

communiqué

Masá'il 175 BE/December 2018



Youth institute camp: 27-30 October in Gortin, Co Tyrone

The four-day Youth institute camp was spent in a hostel and activity centre in an idyllic location in the west of Northern Ireland.

In total there were 36 people present including adults with child safeguarding roles and children. There were 16 youth, 2 junior youth and 12 study circle collaborators.

Four study circles – Book 1, Book 2 (in Persian), Book 3 and Book 4 – and two small groups of junior youth happened simultaneously during the camp.

The Institute Camp was an empowering environment that enabled some youth to immerse themselves over a period of time in study of the Creative Word. It allowed others to get a first experience of the spirit of a Baha'i environment in all its entirety. Different elements came together to create an empowering experience.

The combination of study, activities, and evening sessions including some opportunities for service contributed to this environment. The residential environment, with its beautiful surroundings, allowed a certain amount of focus where the youth could be free of external influences or distractions.

This camp was the second of a series of camps. The first was at Downhill, Co Derry in July. The provisional dates for future camps are:

27–31 December
16–19 February
19–25 April
1–10 July
14–18 August

Messages from the World Centre

Recent weeks have seen multiple inspiring messages from the World Centre.

On 9th November the Universal House of Justice outlined the efforts by Baha'i communities to apply Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to unite material and spiritual progress. The letter goes on to announce the launch of the Baha'i International Development Organization:

"...On this sacred occasion of the... Twin Birthdays, we are pleased to announce that the Office of Social and Economic Development now effloresces into a new world-embracing institution established at the World Centre, the Bahá'í International Development Organization. In addition, a Bahá'í Development Fund will be inaugurated... individuals and institutions may contribute to it."

"...Ultimately, of course, the work of Bahá'í social and economic development rests in the hands of the friends everywhere... Consider His words: "We should continually be establishing new bases for human happiness and creating and promoting new instrumentalities toward this end. How excellent, how honorable is man if he arises to fulfill his responsibilities; how wretched and contemptible, if he shuts his eyes to the welfare of society and wastes his precious life in pursuing his own selfish interests and personal advantages. Supreme happiness is man's, and he beholds the signs of God in the world and in the human soul, if he urges on the steed of high endeavor in the arena of civilization and justice."

Two junior youth report from Gortin

It was a cold Saturday morning when a bunch of youth and adults gathered together anticipating the new friendships, experiences, and learning that were to come during the upcoming weekend in Gortin. The purpose of the institute camp in Gortin was to learn how to better ourselves and our community through group activities, reflection on our lives, prayer, and study.

During our time there we studied lessons in small groups, reading stories and learning how one life can make a huge difference; it can change how we look towards life and how small changes can impact the whole world. The many activities we took part in brought us closer together as well as being lots of fun. Some of the activities included team building, wall climbing, archery, nightline, pumpkin carving, bush craft, and sports.

At the institute camp the youth and adults studied various courses specifically Books 1–4 and the junior youth continued their study. In our sessions we explored the ideas of friendship, peer pressure and using the power of the word. We all look forward for the next time we meet to deepen our spiritual excellence and to have more fun.

~ Liandra and Christopher Guimaraes

Youth Institute Camps

The efforts to strengthen the regional Youth Training Institute Camps will continue between 27th and 31st December, 2018. The same as last time, It will be held in Gortin Activity Centre, County Tyrone. Please see the registration link below with all the details: <http://goo.gl/forms/dFH228RRcDwBylv22>

Also, to find out more about the nature and purpose of Youth Training Institute Camps please see the recent film, **Widening Embrace**, released by the Universal House of Justice. Watch from minute 12.30 onwards for the segment looking at the Camps. <https://www.bahai.org/widening-embrace/>



Advancing community building

The Baha'i Council recently held a regional nucleus of friends gathering in Hainsworth cluster as a follow up to the regional conference in June. The purpose was to reflect on how we can work in groups to take steps in

advancing the community building work. It was a lovely occasion with thought given about how to advance some of the fledgling efforts already underway.

The George Townshend Campaign in Belfast

A few months ago Belfast Spiritual Assembly initiated the George Townshend Campaign to improve the devotional character of the community by raising the number of devotional gatherings held in Belfast.

The number of devotionals in Belfast has increased from 6 to 13 with a total average attendance of 66 + 1 child including 26 friends of the Faith, and a total average attendance without overlap of 39 + 1 child including 15 friends of the Faith.

To celebrate this achievement the Assembly is planning a trip for the community to the resting place of George Townshend in Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow.

Twin Holy Days: A big breakfast

In Banbridge Damien and Najla Basketfield hosted a very big and tasty breakfast on the anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah. Baha'is and their friends from the surrounding communities were well fed! It was a very successful social occasion providing a great opportunity for people to meet Baha'is from different backgrounds.

From the writings

“... make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws. Read ye The Hidden Words, ponder the inner meanings thereof, act in accord therewith. Read, with close attention, the Tablets of ... [Baha'u'llah] ... and rise up as ye are bidden in the heavenly teachings. Thus may each one of you be even as a candle casting its light, the centre of attraction wherever people come together; and from you, as from a bed of flowers, may sweet scents be shed.”

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá. *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, page 36)



Reflection gathering in Northern Lights

On Sunday 11th November over 50 people gathered in Merville House, Newtownabbey to reflect on the progress achieved by Baha'is and their friends in the Northern Lights cluster. The gathering was lively and energetic. There were many familiar faces but there were also some friends who were attending their first reflection gathering and some people who had only recently settled in Belfast. An excellent presentation summarised the statistics of the cluster in a way that

made it very easy to understand.

