

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

From the carvings on the eastern steps of the Apadana Palace at Persepolis, we know that 3000 years ago people of various cultures and beliefs came together to celebrate not only the arrival of Spring, but also a universal philosophy encapsulated in six words and thirty letters – Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds.

GOOD THOUGHTS

Nowruz Commission was founded on the ancient idea of celebrating the arrival of Spring *together*. Five years ago, on March 17, 2010, this tradition of Nowruz togetherness was revived at Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. For the first time in recent history, Afghans, Azeris, Georgians, Iranians, Iraqis, Kazakhs, Kurds, Kyrgyz, Russians, Tajiks, Turks, Turkmen, Ukrainians and others came together to renew their bonds of friendship.

GOOD WORDS

The mission of Nowruz Commission is to promote and preserve not only the physical significance of Nowruz as a universal new year, but also its philosophical significance of renewal of the bonds of friendship, care and compassion around the world. Our vision is to help cause a positive and measurable change in the lives of the people of Nowruz countries, their health, their education, their environment, and their degree of care about people all over the world. We have brought people of many cultures together under the Nowruz platform. We started with nine countries and communities. We are now nineteen members strong and growing. Nine exceptionally qualified leaders represent Nowruz Commission in their respective countries. They promote the togetherness, care, and compassion that the ancient, time-honored tradition of Nowruz stands on.

GOOD DEEDS

A unique global public diplomacy organization with real impact, Nowruz Commission exists to turn good thoughts and good words into good deeds – from caring for cancer stricken children in Iran, to performing open heart surgeries for Afghan children, to sponsoring brilliant young minds for high visibility internships, to helping immigrants find jobs compatible with their experience and education, to putting smiles on the faces of 20,000 people who gathered at Badam Bagh in Kabul to celebrate Nowruz, to bringing happiness to 700 orphans who have never had a brand new pair of shoes and more.

Nowruz Commission is an all-volunteer organization, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed time to fulfilling this important mission. I would also like to thank our diplomatic colleagues at our participating embassies in Washington, DC for their continued support and engagement. Our work would not be possible without the generous contributions of our Nowruz Commission Ambassadors and other donors. We are very grateful for your continued sponsorship of our events and programs. We are a United States tax-exempt entity and contributions to the Nowruz Commission are subject to tax exemptions permitted by law.

Once a year, we hold a magnificent event in Washington, DC to show the whole world what a fantastic tradition we share with people of so many cultures. The White House, United States Congress, Heads of State like the President of Kazakhstan, The President of Tajikistan, Foreign Ministers and high-ranking diplomats, civilian and military leaders have all joined to share the joy of the arrival of Spring. Highlights from our 2014 programs and events are included in the coming pages.

Kindly [click here](#) for more information regarding our sponsorship packages for 2015. I look forward to receiving your sponsorship contributions and personally welcoming you at the Andrew Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC on March 14, 2015.

With my sincere appreciation,

Gissou R. Kian

President and CEO



Highlights from 2014

SAVE THE DATE

Mission

To promote and preserve the time-honored tradition of celebrating not only the physical arrival of Spring, but also using Nowruz as a platform to make a difference in the countries and among the people who recognize and celebrate Nowruz.

To use the time-honored universal traditions of Nowruz like giving, caring, and renewal of friendship to make a positive change in the participating nationalities and beyond.

To help cause a positive and measurable change in the lives of the people of Nowruz countries – their health, their education, their environment and their degree of care about people all over the world.

Nowruz Commission looks forward to celebrating our Fifth Birthday with you at our annual gala event on Saturday, March 14, 2015 at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC!

Mark your calendars!



2014 ANNUAL NOWRUZ COMMISSION GALA DINNER

MARCH 15, 2014

On March 15, 2014, Nowruz Commission celebrated its Fifth Annual Gala Event at The Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC. Guests traveled from near and far to celebrate togetherness, giving, caring, and renewal of friendship at the arrival of spring. The event was attended by 500 people, including diplomats, dignitaries, senior military leaders, and members of the Afghan, Azeri, Georgian, Iranian, Iraqi, Kazakh, Kurdish, Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik, Turkish, and Ukrainian communities.

