



JANUARY 2026

NEWSLETTER

WHAT'S INSIDE:


UPCOMING EVENTS:


- Halaqa Series on *The Words*
- Silicon Valley Peace Conference


PAST EVENTS:


- Courtesy Visit from WeHope
- BAYCC Cooking Club Makes Dumplings
- Turkish Schools Alumni Reunion
- Halaqa: Review of Said Nursi's Life

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THIS MONTH WITH BAYCC

As we step into the new year, we're grateful for the moments that brought our community together and excited for what's ahead. This issue looks back at recent gatherings—from shared meals and alumni reunions to reflective halaqas—and highlights upcoming programs, including our ongoing Halaqa Series on *The Words* and the Silicon Valley Peace Conference. Here's to a year of growing together.

ABOUT US

Founded in 2002 by volunteers from diverse professional backgrounds, BAYCC harnesses the power of interfaith dialogue, community engagement, and education to promote the well-being of the community and foster stronger connections.

Visit baycc.org to learn more.

2025 NOTABLE EVENTS

Here's a look back at some of the moments in 2025 that brought our community together, sparked meaningful connections, and made a real difference.



RAMADAN IFTARS

BAYCC hosted diverse iftars in homes and faith spaces, bringing together students, interfaith friends, and community members to share a evenings rooted in Muslim tradition.



SEEKING GOD TOGETHER

In 2025, we hosted two interfaith gatherings at Huddart Park, creating space for people of different faiths to reflect, dialogue, and connect around shared spiritual values in nature.



EID AL-ADHA: SERVICE FEST

BAYCC's first ever Service Fest brought community members together to honor the spirit of Eid through hands-on service projects supporting underserved neighbors.



CONGRESSIONAL AWARDS

Six of our youth were honored with the prestigious Gold Congressional Award Medal in Washington, D.C., recognizing their dedication to service, personal growth, and leadership among awardees from across the nation.

2025 NOTABLE EVENTS



ART WORKSHOPS

We hosted a series of creative art workshops, from paint-with-coffee with Erguvan and kintsugi with Youth Collective to the Cooking Club, offering space for artistic expression and community connection.



5TH WEST PLATFORM CIVIC CONVENTION

The 5th West Platform Civic Convention brought together volunteers and community leaders from 13 Western states for dialogue, workshops, and collaboration on strengthening civic engagement and community impact.



COMPASSION WEEK

BAYCC hosted a service day for Compassion Week, uniting volunteers of all ages in Santa Clara to honor the legacy of Fethullah Gülen through hands-on service projects supporting unhoused and underserved neighbors.



THANKSGIVING EVENTS

BAYCC's Thanksgiving events centered on shared gratitude, interfaith friendship, and service, bringing diverse communities together to share meals and build relationships.

These events remind us of what's possible when we come together. We can't wait to carry that spirit into 2026!

UPCOMING EVENTS



HALAQA SERIES ON THE WORDS

We're hosting a bi-weekly halaqa with Dr. Ferhan Tunagur, diving into the first eight Words of the *Risale-i Nur*.

The evenings start with a community dinner, followed by thoughtful discussion and reflection, giving everyone a chance to connect, share, and explore their faith together.

DATE:
Every other
Friday

TIME:
6:30 PM

LOCATION:
BAYCC
Community
Center

Silicon Valley PEACE CONFERENCE
"AI's Role in Community Development and Peacebuilding in Developing Nations"
Call for Papers

The Silicon Valley Peace Conference invites scholars, researchers, technologists, peacebuilders, practitioners, and policymakers to submit original research work and practice-based papers exploring how Artificial Intelligence can support peacebuilding, inclusive development, social justice, community empowerment, environmental sustainability, public health, education, ethics, and spiritual well-being. Research projects conducted in developing nations are especially encouraged.

