



**TURKISH  
WOMEN'S  
LEAGUE OF  
AMERICA**

**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS**

**BTF**  
BRIDGE TO TÜRKİYE FUND

**ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**In Support of International Women's Day (8th March)**

**TURKISH WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF AMERICA (TWLA) and BRIDGE TO TÜRKİYE FUND (BTF)  
Jointly Organize and Present a in person Meeting at Turkish House Auditorium**

***Invest in women: Accelerate progress***



***"Everything we see in the world is the creative work of women"***

Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK



**Speakers**

**Gamze ATEŞ**

Founder & CEO at My Beachy Side

**Seda BİLGİNER**

Founder of Esas Beauty

**Hande Turan Page**

Educator, Author

**Dr. Funda Süer**

Executive VP Clinical Diagnostic and  
CLIA Laboratory Director

**Dr. Ahu Yıldırım**

President and CEO Coleridge  
Initiative

**Moderator**

**İşıl Baran**

***Friday, March 8, 2024***

***Time: 4.30pm (EST)***

**-Refreshments will be served-**

**RSVP required: <https://forms.gle/5DUzJUyKXH5UA88v6>**

TWLA UN Related Announcement #13

In Support of "International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> March)

**TURKISH WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF AMERICA (TWLA) and BRIDGE TO TURKIYE FUND (BTF)**

Jointly Organize and Present a in person Meeting at **Turkish House Auditorium**

## **Invest in women: Accelerate progress!**

**Friday, March 8,2024 Time:16:30**

**Language:** English

RSVP required: <https://forms.gle/ZZFSJu56vUZci24g9>

### **Background**

On Friday, March 8, 2024, Turkish Women's League of America, as a member of the United Nations Department of Global Communications, together with the Bridge to Turkey foundation, will take a stand with us on International Women's Day under the theme Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress.

### **Program Introduction**

In this program, in support of International Women's Day, we explore a profound theme that reflects the essence of progress and equality: 'Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress'. In a world where empowerment knows no boundaries, focusing on the important role women play in shaping our future is not only a necessity, but also an important catalyst for unparalleled progress. Join us as we explore the transformative power of investing in women, listen to the successes of our women in different fields, and be inspired as we navigate the pathways to societal and global progress.

## **PROGRAMS**

**Before the start of program refreshment served and networking!**

**Moderator:** Işıl Baran (TWLA Board Member)

Opening Remark and introduction by

**Berna Gurdal**-TWLA President

**Gamze Ateş**

Founder &CEO at My Beachy Side

**Seda Bilginer**

Founder of Esas Beauty

**Hande Turan Page**

Educator, Author

**Dr.Funda Süer**

Executive VP Clinical Diagnostic and CLIA Laboratory Director

**Dr. Ahu Yıldırım**

President and CEO Coleridge

Q&A section

Closing Remark by

**Dr. Gül Bahtiyar**-BTF Director in New York

**Moderator:** Işıl Baran (TWLA Board Member)

## Biographies



### **GAMZE ATEŞ- Founder & Ceo at My Beach Side**

Gamze Ateş's successful and diverse career, filled with entrepreneurial ventures emphasize the importance of contributing to society with our own strengths. Starting her entrepreneurial journey by selling her logistics company to DHL, she successfully managed the Middle East, Africa, and Russia regions for 12 years. Throughout her extensive career, she actively collaborated with NGOs and played a key role in providing economic freedom. Sustainable income for women through the TPF board.

Recognizing the importance of sustainable job and income for women's economic freedom, she took the first step in social entrepreneurship by establishing My Beachy Side. The brand began with handmade accessories in collaboration with women's associations, aiming to change the rules in the fashion world. With a desire to be a role model reshaping the fashion industry, Ateş expanded the product range, established production workshops, and set up multiple workshops, providing sustainable income to around 4000 women in various cities.

Ateş continues to actively work towards making My Beachy Side a global brand, uniting fashion with consumers while recognizing the potential for creating women's employment, particularly in challenging regions.



### **SEDA BİLGİNER-** Founder of Esas Beauty

Seda is determined to disrupt the beauty sector by improving upon antiquated industry norms. Her curiosity for sustainable agriculture - merged with her love for beauty - led her on a journey to pave the way for a new beauty standard rooted in strong values and principles.

Inspired by her parents' work ethic and her grandparents' love of all natural things, Seda knew from the start that she was destined to create organic products essential to wellness. Growing up, Seda split her time between New York and New Jersey, with summers spent on her grandparents' farm in Turkey. As such, her life continues to be a fine balancing act of old meets new. In fact, this melding of old-world tradition with new world value is always the inspiration behind the skincare and beauty products that Seda designs.

Seda pursued a degree in Chemistry with a minor in Math before starting to work in the corporate beauty sector, first in skincare formulation and then at a leading fragrance and flavor corporation for over 15 years. Her experiences are diverse and include laboratory, product development, and account management in both fine fragrance and consumer products. She managed a Fortune 500 company and leader in bath and body care, to become one of the company's largest accounts.

