

HUZUREVLERİ KURMA VE YAŞATMA DERNEĞİ
(The Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes)

İSTANBUL HUZUREVİ
(İstanbul Nursing Home)

Historical Background

One late afternoon in August 1960, during the final heat of summer, a well-dressed, vigorous-looking middle-aged man entered the office of Darülaceze Director, Staff Colonel Adnan Çelikoğlu. Introducing himself, he said:

"I am a retired colonel. I retired today. I have no blood relatives, no place to go or stay. I want to live at Darülaceze by paying whatever amount is required."

Director Çelikoğlu was initially surprised, then explained:

"Colonel, according to the current regulations, Darülaceze is an institution responsible for the care of destitute, poor, disabled, and elderly people who were born in Istanbul or have resided there for at least five years and are unable to work, as well as abandoned children found on the streets. Therefore, it is not possible for you to reside here. Moreover, this situation would not be appropriate."

Following an informative and lengthy conversation, he sent his fellow officer on his way, having found a military-related solution. A few days later, he shared this event with the Board of Directors of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze, which operated within the Darülaceze institution.

A Portrait: Painter Melek Celal Sofu

Melek Celal Sofu was born in Istanbul in 1896. She received private education in two foreign languages and engaged in music, painting, sculpture, calligraphy, and decorative arts. She attended the Academy of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi) as a guest student and took lessons from Nazmi Ziya. Later, she studied at the Julian Academy in Paris. Her impressionist-style works focused on portraits, nudes, and still life. Her last solo exhibition was held in Munich in 1964. She passed away in Munich in 1976.

In the 1930s, while in Paris due to her work in fine arts, Melek Celal Sofu was deeply moved by the passing of Atatürk in 1938, just like every other Turk. Under the influence of this sorrow, she channeled her emotions into creating a lasting work that would express Turkish women's gratitude and reverence toward their leader.

As a result, she designed a medallion. On one side it read: "The Turkish Woman You Liberated Offers Her Devotion to You," while on the other side was the date 10 November 1938, with two Turkish women mourning Atatürk. Upon returning to Turkey, she donated this gold medallion—measuring 8.60 cm in diameter and 4.00 mm in thickness—to the Şişli Atatürk Revolution Museum.

What a Coincidence

Around the same time that the retired colonel, who wished to spend the rest of his life at Darülaceze due to having no one, visited Director Adnan Çelikoğlu, the painter Melek Celal Hanım also visited Istanbul's Governor and Mayor, General Refik Tulga. During her visit, Melek Hanım expressed her desire for the medallion—her own artwork currently housed at the Atatürk Revolution Museum—to be reproduced and sold, with the proceeds going toward the construction of a monument in honor of Atatürk.

However, during that period—shortly after the May 27, 1960 military intervention—many institutions and citizens across the country, encouraged and supported by the military administration, were already initiating efforts to erect busts and monuments to Atatürk. Recognizing this ongoing nationwide trend, Governor Tulga Paşa forwarded Melek Hanım's proposal—requesting it be considered in light of other important national matters—to Mrs. Jale Tulga's close associate, İffet Halim Oruz, who was then the President of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze.

At the time, the Board of Directors of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze was composed of:

President	: İffet Halim Oruz
Vice President	: Ruhi Erman
Secretary General	: Ali Topuz
Treasurer	: Zekeriya Salıcı
Cashier	: Kemal Özbek

In this same short time span, the Board received two distinct but equally significant matters:

The request from the retired colonel to reside at Darülaceze

The wish—conveyed via the Istanbul Governorship—by painter Melek Celal Hanım to construct a monument to Atatürk using income from the sale of medallions.

Both matters soon became central agenda items for the Board of Directors for more than four years.

The The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze Board of Directors, having come to the conviction and awareness that resolving the circumstances of individuals like the retired colonel is a duty that social welfare institutions and a socially responsible state cannot ignore, conducted or commissioned studies both domestically and abroad—especially in the U.S. and Northern European countries.

As a result of these investigations, they identified that, aside from publicly run institutions such as Darülaceze, Homes for the Destitute, and Asylums for the Weak and Infirm—established for the elderly poor and disabled—there also existed a different group of elderly or functionally aged individuals. These were people who, although possessing a certain social status or suitability, no longer had the means or environment to live independently in their own homes.

This realization led to the conclusion that there was a genuine need for more contemporary institutions capable of housing such individuals and meeting their physical, social, and emotional needs.

