

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Northeastern States

Connecticut • Maine • Massachusetts • New Hampshire • New Jersey • New York

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June 3, 2021

To the Northeast region for the Feast of Núr

Dear Friends,

Five years ago, the Universal House of Justice notified the Bahá'ís of the world that we were entering a period of special potency. It began with the commemoration of one hundred years since the first of the Tablets of the Divine Plan flowed from the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and will culminate in November 2021 with the Centenary of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In its 25 November 2020 message, the Universal House of Justice stated that this "will be a year for profound reflection on the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the strength of the Covenant of which He was the Centre."

What does this mean for us in the Northeast region? Known for its beautiful scenery and the majesty of its four seasons, the Northeast has something for everyone- mountains, hills, beaches, teeming cities, quaint villages, sprawling suburbs, and evergreen forests. Nothing, however, can compare to the blessings received through the relationship between our beloved Master and the Northeast. It was to our nine states that 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed the first of the Tablets of the Divine Plan. 'Abdu'l-Bahá landed in New York harbor on the morning of April 11, 1912 when He visited North America. He spent more time in the Northeast than in any other part of the country, not only visiting most of our states, but also returning two additional times from other places. He spent significant time at various locations in the region, consecrating the ground of spots that we hold dear such as Green Acre, the Wilhelm Properties, the Dublin Inn, and Lake Mohonk. Additionally, He planted seeds of the love of God among the population and educated and nurtured the heroes and heroines of the Northeast, our spiritual forebears whose influence affects us even today. Surely, you agree that when the friends in the region reflect profoundly on the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we think of Him with deep gratitude for the blessings that He bestowed upon us.

Our teachings inform us that a natural outgrowth of gratitude is a desire to express it. 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us that expressing gratitude in words is good but expressing it in action is better. In *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Bahá'u'lláh tells us to "yield thanks unto Him with joy and radiance... Arise ye, under all conditions, to render service to the Cause..."

To render service to the Cause- what does that mean when the Universal House of Justice is calling upon us to render service during this One Year Plan? And how can that assist our region to find meaningful ways to express our gratitude to the Master during this period of special potency?

Realizing that this year is meant to be viewed as a time for action in the field, for learning by doing, for "providing for advances within clusters everywhere," let us consider the following three main advances needing to be accomplished during this year:

- Every cluster needs to significantly increase its number of core activities and the participants in them, particularly drawing upon people from the wider community.

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- More people need to be involved in the educational process: people from the wider community entering the institute process in Book 1 study circles, more children in more children's classes, and more junior youth in more junior youth groups.
- Clusters that have begun the process of community-building in receptive neighborhoods need to increase their involvement in more neighborhoods and those that have not, need to start.

To accomplish the actions listed above, the following will be particularly helpful, and your help is needed:

- Cluster agencies can set audacious cluster goals for achieving those advances.
- Spiritual Assemblies and registered groups can set goals in line with the cluster goals for assisting to achieve them.
- Many individuals can become part of a nucleus – a proven method for advancing the growth process and something that, starting out with simple first steps, can easily set that process in motion.
- Individuals can have conversations with many more people, a constant flow of people, where in conversations of consequence they will inspire those involved to participate in activities such as devotionals, enter the institute process, and become protagonists in helping us build communities in their neighborhoods.
- Tutors, particularly, can take responsibility for having conversations leading to invitations to Book 1 study circles, especially with those from the wider community.
- Every cluster can look upon friends from the wider community as protagonists in our process and involve them as facilitators of the core activities.
- Each cluster can reach out to families and groups of families to involve all members - the children in children's classes, the junior youth in junior youth groups, the youth and adults in study circles, and the whole family in hosting their own devotional gatherings.
- Individuals, couples, or families can arise during this year to become homefront pioneers to neighborhoods where they are really needed.
- Youth can offer a Year of Service in the region. Those youth who cannot do this now can prepare to offer one when they can. Their families, institutions, and cluster agencies can help the youth to know about this process and prepare for it.
- When the friends decide to move to another location in the region, they can contact the institutions to ask where they are needed and consider making their decisions based on offering service.

To accomplish these things, what is indispensable? First, the friends will need to unite around a common vision of action. All of us will have to align ourselves with the example set by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in all that we do- how we seek to reach out to all people with love, build meaningful relationships, share the Word of God, and plant seeds of oneness in the hearts of all we meet. Our motivation can be our

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gratitude to the Master, our way of honoring His memory. Finally, all our efforts must be immersed in soul-stirring, heart-felt prayer that divine assistance may accompany all that we do.

If you are willing to step forward into the field of action, please consider the steps mentioned and take them. If institutions, communities, cluster agencies, nuclei, or individuals have questions about the actions mentioned above, please contact us so we can provide further information and help you get started. Let us know about your plans, what you are doing, how it is going. Meanwhile, please know that the gratitude and prayers of the Regional Bahá'í Council are with you for each action that you will take. United, together, the Northeast will make a meaningful contribution toward the advance of the Plan of God in this One Year Plan and offer a befitting tribute to the memory of the Servant of Bahá from our region.

With abiding love,

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Northeastern States

Marie McNair, Secretary

cc Counselor Farah Guchani-Rosenberg

Auxiliary Board members in the Northeast

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