

## Nişantepe Social Empowerment Project - “Cooking for Someone”

*“ ‘Karnıyarık’ (stuffed eggplant) is not just a recipe. I have never seen anyone making ‘karnıyarık’ just to satisfy their hunger. (...) There is a much better reason behind it, actually. For karnıyarık, the recipe or the ingredients are important but as essential as a person to share it with. (...) If it were to be boiled down to a recipe, we could have machines prepare the tastiest karnıyarnık.”*

This is what Oğuzhan Aşık, an undergraduate Mechanical Engineering student, wrote (in b.ğ) after a workshop he attended.

Indeed, cooking something for someone cannot be boiled down to the physical satisfaction of hunger only. We discussed this issue with Nazan (Kılavuz), a fresh Le Cordon Bleu certificate program graduate who, with a group of volunteers, regularly prepares food for the families in need in the Nişantepe neighborhood and personally brings the food to their home. Nazan is one of the names that inspire us the most during this lengthy period. Please click [here](#) for her story.

*(....) “Can I do something while I am here” is the question that first comes to my mind. Then, I meet our department head Defne. She gives her consent and lets us use the school’s kitchen to prepare food with a group of volunteering students when the kitchen is available. With this great news, we start to prepare food with the volunteering classmates from the certificate program once a week, three hours before the start of our classes, to distribute it to the families in the evening. Our friends who have come from abroad for their studies join us too. After the class, we stop by the neighborhood to deliver the meals and pastries we do not take home. Each time, at least 4 or 5 families receive food. As we quickly and in solidarity distribute what we have, my classmates and I find brief chit-chat moments with the locals.”*

Preparing something for someone, putting your effort for someone is very meaningful. That’s how we grow stronger together. As we find ourselves coming to grips with the new meanings of solidarity in this pandemic period, we want to prepare nutritional yet tasty food and share it before the New Year with the local children who live their days off in the neighboring houses, with so many dreams and hopes in their hearts. Nazan offered making a “molasses cake”. You may find the recipe [here](#) with her personal notes. We want to surprise the children with our cakes before the New Year. If you are interested in taking part in our “baking solidarity”, please send an email to Nazan ([kilavuznaz@hotmail.com](mailto:kilavuznaz@hotmail.com)) before December 21 and mail your cake to the address you will receive in a way to reach her before the New Year. We believe that uniting around the same purpose from different kitchens will be highly rejuvenating for us all.

Hoping that 2021 will give us many more opportunities to reach out to those in need, share and give back to this great community, we wish you all health, happiness, and peace in the new year...

Özlem – Okan – Nazan

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