A proven leader herself, Seda is ready to evolve and transform the beauty industry into a modern and healthier era.



### **Dr. AHU YILDIRMAZ-President and CEO Coleridge**

Ahu Yildirmaz is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Coleridge Initiative, a non-profit organization, whose goal is to use data to transform the way governments access and use data for the social good through training programs, research projects and a secure data facility. The secure facility was initially built at the behest of the Census Bureau to inform the decision-making of the Commission on Evidence Based Policy.

Previously, as the founder and former Head of the ADP Research Institute, Dr. Yildirmaz created a legacy framework of unique data analyses and insights leveraging company's administrative payroll data, which included developing the ADP National Employment Report, Workforce Vitality Report and Evolution of Work research series. She is frequently cited by leading business publications, including The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Reuters, CNBC, CNN, and Forbes. Throughout her career, Dr. Yildirmaz's interest in research and data has been guided in their application for public good. Her experience includes several roles with progressing responsibilities at ADP, Johnson & Johnson, and AT&T in the areas of research, strategy, corporate finance, and market insights. She has taught courses in economics and finance at New York University, Manhattan College, and the City University of New York. Dr. Yildirmaz earned a doctorate degree in Economics from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and a bachelor's degree in economics from Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, Türkiye.





**HANDE TURAN PAGE-Educator, Author**

Hande Turan Page was born in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1977. She earned her bachelor's degree in economics from Uludağ University, followed by a second degree in Mathematics from Queens College of New York. She completed her master's degree in mathematics education at City College of New York. She published her first book, titled "A Few Strange Stories," in both English and Turkish, which was distributed in Turkey and the USA. Additionally, she wrote a play called "Marriage Project," scheduled to premiere in May in NYC. She resides in New Jersey with her husband and two sons. She currently works as a mathematics teacher in the NYC Department of Education.



### **Dr.FUNDA SÜER-Executive VP Clinical Diagnostic and CLIA Laboratory director**

Associate Professor Dr. Funda Suer currently Executive Vice President of Clinical Diagnostics, and Clinical Laboratory Director at Quadrant Biosciences, Quadrant Laboratories, where she focuses on neurological disorders genetics, such as Autism, intellectual disability. Prior to joining Quadrant Dr Suer worked at Mount Sinai Hospital, Icahn Sch of Medicine, where she served most recently as Senior Director of Clinical Laboratory and Head of Diagnostic Testing at Department of Genetics. Associate Professor Dr. Suer has extensive experience with clinical molecular genetics and genomics, she presented, published in national and international journals, meetings, invited lectures, training. She developed numerous clinical biotechnologies launched as clinical genetic tests in the last 20 years. She has overseen commercial and academic laboratories as Senior Clinical Laboratory Director and corporate brand transformations, including Quest Diagnostics, Athena Diagnostics, Sema4, Georgetown University, Children's Hospital to name a few.

Dr. Suer graduate of Ankara University has master's in molecular biology, received her PhD in medical genetics at Gulhane Military Medical Academy in Turkey, and completed her postdoctoral medical residency/fellowship training program in clinical molecular genetics at the National Institute of Health Genomic Research Institute (NIH-NHGRI) at Maryland, USA. Additionally, she is a diplomate of the American Board of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ABMGG), a fellow of the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics (ACMG), is certified by the NYS DOH as a clinical director in molecular genetic testing and a member of the American College of Medical Genetics. Dr. Suer previously established genetics



training programs through Harvard University at Quest Diagnostics, and served as a program director, as well as Associate Professor at Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine for the ABMGG Laboratory Genetics Training Program. Funda also holds an Associate Professorship degree from Turkish Institute of Higher Education in Medical Genetics.

## Moderator:



**İŞILAY BARAN-Director-Chief Data office at AT&T**

Isilay Baran is a Director Member of Technical Staff in Chief Information Office Network Systems and Shared Automation Platforms organization, where she is responsible of enabling large-scale automation for Network Operations by providing Artificial Intelligence, Generative AI and Machine Learning solutions. Her team provides actionable insights and automation to various business partners including Network Operations. Isilay is also spearheading a re-usable and scalable data analytics AI/ML pipeline for Network Systems utilizing Cloud-native platforms. Prior to this role, Isilay was in Chief Data Office and was responsible of Network Insights Data Platforms and Cloud Transformation team. Her team delivered mobility network monitoring capabilities (LTE/5G) on Network edge, and network insights through a Big Data platform on Azure Cloud. This platform continues to data-power AT&T for network planning and scaling, threat analytics, consumer behavior analysis and self-service enablement.

