

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

October 19, 2018

To All Local Spiritual Assemblies, Regional Bahá'í Councils, and Regional Training Institute Boards

Dearly loved Friends,

Your loving and sacrificial contributions to the Lifeblood of the Cause are always accepted with the deepest appreciation and heartfelt joy. Every contribution our office receives is handled individually so an accurate record is created and the wishes of each and every contributor are carefully followed.

With increasing frequency, the friends are utilizing the Bahá'í Online Contributions System (OCS). This is a wonderful bounty. As we know, use of the OCS increases the frequency and regularity of contributing to all the Funds of the Faith. OCS also aids the work of the Treasurer's Office in organizing, validating and tracking each contribution in a timely manner.

Our office writes to remind the friends *not* to utilize any other online or third party websites to contribute to *any* of the Bahá'í funds. While they are expedient and some are well-intentioned, donations made through these third-party websites and organizations cannot be validated as donations made by enrolled Bahá'ís. The original contributors using these systems often remain anonymous and even when attributed by name, none of these sites requires a Bahá'í ID number to make a donation, even a donation earmarked for Bahá'í funds or institutions. Despite the wonderful generosity in these contributions, with no ability to confirm the Bahá'í identity of the donor, the Office of the Treasurer must return these contributions to their third-party sources.

We feel it is also important for the friends to note that some of the third-party organizations do not return declined contributions to the original contributor but, by policy, give the money to other non-profit organizations of their own choosing - often without the knowledge of the original contributor.

We will state for clarity, that when contributions made anonymously to any of the Bahá'í funds through third party contribution sites are returned, contributors may receive no notice that their contributions were returned or were given to other non-profits. We also note that while donors may receive a receipt for their charitable donations from the third party organization, this is not a receipt from the organization earmarked for the contribution. Consequently, a receipt from a third party organization which lists a Bahá'í institution or organization is not in fact a receipt from that Bahá'í entity.

The Office of the Treasurer is working diligently to have all references or links to Bahá'í institutions and organizations removed from these third party donation sites. This will take

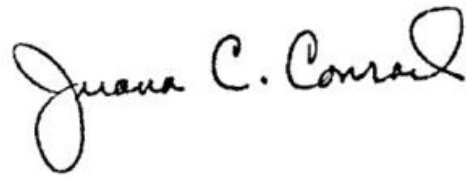
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time. We are sometimes unaware of these growing, third party donation sites until we receive an invalid contribution since these organizations are not required to contact or receive the permission of the National Center, the Office of the Treasurer, any Local Spiritual Assembly or Regional Council to utilize them as one of their many funding targets.

Finally, to avoid any problem with the acceptance and receipting of funds contributed on line to institutions of the Faith, the friends should do so only through the Bahá'í Online Contribution System at ocs.bahai.us/ocs and not through other companies that may be targeting social media or other websites.

With warmest Bahá'í greetings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juana C. Conrad". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Juana C. Conrad
Treasurer