The focus of the reflection gathering was on devotionals. In small groups people studied and discussed two quotations and then the entire group came back together. There were short verbal presentations on a number of devotionals that have been running in the cluster. The presentations demonstrated that there are many different approaches to devotionals that have been successful.

Civic reception for faith communities



On 14th November Belfast City Council hosted a civic reception for representatives of faith communities to demonstrate the Council's commitment to supporting and encouraging faith diversity. The reception was attended by representatives of all the main faith communities including three Baha'is. During the reception Susie Agahi sang "Blessed is the spot".



Messages from the World Centre continued...

The second inspiring message was written on The Day of the Covenant, 26th November 2018. The letter highlighted that "... Three brief years remain until the centenary of the Master's passing, when Bahá'ís the world over will gather and take account of the distance traversed over the first century of the Formative Age."

"May His loved ones, individually and collectively, little by little and day by day, increasingly embody His counsels:

- to be united in the Cause and firm in the Covenant;*
- to avoid calumny and never speak ill of others;*
- to see no strangers but regard all as members of one family;*
- to set aside divergent theories and conflicting views and pursue a single purpose and common goal;*
- to ensure that the love of Bahá'u'lláh has so mastered every organ, part, and limb as to leave no effect from the promptings of the human world;*
- to arise with heart and soul and in one accord to teach the Cause;*
- to march in serried lines, pressed together, each supporting the others;*
- to cultivate good character, perseverance, strength, and determination;*
- to know the value of this precious Faith, obey its teachings, walk in this road that is drawn straight, and show this way to the people."*

The third message which came from the World Centre was issued through the Baha'i World News Service on the same day – 26 November 2018. It gives an overview of the efforts of Abdu'l-Baha to establish peace: how He predicted both the First World War and the Second World War, how he asked Baha'is who were farming in the Jordan valley to increase their harvests so that there was sufficient during the wartime food shortages. It identifies practical measures that Abdu'l-Baha took to help all the citizens of Haifa and the surrounding area during the war and it includes images of press cuttings during Abdu'l-Baha's travels in America as well as impressive photographs of Haifa during the war.

Letter from the Baha'i Council

On 12th November 2018 the Baha'i Council for Northern Ireland wrote to all the Baha'is to inform them of changes in the institutions and agencies of the Faith. The Council stated that the regional Training Institute Board was not best placed to serve the requirements of the Plan at this stage. In a similar manner, the Area Teaching Committee in Northern Lights is no longer operational. Alongside the Auxiliary Board members, the Council is currently trying new ways of following and encouraging the progress of nuclei of friends.

Regional children's class gathering



Children's teachers from across the region came together in the Windsor neighbourhood in Belfast to reflect on development of the classes across the region with a focus on how to build relationships with parents, as well as to describe the nature and purpose of the classes to those we encounter.

Membership of the Regional Councils

In a letter dated 23rd November, the National Spiritual Assembly announced the membership of the Councils for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The members appointed by the National Assembly to serve on the Council for Northern Ireland are as follows: Jamie Anderson, Rhianna Giffin, Maria Graham, Patricia Irvine, Patricia Jamshidi.

Unit Conventions

Unit Conventions were held in Belfast and Londonderry on Sunday 2nd December. The following were elected to serve as delegates at National Convention in 2019: Jamie Anderson, Donna Semple, Kevin Proudman, Edwin Graham.

Summer School 2019

14th–18th August 2019
Campbell College, Belfast



Put the dates in your diary, then come at noon on Wednesday the 14th August for the welcome barbecue!

This will be the best yet – a place to invite your community of interest, 120 acres of space and facilities including the large heated indoor swimming pool, a purpose built theatre and wonderfully provided children's play rooms. Youth and junior youth spaces of your dreams. Costs are subsidised as last year. More details to come!

Visit the facebook page:
[@BahaiSummerSchoolNI](#)

Copy dates for CommuNIque

In the coming year CommuNIque will be published quarterly in March, June, September and December.

The deadline for copy is
15th of the previous month:

15 February

15 May

15 August

15 November.

The editor of CommuNIque is currently Edwin Graham.

Please send news and information to Edwin at the following address:

communique.bahai@gmail.com
Phone 0777 9600 254

Dates for your diary

Next reflection gatherings in Northern Lights

3rd March 2019

2nd June 2019

1st September 2019

Youth institute camps (provisional dates)

27th - 31st December 2018

16th - 19th February 2019

19th - 25th April 2019

Feasts and Holy Days

12 December Masá'il

31 December Sharaf

19 January Sultán

7 February Mulk

26 Feb - 1 March Ayyám-i-Há

2 March 'Alá'

Arrivals and departures

*in the last three months
(since the beginning of September).*

Departures

Shapoor Monadjem

*(a former Counsellor member of the
International Teaching Centre)*

16th November 2018

Arrivals

Ronan Thomas Joseph Graham

born 11th September

Maya Saprikina

born 23rd September

The Fund

As the whole of the United Kingdom shudders under the impact of a crumbling World Order the National Assembly has instigated a program of Youth Institutes throughout the land. Unity in action is a powerful force. In Northern Ireland under the guidance of our beloved Auxiliary Board member we too are joining in this mighty effort. Please friends help this effort by contributing to the Northern Ireland Funds

With love,
BCNI Treasurer

Patricia Jamshidi,
12 Ferndene Gardens, Dundonald,
BT16 2EP, patriciadeirdre@gmail.com

Account details

Account name:

NSA of Bahais – Council for NI

Sort code: 60-04-04

Account number: 85123196