Background and Development

Based on the research and findings conducted, the progress in elderly welfare in our country can be summarized as follows:

After World War II, during the 1950s, the phenomenon of urbanization, known in Turkey as the "gecekondu" (shantytown) movement, triggered significant changes in social structures and problems in both cities and rural areas. The influx of people into cities resulted in younger generations contributing economically to the household, which, along with intergenerational conflicts, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law disagreements, and the unsuitability of small living spaces for extended families, led to the breakdown of the traditional Turkish family structure. It gradually gave way to a nuclear family model consisting of only parents and their children. The patriarchal family model began to dissolve.

Young people increasingly chose to move out and start their own homes rather than live with their parents, weakening intergenerational ties. As a result, relationships between children and parents were often reduced to financial support alone. Parents, especially the elderly, became increasingly isolated, and their care needs emerged as a pressing social issue.

Evaluating all collected data and documents, the Board of Directors of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze decided—during its meeting on October 17, 1960—to realize its mission (as stated in its founding regulation from 1941) of providing care and welfare for the elderly and the lonely. It resolved to reproduce and sell copies of the commemorative medallion created by painter Melek Celal Hanım. The proceeds would be used to establish an institution outside the Darülaceze system, to serve elderly welfare, under the name “Huzur Evi” (literally Peace Home – Nursing Home). This marked the beginning of one of the first civil society initiatives in Turkey for the care and well-being of the elderly.

Implementation Process

October 21, 1960

This movement was regarded as a societal project, and it was deemed essential to inform and involve the public. Therefore, a broad outreach strategy was adopted, including collaboration with the Women's Solidarity Union. All operations would be managed by the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze. Financial transactions would be held in a separate account under the name "Huzur Evi" Once the goal was achieved and the Huzur Evi gained legal entity status, this account would be closed.

February 10, 1961

An agreement was made with the State Mint (Darphane) to produce the medallions. According to the agreement, small medallions with a 3.80 cm diameter made of a special alloy would cost 1.61 TL each. An initial order of 10,000 small and 500 large medallions was placed. Some of the large medallions were to be made in silver, others oxidized, and some gold-plated. Labor fees per medallion were:

Silver-plated: 3.50 TL

Oxidized: 3.25 TL

Gold-plated: 7.00 TL

Small medallions: 1.25 TL for plating, plus 25 kuruş for some die labor.

As the medallions were received from the Mint, production tasks were carried out by the firms Bedii Cemal Aktulga and Ohannes Altunyan. Some of the large medallions and handleless small ones were mounted on wooden bases produced by Bahattin Dursunoğlu.

November 3, 1961

The oxidized and silver-plated large medallions began selling for 50 TL, while the gold-plated medallions were offered to major companies and institutions in return for significant donations. The small medallions were sold for 10 TL each.

December 1, 1961

Observing the ease with which the small medallions with loops were sold, it was assumed that the gold-plated versions would also be of interest in Anatolia. At that time, it was known that T.C. Ziraat Bankası had over 600 branches and agencies across Turkey. Ruhi Erman, the Vice President of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze and a former inspector of Ziraat Bank, was expected to facilitate communication. Together with President Iffet Halim Oruz, they traveled to Ankara and met with Zeki Albayrak (Deputy General Manager) and Şadan Yurdalan (Head of Banking Services) of the bank.

During the meeting, it was revealed that Iffet Hanım and Şadan Hanım had both attended Erenköy Girls' High School around 40 years earlier. At the conclusion of the meeting, T.C. Ziraat Bank agreed to distribute and sell the medallions in its branches and agencies without charging any fees or commission, notifying all offices via an official circular.

December 8, 1961

Special cloth pouches were made to send the medallions to Ziraat Bank branches. Considering the size, economy, and social standing of the cities and towns with branches or agencies, the medallions were packaged in sealed bags containing between 2 and 100 pieces, and shipped via the postal service (PTT). Some smaller agencies returned unsold medallions, while others requested additional stock.

Out of the 40,000 medallions produced through various orders to the Mint, approximately 20,000 were sold via Ziraat Bank, and the revenues were deposited into the Society for Assistance to Darülaceze's account. Thus, Ziraat Bank played a significant role in spreading the Huzur Evi (Nursing Home) initiative throughout Turkey. The contributions of senior administrators Zeki Albayrak and Şadan Yurdalan are also recognized as highly impactful.

January 23, 1962

As medallion sales exceeded expectations within a year, it was concluded that the time had come to formalize efforts to build a retirement home under a separate legal entity. Thus, work began to establish an independent association.

During the 1960s, the idea of elderly individuals living outside the family home in facilities such as retirement homes, which had not yet become familiar to Turkish society, was far from being an easily accepted lifestyle for either the individuals or their families. As a matter of fact, even the state-run facilities established in cities like Eskişehir, Konya, and Antalya—as foreseen in future development plans—remained underutilized for many years.

