CommuNIqué

Newsletter for the Bahá'í Community in Northern Ireland

Quadrat 171 BE/November 2014

Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland

bahaicouncil-ni.org.uk

Email: bcni@bahai.org.uk

Please inform us if you prefer to receive the newsletter online.

Bahai-ni

To subscribe to the email news service, send an mail to the list manager at bahaini@gmail.com

Fund donations

To make online donations to the National fund/Huqúqu'lláh, go to bahai.org.uk/donations

Please note, views expressed by various contributors are not necessarily those of the editor, the Bahá'í Council for Northern Ireland or the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

Preparing for a Life of Service

'I began my year of service in July and am involved in both sustaining and initiating core activities in two neighbourhoods. I am learning about the challenges that come along with both but also learning and experiencing the joys of being involved in such vibrant communities! The goal we set, along with the institutions, in one neighbourhood was to help set up activities in this area. With a weekly devotional and a small number of junior youth keen to be involved in the programme, we are certainly on our way to involving numbers of people in activities in this neighbourhood. In another neighbourhood where activities are well established, it was decided that I would be involved in the diverse activities where, along with others, we would strive to accompany those arising to serve in that neighbourhood. I feel that, since some projects and gatherings over summer which assisted with this, we are being confirmed in these efforts. The support of the entire community these past few months has been wonderful and serving alongside people who are so alive with Bahá'u'lláh's vision has supported me in my own services. Serving full time is not only giving me an opportunity to gain new skills and experiences in building communities, but is preparing me for a life of service to the Cause and enabling me to build a coherent approach to all aspects of my life.' RG

Youth Campaign

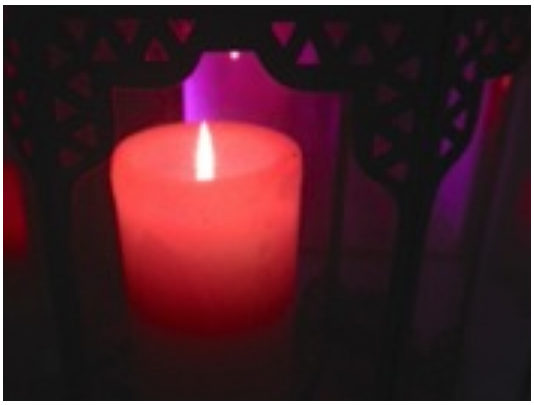
'In July 2014, youth from around Northern Ireland embarked on a week-long project which was designed to follow on from the joyous gathering at the Youth Conference in Warwick last September. The week began with a discussion amongst the youth as to what they feel are negative and positive forces that they are influenced by in their everyday lives. Using the material prepared for the 114 global conferences as inspiration, and through a series of discussions and skits, we explored themes such as: the role of youth in society, the meaning of a life of service and community building. In order to build a greater sense of community, it was decided that we would have to increase our efforts of outreach into our local communities and get to know our neighbours. This involved us going out into various areas of Belfast, Bangor and even as far as Omagh. I felt that this was an extremely useful experience for the youth as many were interested in outreaching into their community, but had previously lacked the confidence to do so. Through confirmations from God, I believe that together we have seen a positive transformation in the core activities. Before this week I think I had a somewhat cynical view on what I could change for the better in society but I now realise- youth can move the world!' JK

