



Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois (KCCI) 2024 Activities and Events:

We, the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois, are very grateful to have many supportive members and dedicated volunteers helping our community grow. We would like to express our appreciation and thank everyone for their sincere efforts. Please see what we accomplished during the past year:

January 15: Kurdish Dance Workshop: The Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois organized a workshop where participants learned traditional Kurdish dances, embracing and celebrating Kurdish cultural heritage through dance.

January 21: Monthly Potluck: The Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois hosted a potluck to celebrate the anniversary of the Republic of Kurdistan (1946), bringing the community together to share food and honor Kurdish history.

January 24: Movie Night: The Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois hosted a screening of “Vodka Lemon” (by Hiner Saleem, 2003). Set in a remote, isolated Yazidi Kurdish village in post-Soviet Armenia, the film follows Hamo, a widower with a pitiful pension and three worthless sons, as he travels daily to his wife’s grave.

January 27: Women’s gathering. Where women from diverse communities come together to share stories and enjoy coffee, sweets, and delightful company. We aim to create connections, build relationships, and open doors to job opportunities and personal growth.

January 29: The Board and community members of the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois met with Daniel Strom (Outreach Director, Office of Senator Martwick) on January 29th. We introduced KCCI and the importance of the Kurdish diaspora in the city of Chicago.

February 1: Board Game Nights: Throughout the winter, the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois hosted weekly board game nights every Thursday at 8:00 PM, bringing the community together for fun and friendly competition.

February 5: ESL Classes: The Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois offers English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, helping community members improve their language skills and gain

confidence in daily interactions. ESL classes were taught by Fatima Rasoul (Loyola University).

February 10: Kurdish University students, high school students, and professionals met at KCCI to share their experiences and assist high school students during the application process. The KCCI provided dinner for attendees.

February 13: Valentine's Celebration: The Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois celebrated Valentine's Day by honoring the ancient tradition of apples and cloves, bringing the community together to enjoy this unique cultural practice and create lasting memories.

February 18: A Kurdish potluck brought everyone together to share traditional homemade dishes. Guests enjoyed each other's food, celebrating Kurdish culture in a warm, communal setting.

March 4: Kurdish Student Gathering: Students gathered to connect, share valuable resources, and expand their networks. The event provided an opportunity to build relationships, collaborate, and strengthen the Kurdish student community.

March 12: Meeting with the Jewish United Fund: KCCI members met with representatives from the Jewish United Fund to discuss potential collaborations and strengthen community ties through shared initiatives and support.

March 17: Iftar dinner. Members and friends of the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois met at an iftar dinner which was sponsored by a member of KCCI.

March 24: KCCI celebrated the main Kurdish holiday, Newroz in memory of our dear friend, Bahoz Broosk, with its members, friends, and community at large at the Crystal Palace Banquet. We welcomed the coming of spring along with our singers' performance (Galawij Sazezi, Nofl Hakare, Ava, Arash, and Alan). It was a memorable night to reconnect through joy and revive community bonds.

March 27: KCCI has screened the film "Kurdistan Kurdistan" as part of the Zagros Movie Festival. Directed by Bulent Gunduz, this French production from 2015.

April 4: KCCI attended a Kyrgyz community iftar dinner, where members of the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Turkmen, and Azeri communities from the Chicago area gathered to share a meal, celebrate, and strengthen ties among diverse cultures.

April 6: The Kyrgyz community joined us for an iftar hosted at the Kurdish Cultural Center, fostering a sense of unity and cultural exchange as we shared a meal and celebrated together. The event brought together diverse communities in a spirit of collaboration and friendship.

April 7: KCCI held a town hall—community meeting to listen to the community's needs and make recommendations on how to increase engagement!

May 18 -19: The Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois participated in the Skokie Festival of Cultures, showcasing Kurdish heritage through vibrant displays, traditional attire, and cultural exhibits. The event provided a wonderful opportunity to share and celebrate

Kurdish traditions with the diverse Skokie community.