Special guests included Her Imperial Majesty Farah Pahlavi, His Excellency Peter Robinson, First Minister of Northern Ireland, His Excellency Eklil Hakimi, Afghan Ambassador to the US, His Excellency Kairat Umarov, Kazakh Ambassador to the US, His Excellency Muktar Djumaliev, Kyrgyz Ambassador to the US, His Excellency Nuriddin Shamsov, Tajik Ambassador to the US, His Excellency Namik Tan, Turkish Ambassador to the US, His Excellency Olexander Motsyk, Ukrainian Ambassador to the US, His Excellency Dusen Kasseinov, Secretary General of TURKSOY and Nowruz Commission Board Member, and Nowruz Commission Country Ambassadors Dr. Jahangir Hajiyevev, Mrs. Mary Darling, and Mrs. Homayoun Mazandi, The Lady Renwick, who represented Azerbaijan, Canada, and The United Kingdom respectively. Mr. Reza Vaziri, Nowruz Commission's Vice Chairman and Board Member representing Azerbaijan, and His Excellency Batu Kutelia, Nowruz Commission's Board Member representing Georgia were also present.



Emmy Award winning news anchor, Mr. Tim White, served as Master of Ceremonies, opening the program by introducing a vibrant performance by Silk Road Dance Company. The night continued with remarks from Chairman and Co-Founder, Nasser Kazeminy, and Vice Chairman and Co-Founder The Honorable Bijan Kian.

In a unique moment celebrating unity, representatives from each of the Nowruz Commission participating countries and communities were called to the stage to join Chairman Nasser Kazeminy, Vice Chairman The Honorable Bijan Kian, and President and CEO Gissou Kian to commemorate the togetherness that Nowruz Commission has become known for.



His Excellency Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, sent a Nowruz Message to Chairman Kazeminy, emphasizing the role of the Nowruz tradition. His Royal Highness, Sehm Mbinglo I, the Fon (King) of the Nso people in Kumbo, Cameroon sent greetings to Nowruz Commission, read by Nowruz Commission Secretary General Robert Kelley.

To highlight the evening was a long standing ovation for six special guests of the Nowruz Commission, members of the United States Armed Services – wounded warriors who courageously served their country and paid the price of sacrifice.



2014 ANNUAL NOWRUZ COMMISSION GALA DINNER

MARCH 15, 2014



The single most significant fundraising effort in the history of the Commission was facilitated by a gift from Mr. Matt Schaub, a friend of Nowruz Commission. Mr. Schaub has an extraordinary talent of building electric guitars. To symbolize Nowruz Commission's Gift of Life initiative, Mr. Schaub created an electric guitar made from a first aid kit and bloodwood. The kit is marked by the emblem of the Red Lion and Sun, reminiscent of a time passed when the organization was an affiliate of the Red Cross in Iran. The wooden neck on the guitar is emblazoned with the Nowruz Commission Logo.

After finishing his brief remarks, The Honorable Bijan Kian invited the audience to listen as the first notes were played on this special gift by Mr. Schaub. In a unique historical moment, Dr. Kaivon Saleh, who oversaw the Red Lion and Sun during his time as Under Secretary of Health in Iran, was also present.

The guitar was auctioned twice! First, an anonymous bidder, later identified as Nowruz Commission's Chairman, Mr. Nasser Kazeminy, bought the guitar for \$50,000, and donated it back to the Commission, to be auctioned again. This time, Dr. Massih Tayebi, Nowruz Commission Board Member, acquired the guitar for a second \$50,000, and he too donated it back to the Commission to be auctioned again during the 2015 event.



His Excellency Dussanbay Kasseinov, Secretary General of TURKSOY and Nowruz Commission Board Member, joined by His Excellency Kairat Umarov, presented gifts to Nowruz Commission, which were received by Chairman Nasser Kazeminy, The Honorable Bijan Kian, and President Gissou Kian.

The event included cultural displays from Afghanistan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, the Kurdish Region of Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Turkey, in addition to the traditional presentation of the haftseen and haft meeveh. The audience traveled through the Silk Road with the sounds and colors of cultural musical performances by the Silk Road Dance Company, Mr. Milad Yousefi and Mr. Masood Omari, representing Afghanistan, Mr. Jani Dilan, representing the Kurdish Region of Iraq, The Nomad Dancers, and TURKSOY performers representing the cultural traditions of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. TURKSOY, The International Organization of Turkic Culture was established in 1993 by Turkish-speaking countries with the intention of promoting



cooperation in the fields of art and culture and strengthening the already existing common cultural presence among the Turkic nations.

2014 ANNUAL NOWRUZ COMMISSION GALA DINNER

MARCH 15, 2014



Rana Mansour and Karmandan performed a lively and dynamic set both in English and in Farsi, which the audience loved! Rana is an Iranian-American and a rising star. Nowruz Commission looks forward to another great performance by Rana and Karmandan at our upcoming Fifth Birthday celebration on March 14!



