

ASSOCIATION FOR ESTABLISHING AND SUPPORTING NURSING HOMES AND İSTANBUL NURSING HOME*

This institution, the first of its kind established in Turkey and named a “Nursing Home” (Huzur Evi), was intentionally named to diverge from the globally used concept of an “Old Age Home.” The founders sought to avoid the psychological burden associated with that term and instead create a more comforting environment for its residents.

As is known, under current living and family conditions, not only the elderly but also citizens in need are admitted to these homes. Therefore, the term “Huzur Evi” (literally house of peace) was adopted nationwide, and new homes established with this purpose have taken on this name.

Below is a brief history of the Istanbul Nursing Home and the Association:

ASSOCIATION FOR ESTABLISHING AND SUPPORTING NURSING HOMES

In the early 1960s, the Executive Board of the Istanbul Branch of the Turkish Women’s Council initiated an effort to establish a home for the elderly, responding to pressing social needs.

As is well known, Darülaceze, a century-old institution in our country, is a sacred sanctuary that has taken in both destitute elderly individuals and children. When members of the Turkish Women’s Council sought to establish a facility appropriate for the needs of the day, they first consulted Darülaceze for insight and inspiration.

At that time, Staff Colonel Adnan Çelikoğlu had just been appointed as the Director of Darülaceze. In his discussions with us, he encouraged us to join the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze, which was then nearly inactive, and to support Darülaceze through our participation.

This proposal could not be refused. Together with our colleagues, we joined the association. A general assembly was convened, and we were elected to the board of directors. Thus, the foundation of the Istanbul Nursing Home was laid.

Since no other “elderly care home” existed at that time, everyone in need would turn to Darülaceze—not only the destitute but also individuals who, while not completely helpless, lacked care and support in their normal lives. There was a long waiting list.

Amid these circumstances, we, as the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze, decided to establish a second facility—one that could serve low-income individuals who were unable to receive care—and thereby ease the demand on Darülaceze. With great dedication and effort, we decided to purchase a building located in Bakırköy, Bahçelievler, Eski Londra Asfaltı.

Originally built for health-related activities, the building required only minor modifications to become suitable for use as a nursing home. The owner facilitated the sale, and we opened it under the name “İstanbul Nursing Home.”

While we cannot delve into every detail, we must mention a noble effort tied to the passing of our Great Leader on November 10, 1938:

A medallion in honor of Atatürk was created by painter Melek Celal on behalf of Turkish womanhood. However, this medallion remained unused until the 1960s. When Melek Celal offered to donate it to us, we gratefully accepted. We had the medallions minted by the State Mint, and the proceeds from their distribution were our first donations.

The inscription on the front of the medallion reads:

"The Turkish Woman, whom you saved, presents her loyalty to you (1881–1938)."

Thus, Atatürk’s legacy forms the spiritual foundation of the Istanbul Nursing Home. These medallions were even taken abroad during a trip to America with Mrs. Hasene Ilgaz, where, with the help of our embassy and donations from our citizens abroad, significant support was collected.

The Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes was officially founded on February 11, 1963, and was recognized as a public-benefit organization on June 28, 1967.

İSTANBUL NURSING HOME

Established by the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes, the İstanbul Nursing Home officially opened its doors on July 1, 1964.

Those who were unable to find peace in their own homes for many years were now able to live in peace and psychological well-being. The Nursing Home is not a hospital, but a place of rest, designed to offer a tranquil environment for those who live alone.

It provides a space where people who can no longer relate to younger generations, who are tired of living alone due to lack of family, or who cannot feel comfortable living with their children, can find companionship among peers.

As the patriarchal family structure changes due to urbanization and industrialization, our society has a growing need for such homes. These institutions are mostly sustained by public donations. The underlying principle of our fundraising is the belief that one day, anyone could need such a home. Models of these institutions are more advanced in Western countries, and the need for them in our country will only grow.

Following the guidance of our Great Leader, our nation strives to rise to the level of Western civilization. In doing so, we must also develop our social structures and establish similar institutions to support our evolving society.

President

İffet Halim ORUZ

THE SOCIETY FOR ASSISTANCE TO DARÜLACEZE**

"In accordance with its charter at the time and with the authority granted by the general assembly, the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze purchased a building located at No. 38, Eski Londra Asfaltı, Bahçelievler, Bakırköy, and opened the institution named İstanbul Nursing Home on July 1, 1964, to provide full care and treatment for elderly citizens who had financial means.

The goal of this facility was to establish a modern home for low-income citizens and, in doing so, expand the opportunities for sheltering the destitute as defined by the Darülaceze charter, thus reducing the long waiting list.

The "Huzur Medallions," printed and sold by the association, contributed significantly to this initiative. The then-Governor of İstanbul, Niyazi Akı, was also instrumental in encouraging the establishment of this facility.

The Ziraat Bank, İstanbul neighborhood heads (muhtars), and members of İstanbul Women's Associations also provided major support in promoting the medallions.

Still operating today, the İstanbul Nursing Home was officially transferred to the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes as of January 1, 1968, following a decision made during the general assembly on April 9, 1967.

This association thus became the first in Turkey to set an example for institutions like the İstanbul Nursing Home."

** Excerpted from Reşat Ekrem Koçu's book Darülaceze (1895–1974), Section VII titled "The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze", written by İffet Halim Oruz, page 196 (İnkılap ve Aka Publishing, İstanbul 1974).