

City of the Covenant News

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Masá'il – Mulk, 159 B.E.

December 2009 – January 2010

Cluster Reflection Gathering Recap

On Sunday, December 6th, members of the New York City community met at the Bahá'í Center in downtown Manhattan for a Cluster Reflection Meeting, in preparation for the Expansion Phase of the 18th Intensive Program of Growth. The Expansion Phase began December 7th and ended December 20th.

The Area Teaching Committee (ATC) put together an uplifting program. It began, as always, with prayers and selected readings, followed by Bruce Grover, our beloved Auxiliary Board Member, who gave an inspiring summary of the journey we have taken and the learning we have acquired since New York City became an A-level Cluster.

The Institute Coordinators took the stage next and encouraged all friends to find ways to get involved with core activities, which are multiplying in every neighborhood!

Next, the ATC gave a presentation on the plans for the Expansion Phase, with a focus on Home Visits. They then put on a skit to demonstrate what a Home Visit or Teaching Day might look like in any given neighborhood during the expansion.

Finally, each neighborhood finalized its plans for the Expansion Phase in break-out sessions.

Over 150 home visits were scheduled for the Expansion Phase. With such an electrifying start, it can only have been a resounding success!

How heartening to know that as we engage our friends in spiritual conversations and share the Faith with them, countless other friends throughout the city are doing the very same thing.

As our friends and neighbors prepared for the festivities celebrating the birth of Christ, we Bahá'ís, also celebrated – by spreading the Healing and Living Words of Baha'u'lláh. Through teaching, we can hasten the fulfillment of Christ's promise, that "His Kingdom come, His Will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven", as prescribed by Baha'u'lláh.

The words of 'Abdu'l-Bahà on December 5th, 1912, as He set sail from Manhattan, are all the more meaningful today, as the world has witnessed so many unimaginable and horrific wars since that day:

But if man lives up to these divine commandments, this world of earth shall be transformed into the world of heaven, and this material sphere shall be converted into a paradise of glory. It is my hope that you may become successful in this high calling so that like brilliant lamps you may cast light upon the world of humanity and quicken and stir the body of existence like unto a spirit of life. This is eternal glory. This is everlasting felicity. This is immortal life. This is heavenly attainment. This is being created in the image and likeness of God. And unto this I call you, praying to God to strengthen and bless you.

Heartfelt thanks to all those who arose to teach. To those who couldn't participate directly, thanks for praying for the teachers' success.

Next up were the Consolidation Phase planning meetings, from December 21st to January 3rd. It's always a good time to get involved with spreading the word about Baha'u'lláh!

The City of the Covenant News is a bi-monthly newsletter for and about the Bahá'ís of the New York City area, published by the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the City of New York. Managing Editor: Arvid Nelson, arvid@rexford.net. LSA Liaison: Paula Absolon.

☽ A Change of the Guard ☽

Kambiz Hakim resigned from his position on the LSA in November. Thank you, Kambiz, for your 28 years of dedicated, selfless service. We wish you the very best, and we miss you sorely! But every ending is a new beginning. Lincoln Resauladin was elected in his place in a special by-election on December 14th. Congratulations, Lincoln!

Kambiz and Lincoln are both pillars of the Queens community, loving fathers, and tireless advocates of the healing Message of Baha'u'llah. City of the Covenant News's elite team of reporters caught up with Lincoln for a quick Q&A on what serving the Cause means to him.

What was going through your head when you found out you'd been elected?

I was very surprised and humbled at the same time upon hearing my name called as the newly elected member of our beloved Local Spiritual Assembly. After the announcement, I was lovingly told we'd be meeting in two days. I knew I had to "un-numb" myself and steady my nerves by that time – wow! It's been a few weeks now, and I'm still in a mild daze. With Baha'u'llah's help and the prayers of our wonderful community, I will lovingly serve with all my heart and soul.

What are you most looking forward to in serving on the LSA?

What is your biggest concern?

It delights me to see how our institutions have grown and become pillars of edification and guidance, the foundation upon which our community is nourished. I have seen our Auxiliary Boards, Local Spiritual Assembly and Area Teaching Committee become synchronized. As a result, our teaching activities blossomed and took on a higher level of intensity. Friends in all five boroughs are arising to the call of spreading the fragrances of Baha'u'llah's teachings. I have seen our intensive programs of growth energizing and transforming our teaching efforts, resulting in an increase of firesides, devotional gatherings, study circles and children's classes. I am most looking forward to playing a humble supporting role in advancing the cause of Baha'u'llah in our community and helping to continue this exciting trend of growth.

How do you find time to serve the Faith with your busy work and family schedule?