A number of items were donated to our Silent Auction, including several beautiful works of art donated by Nowruz Commission Ambassador Mr. Hooshang Tebyanian, two magnificent original



paintings by Nowruz Commission Ambassador Dr. Kamran Khavarani, who has donated his works each year since Nowruz Commission's inaugural event, two oriental wall plaques, the "Nowruz Bee" donated by Nowruz Commission Ambassador Ms. Nancye Miller, fine exclusive porcelain and silk donated by LR Paris, a beautiful set of necklace and earrings designed by Paul Spurgeon



in collaboration with Afghan jewelry, cashmere Afghan made scarves donated by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Kolendar, two round-trip business class travel certificates donated by Turkish Airlines, two signed original oil canvas paintings donated by the artist himself, Mr. Bryon Line, and a certificate for a 2 night stay for 2 at Hotel Lac Salin Spa & Mountain Resort of Livigno, Italy.



Nowruz Commission is extremely grateful for the many kind gifts donated by our supporters. The funds raised from these items help save lives and fulfill our mission.

A special thanks to all the volunteers and friends of Nowruz Commission, embassy staff members, vendors, and venue staff members who work tirelessly to make this event possible. Looking forward to celebrating with you again on March 14, 2015!

Photo credit: B&B Multi Productions and Imijation Photography



2014 PROGRAM UPDATES

Upwardly Global

Excellent education and ample experience do not necessarily guarantee immigrants jobs consistent with their level of education and experience. Employers may be looking for those exact skill sets, but there is no connection between the immigrants and those jobs. Upwardly Global creates the bridge to mentor the immigrants and provide the network to connect them with jobs commensurate with their skills. A Nowruz Commission grant helps build the bridge that elevates the quality of life for the immigrants and contribute to a stronger economy.

Gift of Life

Thanks to your generous contributions, in 2014, a grant from Nowruz Commission sponsored life-saving open heart surgeries giving the gift of life to 11 children in Afghanistan. The youngest child was just six months old at the time of the operation. Nowruz Commission partner organization Gift of Life International undertook not only the life saving operations, but also provided training for Afghan surgeons on the procedures. On behalf of all the children who underwent surgery and their families, we thank you for your continued support of our programs.

Clearwater Initiative

A well in a rural area in Uganda brings life to over 100 families in need of drinking water. Clear Water Initiative was founded by United States Army Captain Ben Sklaver. A dedicated soldier with a big heart who wanted to fix anything he found broken, Ben died in an ambush in 2009 while deployed in Afghanistan. His friends continued his work and Clear Water Initiative kept bringing life to communities in need of water. A Nowruz Commission grant made to Clear Water Initiative in 2014 will help establish a new well that will serve over 300 people lead happier, healthier, and more prosperous lives.

Nowruz Commission Globally

Two magnificent events augmented the presence of Nowruz Commission in Europe in 2014. Both events were attended by Mr. Nasser Kazeminy, Chairman and Co-founder of the Nowruz Commission.

London



On March 6, 2014, Lady Homayoun Renwick, Country Ambassador in the United Kingdom, held Nowruz Commission's annual event with the kind of elegance that has become her hallmark. Lady Renwick and her team were joined by Ambassadors from Nowruz countries, along with dignitaries and over 200 distinguished guests who came together not only to celebrate the arrival of Spring, but also the philosophy of care and compassion embedded in the charter of the Nowruz Commission.

Click [here](#) to view video footage from the London event!

PS there are two parts! Click [here](#) to view part two!



Paris

On June 18, 2014 His Excellency Hakki Akil, Republic of Turkey's Ambassador to France, also the Dean of Nowruz Commission Ambassadors in Europe, was the gracious host to French legislators along with Ambassadors from the Nowruz Commission participating countries.

The Honorable Bijan Kian, Co-founder and Vice Chairman of Nowruz Commission along with Mrs. Gissou Kian, President, Mr. Farid Rohani, Board Member, and Mr. Xavier Hermes, Nowruz Commission Country Ambassador in France attended this unique public diplomacy event. Ms. Darya Dadvar, world class singer, and Mrs. Gülsin Onay, master pianist, were the special guests who brought the gift of their music to the event held at the historical building and garden residence of the Turkish Ambassador.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Board Appointments

In 2014, Nowruz Commission elected four exceptional board members



His Excellency Batu Kutelia



Mrs. Galiya Umarova



His Excellency Dussanbay Kasseinov



Dr. Massih Tayebi

We are delighted to welcome these new board members! We are grateful for their service, and look forward to their valuable participation in the coming years.