The conference offers an academic forum for sharing empirical research, case studies, technical innovations, interdisciplinary insights, and policy analyses that highlight AI's potential and challenges in shaping equitable, peaceful, and resilient communities. The conference features no participation or publication fees and will be held in a hybrid format, with options for both in-person and virtual attendance.

SUBTHEME HIGHLIGHTS

- Advancing Peacebuilding Efforts With AI-Based Approaches
- Promoting Ethical, Transparent, and Responsible AI Development and Use
- Promoting Social Justice and Reducing Inequality Through AI
- Preserving Indigenous Cultures, Languages, and Community Heritage
- Assistive AI Technologies for Persons With Disabilities and Caregivers
- Empowering Marginalized Communities With AI-Enabled Tools
- Creating New Forms of Employment Through AI-Driven Technologies
- Supporting and Achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals With AI Tools
- Climate Action, Conservation, and Environmental Monitoring Enhanced by AI
- Strengthening Education Systems Through AI-Driven Innovations
- Theological and Ethical Reflections on Artificial Intelligence

IMPORTANT DATES

- Abstract Submission : February 28, 2026
- Full Paper Submission : May 31, 2026
- Conference Dates : September 18-19, 2026
- San Francisco Bay Area Tours : September 17 and 20, 2026

Submitted abstracts will be reviewed by the Editorial Board, and authors will receive a decision within two weeks, allowing authors with an accepted research abstract to begin conducting research and drafting their manuscripts without waiting for the abstract submission deadline. Full papers will be reviewed within three weeks, enabling authors to receive an early acceptance decision and make timely preparations for participation and travel.

September 18-19, 2026
Palo Alto, California

The conference website provides access to the submission portal, author guidelines, program flow, livestream sessions, and the published proceedings. Authors are encouraged to check the website regularly for the latest updates.

Logos: CMU, BAYCC, PACIFICA UNIVERSITY, SITC, IRI, University of San Francisco
www.svpconference.org

SILICON VALLEY PEACE CONFERENCE: CALL FOR PAPERS

The Silicon Valley Peace Conference invites scholars, technologists, and peacebuilders to submit papers on "AI's Role in Community Development and Peacebuilding in Developing Nations." We welcome research exploring how AI can support peace, social justice, education, public health, and community empowerment.

Key Dates:

- Abstracts due: Feb. 28, 2026
- Full papers due: May 31, 2026
- Conference dates: Sept. 18–19, 2026

ABSTRACTS DUE:
February 28,
2026

CONFERENCE LOCATION:
Palo Alto, CA

WEBSITE:
svpconference.org

LEARN MORE



PAST EVENTS



COURTESY VISIT FROM WEHOPE

At the end of November, BAYCC partnered with the Abrahamic Alliance for a meaningful Thanksgiving gathering. Together, we hosted a community dinner and prepared hot meals, which were then delivered to nearby unhoused neighbors.

A special thanks to Nurdin Abi, whose efforts made this collaboration possible through our Dialogue Unit. During the service, we met the encampment's site managers—a Muslim couple—and were able to connect with them personally. A week later, we invited them to the BAYCC's community center to share a meal, engage in heartfelt conversation, and explore future collaborations.

These moments of service and connection continue to inspire and strengthen our community bonds.



BAYCC COOKING CLUB MAKES DUMPLINGS

On December 13, 2025, the BAYCC Cooking Club gathered for a joyful evening centered on a shared love of cooking—this time, dumplings. Hosted in a community member's home, the space quickly turned into a warm and welcoming cultural gathering where longtime friends and

DECEMBER 4,
2026

DECEMBER
13, 2026

PAST EVENTS

new faces came together around the same table.

From seasoned cooks to first-time helpers, the kitchen was full of energy, conversation, and laughter as dumplings were prepared side by side. We are deeply grateful to those who opened their homes and hearts for this gathering. May it be a source of barakah and continued togetherness for our community.



The photos truly capture the spirit of the night.