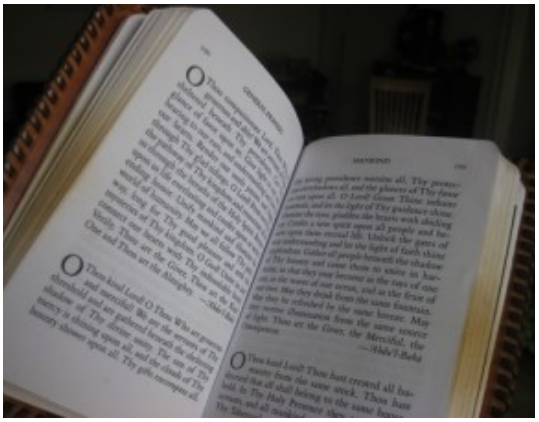
Reflections on the Life of the Spirit

With my study circle, I recently completed book one, 'Reflections on the Life of the Spirit'. The book takes you on a journey of self-evaluation as it aims to apply Bahá'í teachings to an array of social issues. The book was split into three sections to make it easier for people like me who had no previous knowledge of this faith to learn the key themes, prayers and beliefs of the religion. The most interesting thing about the course for me was that although the teachings were from the Bahá'í writings, there were people of all different faiths taking part in the meetings and we all understood as a collective that the common ground was our devotion to God, no matter what faith. I learnt about the Muslim faith, the Bahá'í faith and more about my own faith Christianity. I felt a real sense of community development as the sessions took place in our own neighbourhood among familiar surroundings but with new friends. I connected with people of all ages and faiths, learnt so much more about the importance of community and togetherness, and more about what it is to have faith. We conducted an outreach session, visiting others in our neighbourhood and praying with them which was greatly appreciated and humbling. We are here for a short time, compared to the eternity we will live with God so our purpose in life must be one of service to our creator and endeavouring to help others. In the last session of the series we thought about how we could apply what we had learnt to our lives going forward and how we could become better people through following the teachings and being devoted to others. I really enjoyed the whole experience and everything that I learnt and I can't wait for book two! ZJ

"Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path" –Abdu'l-Baha

Focus on Devotionals





We have had an annual devotional in our house for about six years - always at the beginning of November. Our neighbours do most of the organisation for it. Every year we remember a great soul who lived in the house 40 years ago - Madge Campbell - with a programme of Christian texts as well as texts from other faiths. The devotional is attended by about 50 people from the area, most of whom knew Madge. It isa very happy occasion for us and a great opportunity to connect spiritually with traditional Catholic families. EG

Having attended several at various friends' homes I realised that each devotional is very personal to the person hosting, and that is as it should be. The choosing of the readings, the music came easily; they were all my favourites taken from all religions and none. I knew that I could comfortably seat 10 so I invited 10 knowing that a few would not turn up and perhaps a few would bring a friend which is what happened. I was still nervous on the night but for my first I had chosen old friends so it made me feel more comfortable. PC

Our devotional has been a weekly Friday night feature for over 5 years. Initially there were a few of us, but with effort and over time it has expanded. We have a basket of books and people choose their own readings; most are attracted to read from the Word of God. What has lifted our hearts most over the last few years is having those who live near partake in prayers and singing for the betterment of their own souls and for others. They change our "house of earth" into "a house of heaven", our "fabric of stone" into a "congress of the spirit". SGA

Thursdays at Wendy's

Drawing together in sacred space
Ceiling, walls and floor permeating peace
Wild flowers, circled by candle flame
Come sit and meditate with friends again
Cleanse the thought of earthly things
Awareness touching the heart within
Listen to the cracks and sparks
Of the fire breathing in the hearth.
Come drink from the waters of truth
Quench your dry desert thirst
Then in turn, with individual tone
Rippling vibrations of the voice
In verse, rhythm, prayer and song
Droplets of wisdom begin to flow
Living words piercing home
Translucent meanings spring up from the sound
Shimmering upon the surface of the opened mind,
Reflections glimpsed and absorbed
Deep within the cavern of the soul.
-GJ

Message from the Baha'i Council for Northern Ireland

At this pivotal point in the Five Year Plan with just short of 17 months remaining, we humbly ask the Northern Ireland community for their help in supporting our priority clusters: Hainsworth and Stars of the West. The goal of the current Five Year Plan is for all of the UK clusters to establish a programme of growth by Ridvan 2016. It is our hope that the friends in NI will be moved to consider how they may be able to support the clusters through visiting teaching teams, homefront pioneering or part of a coordinated activity.

In describing how a programme of growth emerges, the House of Justice stated that "visiting teams may be called upon to provide impetus to the fledgling set of activities". Our dear friends in the priority clusters would welcome support in efforts to initiate and expand activities, and we ask you to pray for all those sacrificially engaging in these endeavours.

If you are interested in assisting the friends in our priority clusters, please contact Orang Agahi - orangagahi@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events

Northern Lights Winter School

27-30th December 2014, Lorne House, 30 Station Road, BT18 0BP

'Faith in the Modern World'

The theme is unity of religion exploring progressive revelation, with the evening sessions touching the history of the Baha'i luminaries from Ireland.

For information/registration email, post or call Qudrat Jamshidi, 4 Long Island Drive, Newtownards, BT23 7AH; cluster.schools@gmail.com; (028)91813430.
£20(pp) deposit required. *Register before 12 December for reduced fees*.

Intensive Book 8 (The Covenant of Baha'u'llah)

1-4th January 2014 (gathering on 31st evening), Unit 1 and Unit 2 will take concurrently, facilitated by Bruce Luck and Earl Redmond respectively

For information/registration, email or call Anne Munro: annemunro1@hotmail.com, (028)71337330 or (028)71338737 (business number with answering machine).

All in costs £35. *Booking forms must be returned by Wednesday 24th December, latest.*