Isilay is a continuous learner and an innovative technologist with 7 patent disclosures and 9 published papers. She has a BS degree in Industrial Engineering from Boğaziçi University and an MS in Industrial and Systems Engineering from Colorado State University, and a Data Science. Isilay serves as a General Executive Chair for AT&T's Annual Software Symposium. She is also an active member of AT&T Innovation Network. Işıl takes pride in serving community through various organizations she is affiliated with. She is an Executive Board Member for Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA). Isilay mentors DECA high school students via AT&T ASPIRE program; and has participated in "Snacks with Scientists" initiatives where girls in Grade 3-5 meet with women in technology fields to learn about STEM careers. She is also an organizer of AT&T Women of Technology mentoring sessions as a circle lead, which is a program to encourage and guide women to pursue careers in technology.



## **BERNA GURDAL-TWLA PRESIDENT**

**Berna Gurdal** graduated from Hacettepe University Faculty of Nutrition and Dietetics in 1997 and worked as a corporate dietitian at Panorama Food Company between 1997-1999. Between 1998-2005, she worked as a clinical dietitian at Internal Medicine Department of Uludağ University and made presentations at various congresses. Her work on the treatment of diabetes was published in the book Diabetes Mellitus in 2006. Berna Gurdal, who has been living in New York since 2005, received the Child Nutrition and Cooking Program Certificate from Stanford University. She has completed the certified program Cornell University Nutrition Health Living in 2020. She is married and has two children. Her son graduated from New York Atatürk School since 2017. She has been serving on the Board of Directors of TWLA since 2017. She is president of the Turkish Women's League Of America for the period 2023-2025.



## **TURKISH WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF AMERICA**

Established on September 17, 1958, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in New York, Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA) aims to preserve and teach Turkish language and culture to the future generations. The organization is one of the oldest active Turkish American organizations in the USA and is the sole supporter of the NY Atatürk School which has been a pride since 1971. The Turkish Women's League of America's Board of Directors is comprised entirely of volunteer members. The organization and its members adhere to the principles of modern Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the values of the Republic and adopt the national, moral, human, spiritual and cultural values of the Turkish Nation. Our Mission is to unite the Turkish women living in America under one roof, to provide solidarity and strength among them. We organize cultural and recreational activities to foster a better understanding between the people of Turkey and the United States. With this awareness, Turkish Women's League of America works devotedly with institutions and nongovernmental organization to achieve and preserve the deserved respected place of women in the society. The Turkish Women's League of America is proud to announce our association with the United Nations Department of Global Communications as of December 10, 2021.

[www.atkb.org](http://www.atkb.org)

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<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100079231592772&mibextid=LQQJ4d>



**Dr. GÜL BAHTİYAR-BTF Director in New York**

**Clinical Professor of Medicine, NYU Grossman School of Medicine**

Dr. Gül Bahtiyar is an accomplished medical doctor and education advocate and comes from a family who attributed great importance to education. She was born in Erzurum and graduated from Istanbul University, Cerrahpasa Medical School and later completed her internal medicine training in the US. Currently she holds the position of Clinical Professor of Medicine at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, and serve as the Division Chief of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism, NYC Health+Hospitals / Woodhull and Site Program Director for Woodhull, SUNY Downstate Medical Center Endocrine Fellowship Program. In addition to her professional accomplishments, Dr. Bahtiyar is a dedicated philanthropist and an advocate for egalitarian education in Türkiye. She joined Bridge to Türkiye Fund, established NY/NJ Circle in 2014 and became a board member. She obtained consultative status with the UN for the organization in 2016. She hosted numerous meetings with NGO Commission Status of Women (CSW) at the Church Center of the UN in NYC. She is currently the chairperson of Donor Relation and Fundraising Committee of BTF. She tirelessly volunteered for earthquake relief efforts, brought many people and organizations from different backgrounds together to volunteer and generate funding. She continues contribute to Child Amputees of Türkiye Earthquake (CATE Project). She believes that education is a human right and will continue her efforts to support underprivileged children's education in Türkiye as a BTF volunteer.



## THE BRIDGE OF TÜRKİYE

A culture of giving and civic involvement is a part of our heritage. Bridge to Türkiye Fund (BTF) was founded in 2003 by a few like-minded Turkish Americans and Friends of Türkiye with the simple desire to Give-Back. Based in the Triangle area or North Carolina, BTF quickly grew across the US with many regional grassroots Giving Circles, and today has individual donors and supporting communities in all parts of the Globe.

Our simple and shared vision is to unite people and give back as a community. It is an organized attempt to leverage individual diaspora resources who believe in the power of investing together for education and building better futures for underserved youth in Türkiye.

BTF maintains a portfolio of carefully vetted Turkish NGOs and Localized Projects to accomplish this. This makes it possible for BTF's donors to support great causes simply and safely from abroad. To join our community or to learn more about BTF and our ideals, please feel free to contact us.

Bridge to Türkiye Fund (BTF) is founded on citizen-based, democratic, and secular principles and encourages all to contribute to the educational welfare of less fortunate children in Türkiye.

[www.bridgetoturkiye.org](http://www.bridgetoturkiye.org)