TURKISH SCHOOLS ALUMNI REUNION

The Turkish Schools Alumni Reunion brought alumni in Silicon Valley together for a warm and meaningful evening of reconnection. The night began with welcome and check-in, giving everyone time to mingle, catch up, and take photos before sitting down together for a traditional plov dinner. A short talk from a Turkish Schools teacher was followed by a few alumni sharing brief memories and life updates—moments that were both emotional and motivating.

The rest of the evening flowed into open social time, with conversations continuing late into the night as old friendships were renewed and

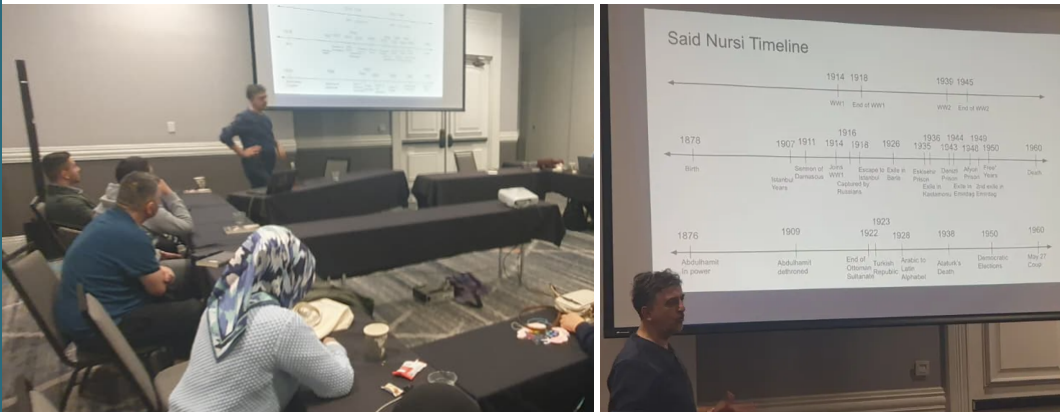
**DECEMBER
13, 2026**

PAST EVENTS

new connections formed. The atmosphere was exciting, heartfelt, and deeply nostalgic, reminding everyone why this community matters. The reunion strengthened bonds, boosted morale, and left participants feeling inspired, supported, and eager to stay connected.



Looking ahead: Alumni are also invited to the upcoming Hizmet Graduates Iftar on March 9, a special Ramadan evening to break fast together and reconnect once again.



**DECEMBER
19, 2026**

HALAQA: REVIEW OF SAID NURSI'S LIFE

Friday, December 19, 2025, Dr. Fatih Sarıgöz led a review session on the biography of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi. During the session, he walked participants through key moments of Bediüzzaman's life, the historical conditions of the period, and the challenges he was responding to. He explained how these circumstances shaped both the content and the style of Bediüzzaman's writings, and why understanding this background is essential for making sense of his works today.

Dr. Sarıgöz emphasized that without knowing the lived realities of the time—what problems were being addressed, what tensions existed, and what questions people were struggling with—many passages risk being misunderstood or seen as overly simple or repetitive, even

PAST EVENTS

though they were written in response to very concrete and pressing realities.

Although Dr. Sarigöz did not explicitly present the Qur'an–Prophet ﷺ analogy during this particular halaqa on December 19, he later articulated this analogy in subsequent biography review sessions. The logic underlying this session, however, reflects the same framework. Just as the Qur'an is understood through the life, explanations, and lived example of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the writings of scholars like Bediüzzaman also require familiarity with the historical and social context in which they were produced in order to be properly understood and related to.

Attendance was good, with meaningful engagement throughout the session. One female participant shared that while she had previously questioned why she should read Bediüzzaman's works, the discussion helped her feel that she should read him and better understand the relevance of his writings.

*Please note: These images are from a halaqa held on another date.

To read about these events in more detail:
VISIT [**BAYCC.ORG/EVENTS**](https://baycc.org/events)