June 11: Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois Monthly Potluck and Town Hall meeting. Our community members generously brought food to share and joyfully engaged in games with children and Kurdish dance.

June 16: Eid and Summer Picnic: KCCI members and friends celebrated "Cejna/Eid" together at Central Park, enjoying a festive day in great company.

July 3: Independence Day Celebration: We celebrated the United States' Independence Day with a documentary screening and a discussion led by Bahadin Hawar Kerborani from the University of Chicago, exploring the rights guaranteed by the American Constitution.

July 21: KCCI Summer Picnic at Terminal Park: Members enjoyed a potluck-style gathering, bringing and sharing delicious Kurdish food in a warm, community atmosphere.

August 18: KCCI Summer Picnic: Members enjoyed a potluck-style gathering, bringing and sharing delicious Kurdish food in a warm, community atmosphere.

September 11: KCCI Business Recognition Visit: KCCI visited the owner of Antepi Restaurant, Kadir Akkus to honor their contributions to the community. The visit included presenting awards and expressing gratitude for their support of the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois and the Kurdish community in Chicago.

September 15: Final Community Picnic of the Year: Hosted by the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois at Hamlin Park, Skokie, IL. Food and drinks provided by KCCI.

September 25: Second Meeting with the Jewish United Fund: KCCI met with the Jewish United Fund to invite them to the Kurdish Film Festival and discuss organizing a gathering to bring together Jewish and Kurdish communities for cultural exchange and connection.

October 13: Pumpkin Carving Contest: KCCI hosted a fun-filled pumpkin carving event at the Cultural Center, bringing members together for a creative celebration.

November 2-3: Chicago's First Kurdish Film Festival: Hosted by the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois at Loyola University, this event brought together many attendees and organizations. The festival received wonderful feedback from the community.

November 17: KCCI held a Town Hall meeting to inform its members about upcoming board election and committee structures.

December 6: The members of the Kurdish Center attended Cook County Treasurer's Office Christmas Party in the City Hall. Board members met officers from the City of Chicago and introduced the mission of KCCI to attendees.

December 8: A substantial number of members of the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois participated in voting to elect new board members and people who wanted to be on committees filled out the form.

December 12: KCCI started to organize its traditional “Board Game Night” on Thursdays. A large number of people from the Kurdish community and outside have been attending the Board Game Nights. This event will continue until May 2025.

December 15: We are thrilled to announce that KCCI received a renewable 2024 CityArts grant from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events or DCASE. Our goal is to apply for more grants to better serve the Kurdish community in Illinois.

December 26-28: The Board and community members of KCCI attended MAS-ICNA Annual Convention 2024 at McCormick Place in Chicago. People from the Kurdish community met many organizations and individuals at the convention and shared the vision and mission of the Kurdish center with attendees.

December 31: The Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois ended 2024 with a lively New Year's Eve Party featuring traditional music, dance, and a joyous countdown to midnight. The event brought the community together to celebrate and welcome 2025 with unity and excitement.

January-December: Board members of the Kurdish Cultural Center of Illinois have been visiting new Kurdish families in the Chicago area, local Kurdish businesses, community organizations, educational institutions, and politicians to strengthen our relationship with these individuals and organizations and to present Kurdish culture in the diaspora.

Board Members of 2024

<p><u>Co-Presidents:</u></p> <p>Bahadin H Kerborani</p> <p>Ridwan Zozani</p>	<p><u>Vice President:</u> Serhat Yesilmen</p> <p><u>Secretary:</u> Ferat Imrak</p>
<p><u>Treasurer:</u> Ceko Zagros</p>	<p><u>Members:</u></p> <p>Abdulhaluk Akpinar</p> <p>Ahmet Dursun</p> <p>Biekhal Alkhalifa</p> <p>Ibrahim H Munigu</p> <p>Ramazan Balikci</p> <p>Velat Turk</p> <p>Yusuf Erik</p>

If you have any questions or suggestions please let us know. We will be happy to hear your feedback to strengthen our community together. **Address:** 4217 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60641 **Email:** info@kurdsofillinois.org