
Norman Cluster Newsletter



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Encouragement from Your Cluster Institute Coordinator

Friends, now is the time to commit to doing the sequence of courses, whether it is to start it or just finish the ones you haven't done. These books increase your ability to teach effectively. The themes in the books will enhance your life.

Book 1 Focuses on connecting with your inner self through prayer and then your life after death, saying prayers with friends and having devotional meetings.

Book 2 Focuses on home visits where you discuss aspects of the Faith, drawing us all closer together.

Book 3 Focuses on children's classes and ways to connect with children, not just in class, but as parents, grandparents, and close adults.

Book 4 Focuses on the history of the Faith and storytelling.

Book 6 Presents an amazing and effective way to teach the Faith.

I hope you will all prayerfully consider taking this step and, if you are a tutor, consider which book you would like to tutor. I feel that, in this way, we will be ready for the new five-year plan.

—Kay Kirtley kay.kirtley@gmail.com (321-6526).

Treasurer's Report

Cliff reminded us of both the National Fund's serious shortfall and the previous month's "enthusiastic response" to an earlier appeal. In the same letter Dr. William Roberts, the national treasurer, explained the new tool that makes online contributions easy and automatic. Go to www.MyBahaiFund.us for that information. In our own progress for the last 13 Bahá'í months, we have exceeded our goal of national contributions. The last count of fund participation ran forty percent for both adults and children.

Bahá'ís Still Needed to Serve in the Holy Land

The Bahá'í World Centre needs individuals who possess training and experience to fill a number of positions that require administrative skills. Inquiries and offers of service may be submitted through bahai.bwc.org/service or by email to serve@bwc.org.

Amy Hamilton has graduated from OU and is now back home in Edmond, considering a year of service in Haifa before deciding on graduate school. Good job, Amy!



Request from The American Bahá'í**

The editors of *The American Bahá'í* are putting together a package of articles on engaging more and more effectively as individuals, institutions and communities/clusters in an ongoing process of study, consultation, action and reflection. We're eager to hear, if you live in the continental U.S., your responses to these questions:

- In your cluster, what are some things Bahá'ís have learned as a result of their actions to teach and build community? What roles have consultation, reflection and study of the guidance played in this learning?
- How are Bahá'ís and seekers using the Ruhi books as a way to prepare for specific paths of service aimed at making the neighborhood a better place?
- How is learning about growth being shared from cluster to cluster? For example, through resource people, visits to or from other clusters, youth projects, etc.?
- What actions are the friends taking at cluster reflections, Feasts, or other gatherings to make sure everyone's voice is heard? For example, all backgrounds, all ages, new and veteran believers alike?

Thank you as always for your help. Learning together is a wondrous thing, is it not?

Tom Mennillo, Associate Editor, *The American Bahá'í*, TMennillo@usbnc.org.

**Friends, if you don't wish to respond directly to *The American Bahá'í*, you may call, write, or email me, and I'll prepare your contribution and send it in for you. Kathleen Park knpark@yahoo.com 405-310-6512.

In Memoriam

Paul R Pettit of Richardson, TX, former member of the NSA Auxiliary Board passed away Wednesday, December 23, 2010, at 7:10 p.m. The graveside Bahá'í Service and burial took place Thursday, December 30, at Restland Memorial Park, in a small section named the Bahá'í Gardens.

+“Every religion which does not concern itself with Science is mere tradition, and that is not the essential. Therefore science, education and civilization are most important necessities for the full religious life.” (Abdu'l-Baha, *Abdu'l-Baha in London*, p. 28)

Progress Report

Several believers have volunteered to tutor area students once a week at the Bahá'í Center. We are waiting now for Norman Public Schools to register us as tutors. A flyer will go out to lower grades and through other channels at Noble mid- and high school. So far, tutors have offered help in math, science, history and English for upper grades as well as general subjects for the early grades. The plan is for the hours of 4 to 6 p.m. at the Center. We'll be more specific when the schools let us know their needs. If you'd like to volunteer, contact Kathleen Park.

LSA Feast Report Summary for Feast of Masa'il (Questions)

1. There was a suggestion to have the Chili cook-off as a fundraiser for the National fund.
2. The OU Baha'i Association held a Coffee & Unitea on campus on 12/3/10 with lots of food and fellowship.
3. We received a letter from a neighbor of the Center requesting the rear security light be turned off as it shines on their property. **Action:** Mashallah drafted a letter letting them know we are working on the problem. We must first move the storage building before we can access the light.
4. Kathleen Park has submitted some suggestions for service to the Assembly for tutoring classes for children and adults. **Action:** Mashallah let her know that the suggestions are good and she can proceed with them.
5. Kathy & Fuad requested assistance for sponsoring about five children in the Noble school system for some basic needs. **Action:** Kathy reported that the gifts of basic clothing needs were gratefully accepted.
6. We encourage additional prayers for the imprisoned Baha'is in Iran as requested by the UHJ.



Coming Up . . .



January 21 Community Speaker

April Ghassemi is a Missouri native, but has lived in many other places, including Iran for 13 years. She married an Iranian and had two sons. When the family moved to Iran, April's husband hid her passport for the next eight years. She had to decide how she would allow that to affect her life and concluded she'd make the best of the situation. "I believe I have," April said. "I am fluent in spoken Farsi and read on a basic level. My children are bilingual and multicultural. I was lucky enough to play basketball on a women's team [in Iran]."

April also taught English as a second language to people of all ages and different cultural backgrounds and had a group of friends from all over the world—Argentina, The Philippines, England, Scotland, Finland, India, and others as well. "Our group comprised a diverse set of beliefs and cultural norms, but the atmosphere of curiosity and acceptance was remarkable," April said.

She'll tell us all about it on Friday evening, Jan. 21, after the potluck dinner. Come and bring your friends!

Feast of Sultán, 7:30 p.m. Jan. 18 at the Center.