Therefore, it was deemed useful to engage socially active and well-regarded individuals to support the association initiative. Indeed, these founding members went on to contribute significantly and earnestly to the establishment of the Association.

June 12, 1962

Due to the military service of Ali Topuz, Secretary General of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze, Nazlı Gaspralı was appointed to the Board of Directors to fill the vacancy.

The Founding of the Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes

February 11, 1963

As a result of the efforts carried out throughout 1962, a meticulously and diligently prepared charter by Board Member Zekeriya Salıcı was submitted to the Istanbul Governorship on February 11, 1963, marking the official establishment of the “Association for Establishing and Supporting Nursing Homes” (Huzurevleri Kurma ve Yaşatma Derneği). This association took its place as a significant civil society organization in Turkish social life, with a mission dedicated to elderly welfare.

The purpose of the association was defined as follows:

To secure the well-being and future of elderly individuals—as well as those not officially considered elderly but who continuously require the assistance and care of others—whether prematurely aged, lonely, without family, or isolated men and women, including couples. It aims to meet their every need and resolve their issues in an environment suitable for their upbringing, educational and cultural background, as well as their psychological, physical, and intellectual characteristics, in a familial and dignified setting that respects human honor and social integrity.

Huzurevleri Kurma ve Yařatma Derneđi
(The Association for Establishing and
Supporting Nursing Homes)

Founding Members

No	Name Surname	Occupation
1	Fahri Atabey	Doctor
2	Resmiye Boysan	Teacher
3	řefika akmur	Housewife
4	Adnan elikođlu	Merchant
5	Ulviye elikođlu	Teacher
6	Ayla Demirođlu	Housewife
7	Ferzan Ener	Housewife
8	Ruhi Erman	Banker
9	Seniha Ersöz	Housewife
10	Nazlı Gaspralı	Teacher
11	Rauf Göken	Merchant
12	Ayře Gübgüb	Housewife
13	Halit Gürol	Teacher
14	Hasene Ilgaz	Teacher
15	Türkan Ilgaz	Lawyer
16	Fethiye Karaman	Dentist
17	Harika Lefiř	Artist
18	Faika Onan	Teacher
19	Necmettin Ormancı	Merchant
20	İffet Halim Oruz	Journalist
21	Zekeriya Salıcı	Civil Servant
22	Selma Sedet	Civil Servant
23	Nermin Süer	Teacher
24	Ali Topuz	Architect
25	Neriman Tuna	Writer

Huzurevleri Kurma ve Yařatma Derneęi
(The Association for Establishing and Supporting
Nursing Homes)
Governing Bodies
(The Association's First Boards)

The Board of Directors

No	Name Surname	Title
1	Faika Onan	President
2	Fethiye Karman	Vice President
3	Ulviye elikoęlu	Secretary General
4	Necmettin Ormancı	Tresurer
5	Ruhi Erman	Accounting & Finance
6	İffet Halim Oruz	Member
7	Nazlı Gaspralı	Member
8	Şefika akmur	Member
9	Ayşe Gübgüb	Member

The Audit Committee

No	Name Surname	Title
1	Zekeriya Salıcı	Auditor
2	Ali Topuz	Auditor
3	Halit Gübgüb	Auditor

The Advisory Board

No	Name Surname	Title
1	Fahri Atabay	President
2	Türkan Ilgaz	Vice President
3	Rauf Gökçen	Member
4	Adnan elikoęlu	Member
5	Resmiye Boysan	Member

As can be seen, those who coined the term "Nursing Home" (Huzurevi) and who had been involved for three years in every possible effort to embed this concept into society—İffet Halim Oruz, Ruhi Erman, Zekeriya Salıcı, Ali Topuz, and Nazlı Gaspralı—took on secondary roles in the association's first Executive Board. Their sole motivation was contributing to the betterment of the country.

In the 1960s, the concept of a nursing home was not sufficiently understood by large segments of society. So much so that even among the members of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze, which brought the nursing home concept to life, there were some who failed to grasp its purpose—claiming that a nursing home was merely a paid institution with no social mission. To mitigate the negative influence of such opposing views, the founding activities were strategically carried out with the involvement of socially respected individuals and, when necessary, were directed toward the areas of interest of the Istanbul Governorship and Municipality.

April 14, 1963

While significant income was being generated from medallion sales through T.C. Ziraat Bank, other fundraising and publicity activities were also organized—such as renting out theaters for matinées, arranging recitals by world-renowned local and international artists, and placing permanent promotional boards in prominent city locations.