In Memoriam

Honorary Freeman Sir Eldon Grittiths was the first member of Nowruz Commission's Advisory Council. A dear friend, a distinguished member of British Parliament from 1964 to 1992, and Chairman of the World Affairs's Council of America, Sir Eldon passed away on June 3, 2014. His name will remain on the roster of Nowruz Commission as an exceptional man who loved culture.



CELEBRATING OUR FIFTH BIRTHDAY!

2015 ANNUAL GALA EVENT

MARCH 14, 2015

Sponsorship Packages

Nowruz Guardian

\$50,000.00

30 guests to gala event

Lifetime Nowruz Guardian

Nowruz Ambassador

\$10,000.00

20 guests to Gala Event

Nowruz Diplomat

\$5,000.00

10 guests at the Gala Event

Nowruz Envoy

\$2,000.00

4 guests at the Gala Event

A limited number of individual tickets are also available at \$550 each.

Please send in your sponsorship confirmation no later than March 1, 2015.

To make your contribution, kindly do one of the following:

1. Send a check to:
Nowruz Commission
P.O. Box 5672
Washington, DC 20016

2. Wire the funds to:
Nowruz Commission

Capital One Bank
Account #: 767-430-2903
Routing#: 255071981

Bank Address:
10211 River Road
Potomac, Maryland 20854

Nowruz Commission is a 501(c)(3) entity, EIN: 27-1933356. Contributions are tax deductible according to the rules set forward by the Internal Revenue Service.

With much appreciation and every good wish, we look forward to welcoming you in Washington.



About Us

CHAIRMAN

Mr. Nasser Kazeminy

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mrs. Gissou R. Kian

GENERAL COUNSEL

Mr. Amir Ghavi, Esq.

SECRETARY GENERAL

Mr. Robert K. Kelley

BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Nasser Kazeminy

Mrs. Gissou R. Kian

The Honorable Bijan R. Kian,
Vice Chairman

Mr. Reza Vaziri, Vice Chairman

Mr. Kamoluddin Abdullaev

Ms. Anousheh Ansari

Mr. Ekim Alptekin

His Excellency Ashraf Ghani

His Excellency Dusen Kasseinov

His Excellency Batu Kutelia

Mr. Farid Rohani

His Excellency Qubad Talabani

Dr. Massih Tayebi

Mrs. Galiya Umarova

CO-FOUNDERS

His Excellency Erlan Idrissov

The Honorable Bijan R. Kian

Mr. Nasser Kazeminy

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Jim Clifton, Chairman

Sir Eldon Griffiths, In Memoriam

Mr. Hasan Asadullozoda

Dr. Jahangir Hajiyev

Mr. Sherali Kabirov

His Excellency Younes Nawandish

Mr. Darkan Nurmagambet

His Excellency Vasil Sikharulidze

His Excellency Saleem Taraki

People of many cultures have celebrated Nowruz on their own for thousands of years. On March 17, 2010, for the first time in history, representatives of nine cultures came together at the Library of Congress, forming The Nowruz Commission by celebrating this time-honored tradition *together* and promoting the philosophy of care and compassion embedded in Nowruz.

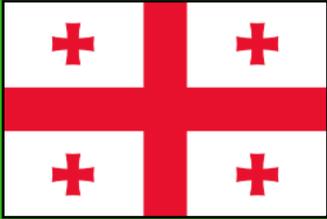
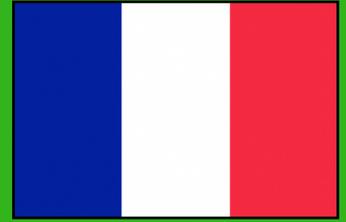
Reviving a three-thousand year old tradition, Afghans, Azeris, Georgians, Iraqis, Kazakhs, Kurds, Kyrgyz, Persians, Russians, Tatars, Tajiks, Turks, Turkmen, Ukrainians, and others joined together under the same roof to celebrate the exact moment of Vernal Equinox, the arrival of Spring and the renewal of the earth, and in this spirit, renewal of the bonds of friendship among all peoples.

A well-diversified Board of Directors governs Nowruz Commission and makes the major decisions through regularly conducted Board Meetings. The day-to-day operation of the Commission takes place by an all-volunteer team.

Biographies of our Board of Directors, financial records, and other information regarding the Commission are all readily available on our web site at www.nowruzcommission.org.



Nowruz Commission Members



Nowruz Commission is a non-profit organization, classified as a public charity under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code. Contributions to Nowruz Commission are deductible under section 170 of the Code.