Ziraat Bank branches and Istanbul's local municipalities. At the request of the artist Melek, who wished the medallions to be sold by Turkish women, the president of the Association for Supporting Darülaceze, İffet Halim Oruz, and Hasene Ilgaz, who later became the director of Istanbul Nursing Home, traveled to the United States and, with the help of the Turkish Embassy, collected donations from Turkish citizens there.

The donation campaign, coordinated by İffet Halim Oruz through the mentioned association, was continued by the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes, founded on February 11, 1963. The Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes was recognized as a public benefit organization with the Cabinet's decision dated May 17, 1967, No. 6/8229. This non-profit civil society organization has been working continuously for nearly 50 years to meet the various needs of elderly people, considering their income levels, and to ensure they live with dignity.

Initially, the Association aimed to build a facility suitable for the needs on an acquired plot. However, due to the inability to immediately secure the large financial investment needed for construction, as well as the potential for delays, it was decided to purchase an existing building instead. As a result of this search, the Akay Clinic in Bahçelievler, which was suitable for use as a nursing home due to its previous use as a rest house and clinic, was purchased on June 3, 1964.

The first elderly house in Turkey, designed in accordance with the “nursing home” concept developed by the founders of the Association, was officially opened on July 1, 1964, under the name Istanbul Nursing Home, with 50 beds.

The first 10 years following the establishment of Istanbul Nursing Home were spent modernizing the clinic-designed building, resolving infrastructure issues, reorganizing, and increasing service quality, as well as securing the necessary funds for these tasks.

During this time, Prof. Dr. Ayşe Saffet Alpar, Turkey's first female rector, became acquainted with the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes. She began constructing a four-story building on a 386 m<sup>2</sup> plot in Bakırköy Merter to be used as a nursing home. Due to difficulties in completing the construction and managing the facility after it was opened, she donated the building to the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes.

After taking over the building, the Association made every effort to open the Alpar Nursing Home. However, in 1985, due to severe economic conditions, the Association was forced to relinquish the building, as its resources were insufficient to complete the project, and funds required for this project would interfere with services provided at Istanbul Nursing Home.

Throughout the 1990s, the Association focused on strengthening the financial situation of Istanbul Nursing Home and resolving the deficiencies of the facility. As a result, the major shortcomings were addressed, and only a limited number of actions remain to be carried out within the current physical structure of the building.

The Association's activities have been supervised by various public institutions and organizations, and in no case have any negative evaluations been made. Over its 50-year history, neither the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes nor Istanbul Nursing Home has encountered any administrative actions, fines, or similar applications, and Istanbul Nursing Home has continuously operated since its establishment.

Over the course of more than 60 years of operation, Istanbul Nursing Home has cared for more than 1,000 elderly individuals. There is a significant gap between the income and expenses of this nursing home, and this deficit is covered by the social aid fund created through in-kind and financial donations from individuals, corporations, and other organizations.

The Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes has plans for the future, including expanding Istanbul Nursing Home, increasing bed capacity, and adding new units to cater to the very elderly. One of the main objectives is to build a modern nursing home complex equipped with advanced technology using the adjacent land. Additionally, improving home-based and daytime care services, which are crucial in elderly care but underdeveloped in the country, is one of the Association's near-term goals.

Considering that the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes has been actively developing solutions to the problems related to nursing homes for the elderly throughout our country — especially in Istanbul — for over 60 years, with a fully amateur spirit and unwavering belief, it is recognized that our Association fulfills a meaningful and important role for the advancement of elderly rights in our country.

Among its counterparts, including official institutions, our nursing home holds a pioneering and special place in terms of both the duration of its service and the quality of the services it provides.

We respectfully, lovingly, gratefully, and sincerely commemorate all those who have contributed to the establishment and sustenance of our nursing home — first and foremost our founders, members, and the public who supported us with their donations.