

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

February 6, 2020

To the American Bahá'í community
for the Feast of Mulk

Dearly loved Friends,

In our most recent Feast message, we referred to the manner in which the Universal House of Justice encourages us to think of our efforts in every community in terms of an “expanding nucleus” of souls dedicated to translating the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh into vibrant reality. In sharing His message with others, we should have faith not only in the power of the Word of God to change hearts, but also in the capacity of others to express their response by joining hands with us in the process of community building.

One example of this is seen in a report recently received from a primarily African American neighborhood where a believer decided to serve as a homefront pioneer together with her children. Following is an excerpt from her story:

In early December, my children and I arrived into the . . . neighborhood as home front pioneers. Spiritually energized by a prayerful three day visit to the Holy Land just a month before, preparations to meet my future co-workers and collaborators began by planning the first month of prayer, study, and action in the new neighborhood. It was understood that, for real growth to occur and be sustained, individuals who are indigenous to the neighborhood would have to quickly move to the forefront, serving as children's class teachers, animators and ultimately as tutors. Faith in the capacity of others, *all* others would have to permeate every interaction.

Initially, at . . . community gatherings prayers were offered and conversations that began at someone's door were deepened. By doing this, a deeper understanding of the reality of the community was formed, friendships were forged and opportunities to serve or participate in the core activities were shared. By the second week, a number of families were met who had children, junior youth, and youth who were interested in seeing programs begin where the young people in the community could be empowered to learn and serve together. . . . By the second week of daily visits to neighbors, a youth gathering with 5 youth, a children's class with 8 children and a junior youth group with 6 junior youth [were] begun.

During the second month, there was great focus given to engaging parents of the children, junior youth and youth in order to deepen friendships and trust. To this end, parents were visited regularly to pray together, invited to attend the existing devotional/community gathering which had now gone from a weekly space to a monthly space and invited to begin their own devotional gathering to support this spiritual journey that was now underway for their child. Three parents agreed to host devotional spaces

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where other families and children could come together to pray. The youth, junior youth and children were also encouraged to host their own devotional gatherings. By the end of the second month, there were 4 children's classes, 7 devotional gatherings, 2 study circles and 1 junior youth group almost all of which were being facilitated by or co-facilitated by a member of the community.

By the 3rd month, a pattern of action, enthusiasm and ownership was emerging in the neighborhood. . . . During the next few months, the focus continued to be engagement of entire families and youth with the hopes of also meeting some slightly older youth who could also begin animating junior youth groups.

There have definitely been challenges during this ten month period. . . . There have also been spiritual challenges, seeing youth and families struggle with the many forces prevalent in a crumbling society. However, by continuing this pattern of consistent prayer, study, outreach and reflection, regular home visits with invitations to immediately become protagonists in this endeavor, taking advantage of every opportunity to help youth advance through the courses and see themselves as essential to this movement, and of course even stronger faith in the capacity of others, it is clear to see that the movement of a population is well on the way, with a group of African American mothers, fathers, youth, junior youth and children in the . . . neighborhood where in just over 3 cycles, 30 activities are being sustained by the residents, the nucleus has expanded from 1 to 7 learning how to plan, consult and arrange activities, a feeling of family and community is being created and at our next youth camp in December of this year, 3-4 youth from the neighborhood will be ready to serve as tutors.

Dear friends, one can see in this wonderful narrative that a vision which recognizes capacity in others to become agents of their own spiritual and social transformation—together with systematic, thoughtful, and prayerful action—can lead to marvelous results in a relatively short time. We hope that this example may serve to inspire your own efforts in advancing the Divine Plan, and we ardently pray for your blessings and confirmations.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES



Kenneth E. Bowers
Secretary