While maintaining close ties with the Istanbul Governorship and Municipality, letters were sent to hundreds of firms and institutions selected from the membership lists of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, resulting in substantial monetary donations.

Upon realizing that enough funds were likely to be raised, the search for land suitable for constructing the nursing home began. Proposed plots in neighborhoods such as Baltalimanı and Balmumcu were inspected by committees. A formal request was made to the Istanbul Municipality to allocate a 400-square-meter plot in Beşiktaş Dikilitaş for the nursing home, but this request did not yield a positive outcome.

December 24, 1963

After these efforts to acquire land proved unsuccessful, the Executive Board concluded that procuring a plot and constructing a building would require excessive time, effort, and expense. It was therefore agreed that purchasing an appropriate existing building would be a more practical and realistic solution to achieve their objective promptly, and their efforts were redirected accordingly.

Finally, a Suitable Building Was Found

February 8, 1964

As a result of the devoted efforts and research by the Society and the circle of social volunteers it had mobilized, it was determined that the building known as Akay Clinic, located in Bakırköy on the Old London Asphalt Road, was highly suitable for use as a nursing home. After prolonged negotiations with the building's owner Sami Akay, the Society decided to purchase the building under the following conditions:

1. The property, registered in Parcel 5, Block 603 of Bakırköy Land Registry, would be purchased by the Society for 600,000 TL.
2. The fixed assets currently in use at the clinic would be inventoried and included in the sales contract protocol.
3. The 600,000 TL purchase price would be paid under the following terms:
 - a. 100,000 TL would be paid at the time the title deed is registered under the Society's name.
 - b. A mortgage of 500,000 TL would be established in favor of the seller, Sami Akay.
 - c. 200,000 TL of the mortgaged amount would be paid interest-free within nine months following the transfer of ownership.

d. 120,000 TL would be paid interest-free within one year to individuals to whom the seller is indebted.

e. 55,000 TL would be paid to Türk Ticaret Bank at 1,000 TL per month on behalf of the seller. The interest for this debt would be covered by the Society.

f. The remaining 125,000 TL would be paid within two years of the title transfer.

4. Until the title deed transaction was finalized, İffet Halim Oruz, A. Ruhi Erman, and Zekeriya Salıcı were authorized to jointly prepare and sign the preliminary contract.

March 19, 1964

To ensure that all legal procedures related to the nursing home were conducted in an orderly and correct manner, former General Director of Treasury, Attorney Rifat Onat, who had consistently shown interest and provided assistance, was officially appointed as legal advisor to the Society.

April 30, 1964

An appraisal of the Akay Clinic, which had been approved for purchase, was carried out through the Istanbul Governorship. The Special Provincial Administration valued the property at a gross price of 600,000 TL, confirming the minimum market value of the building.

May 12, 1964

As the transfer and sale procedures for Akay Clinic neared completion, in order to quickly prepare the building and surrounding area for use under the name İstanbul Nursing Home, and carry out the necessary renovations, Zekeriya Salıcı, who had served as a Board Member of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze for four years and contributed greatly to the nursing home initiative with heartfelt dedication, was appointed as Deputy Director of İstanbul Nursing Home, effective June 1, 1964.

June 3, 1964

After nearly four years of effort, the deed to the nursing home was officially acquired on June 3, 1964. It was decided that the İstanbul Nursing Home, which would begin operations on July 1, 1964, would hold its official opening ceremony on July 15, 1964.

Taking into consideration her broad network and extensive knowledge and experience in social affairs, Hasene Ilgaz was appointed as the Director of the İstanbul Nursing Home, effective July 1, 1964.

Nurse Aliye Taşer was also appointed as Head Nurse with a net monthly salary of 500 TL, to serve full-time.

June 30, 1964

It was decided that starting July 1, 1964, the accounting for the İstanbul Nursing Home would be separated from that of the The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze and would henceforth be maintained independently at the nursing home. Given the need for expertise in areas such as social insurance, tax legislation, and business accounting, Kemal Bafılı, an expert in these matters, was hired with a net monthly salary of 1,000 TL.

July 1, 1964

Thirteen staff members from the former Akay Clinic officially began their duties as employees of the İstanbul Nursing Home on July 1, 1964. With this, our nursing home earned its rightful and honorable place in Turkish social life, dedicated to the welfare of the elderly.

In addition, a statute titled “The Society for Assistance to Darülaceze İstanbul Nursing Home Establishment, Services, and Administration Regulation”, consisting of 3 sections, 12 articles, and 1 provisional article, was enacted. It was submitted to the relevant authorities, and with the necessary permissions obtained, the opening procedures for the İstanbul Nursing Home were successfully completed.