

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date: July 28, 2014

Contact: Mrs. Berna Kovuk-Sozen, Festival Organizing Committee Member
(312) 391-4864 | nbkovuk@gmail.com



Chicago Turkish Festival Raises Funds for ALS at Opening Gala in Pioneer Court

CHICAGO – After a decade long success at Daley Plaza, the 12th annual Chicago Turkish Festival reaches a larger audience at one of downtown Chicago's busiest landmark locations along the lively Magnificent Mile. For the second year in a row, **Pioneer Court** --where the first Chicagoan settled-- hosts a cultural exchange of this scope with the captivating sights, sounds and tastes of one of Chicago's most popular ethnic cultural events: **The Chicago Turkish Festival**, being held between September 4th and 6th this year.

To commence the festivities and raise funding for **ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis or Lou Gehrig's disease)** research, the Turkish Consulate General in Chicago and the Turkish American community of Midwest will host an outdoor, private, black tie optional **Opening Gala Dinner** at Pioneer Court on the evening of Thursday, September 4th between 7:00-10:00 pm. Besides enjoying a sneak preview of festival booths, an open Turkish buffet dinner, Turkish wine, and entertainment, guests will have the opportunity to participate in a live and silent auction to benefit **the Les Turner ALS Foundation**. Among the items to bid on are vacation packages to Turkey and art pieces from Turkey and Turkish artists. Turkish Airlines supports the live auction with two business class tickets to any city in Turkey.

The event will open to the public free of charge at 10 am on Friday, September 5th and run through Saturday, September 6th, from 10 am to 9pm each day, offering Chicagoans world famous Turkish cuisine and delicacies, live stage performances both at noon and in the evenings including whirling dervishes, a fashion show with Ottoman era flair, vibrant folk dances and musical performances, arts and crafts exhibits and demonstrations. Our guest city this year will be **Izmir** (aka Smyrna), and festival visitors will enjoy the hospitality and breathtaking sights of Izmir and one of the most historic regions of Turkey: **Aegean Region**, home to the world-famous, spectacular ruins of **Ephesus**.

You don't need a passport to attend this historic Pioneer Court event organized by the Turkish-American community in collaboration with the City of Chicago. "This is a unique opportunity for all Chicagoans to experience one of the richest and most colorful cultures and cuisines in the world while joining the efforts to raise funds for and awareness about ALS research. ALS is a progressive disease that causes muscle weakness, difficulty speaking and swallowing and generally, complete paralysis. There is no known cure and once diagnosed, patients typically live only three to five years. We are very proud that a member of our community, Dr. Hande Ozdinler leads one of country's foremost ALS research labs at Northwestern University dedicated finding a cure and increasing public awareness," said Hon. Fatih Yıldız, the Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Chicago.

The Festival Committee invites all Chicagoans to attend the Turkish Festival Gala and visit the ALS stand with your generous donations to support this great cause. For further information please visit the event site at www.ChicagoTurkishFestival.org or contact info@chicagoturkishfestival.org.

###