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## Local Turkish Group Holds 3rd Annual Turkish Festival

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A Tulsa-area non-profit group hosted a Turkish festival on Saturday. The Tulsa area is home to between 400 and 500 Turkish people, according to Raindrop Turkish House. Most are Turkish-Americans with American citizenship, around 300, and the rest are Turkish ex-patriots. The Turkish-American community in Tulsa held its third annual Raindrop Turkish Festival on Saturday, which included the grand opening of its new building in the 4400 block of West Houston in Broken Arrow.

The event was free and open to the public from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Festival activities included Turkish folk dancers, Turkish music, Turkish arts and crafts, and Turkish foods such as baklava, doner kebabs, dolmas, sarma, and borek.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony took place at 3:30 p.m. In attendance were Oklahoma Congressman John Sullivan, Broken Arrow Mayor Mike Lester, and Consulate General of Turkey Cemalettin Aydin.

"I think this is the most hospitable state in the United States," Aydin said. This was the Consulate General's first visit to Tulsa.

The goal of the event was to familiarize the Tulsa community with the work of Raindrop Turkish House and its mission, to promote friendship and understanding through shared understanding and community experiences.

Omer Akdeniz of Raindrop Turkish House told Tulsa's Channel 8 that Tulsa's Turkish community is trying to create bridges between cultures.

"As a Turkish community, we are really happy to live in Tulsa," said Akdeniz. "We are really happy to be a part of this community."

Raindrop Turkish House, a non-profit 501(c)(3), educational, charitable, social, and cultural organization founded by Turkish-Americans in Houston in 2000, opens its doors to everybody in the local community. They offer Turkish language classes, Turkish cuisine classes, and Ebru water marbling classes.

Turks have been active members of the Tulsa community as early as the 1970s, when a Turkish couple opened a retail copper shop in the old Annex Mall at 41st and Yale. That family's business has grown into an international company headquartered in southeast Tulsa, with more than 100 Tulsa-area employees.

Raindrop Turkish House now it operates in six states—Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Turkey itself is a secular state with no official state religion, though the majority of the population is Muslim.

The nation of Turkey has been an associate member of the former European Economic Community since 1963 and began negotiations for full membership into the European Union in 2005.

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For more information on Raindrop Turkish House, visit [www.turkishhouse.org/oklahoma/tulsa](http://www.turkishhouse.org/oklahoma/tulsa).