Ha! Our family has learned the Baha'i Faith is the pivot around which our lives revolve. We have also learned from



Lincoln Resauladin was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly on December 14th, 2009. Congratulations!



A children's class at the Resauladin household.

our teachings that the saints and souls of bygone ages would love to return and serve their Lord in this day. Busy? I think not. If I had to choose between going to the movies and host children classes on Sundays I will definitely want to see those ten little radiant faces chanting prayers. I thank my dear wife Afrose and the teachers for also devoting their time and lovingly care for the little angels.

Busy? A little, I think!

Postcards from Haifa

Pilgrimage to Haifa, the port city in Israel where the holiest places of the Bahá'í Faith are found, is one of the most profound journeys a person can take in this life. All Bahá'ís in good standing may partake of this blessing, which spans nine days and includes guided visits to the Holy Shrines and other important sites in the history of the Faith.

Anissa Moeini and Clyde Herring went on pilgrimage last year and were happy to share their experiences with City of the Covenant News. Not surprisingly, when asked what the highlight of the experience was for her, Anissa said,

“The second day of pilgrimage, when we went to Bahjí for the first time.” The Mansion of Bahjí is where Baha'u'lláh passed away in 1892. It is the site of His shrine, the holiest place on Earth.

“The most meaningful part of the pilgrimage was seeing the holy sites,” Clyde said. “Holy places’, the Master assures us, ‘are centers of the outpouring of Divine grace.’ Upon entering these illumined sites associated with the martyrs and holy souls my heart was moved.”

“So much has happened in the Bahá'í world and in my life since my first pilgrimage twenty years ago,” Clyde said. “I’m forever grateful to Baha'u'lláh for enabling me to recognize His Cause and for the bounty of being able to complete a second pilgrimage. I’ve also gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of the station, service and resourcefulness of Abdu'l-Baha, the Greatest Holy Leaf, and of Shoghi Efendi.”

Both Clyde and Anissa described powerful feelings of spiritual well-being when in the presence of the shrines.

“I was overwhelmed with emotion when I walked into the shrines for the first time. It’s such a bounty to be able to pray in them, they are undeniably special places. You feel it as soon as you enter,” Anissa said.

“I wasn’t surprised, yet I’m always amazed at the generosity of spirit, love and unity of the fellow pilgrims,” Clyde said. “We ate, prayed, sang, laughed, cried and consulted on the progress of the Five Year Plan together. The personal welcome the members of the Universal House of Justice and the Continental Board of Counselors gave us left me awestruck. Several of them inquired about the progress of the five year plan in the City of the Covenant and asked me



Anissa, second from the right, with other pilgrims in Haifa.



The Shrine of the Báb, with the port of Haifa in the distance.

to convey their love and prayers to the friends.”

As for advice for those thinking on going on pilgrimage, Anissa said,

“Take a journal with you and write down your experiences each day. It’s so nice once some time has passed, and you’re back to your hectic life, to remember how you felt and regain that perspective.”

Clyde’s advice for would-be pilgrims is simple.

“Apply for pilgrimage immediately, eat lots of fruits and vegetables and to exercise daily. ‘Cause climbing God’s Holy Mountain isn’t for the faint of heart!” she said.

Photos by Anissa Moeini

☪ Bahá'í Burial and the Necessity of Writing a Will ☪

Part of a continuing series on guidance for the end of one's life

How is one's estate to be divided, and with what priorities? *(continued)*

Should the deceased leave no offspring, their share shall revert to the House of Justice, to be expended by the Trustees of the All-Merciful on the orphaned and widowed, and on whatsoever will bring benefit to the generality of the people, that all may give thanks unto their Lord, the All-Gracious, the Pardoner.

Should the deceased leave offspring, but none of the other categories of heirs that have been specified in the Book, they shall receive two thirds of the inheritance and the remaining third shall revert to the House of Justice. Such is the command which hath been given, in majesty and glory, by Him Who is the All-Possessing, the Most High.

If the deceased should leave none of the specified heirs, but have among his relatives nephews and nieces, whether on his brother's or his sister's side, two thirds of the inheritance shall pass to them; or, lacking these, to his uncles and aunts on both his father's and his mother's side, and after them to their sons and daughters. The remaining third of the inheritance shall, in any case, revert to the Seat of Justice. Thus hath it been laid down in the Book by Him Who ruleth over all men.

Should the deceased be survived by none of those whose names have been recorded by the Pen of the Most High, his estate shall, in its entirety, revert to the aforementioned Seat that it may be expended on that which is prescribed by God. He, verily, is the Ordainer, the Omnipotent.

We have assigned the residence and personal clothing of the deceased to the male, not female, offspring, nor to the other heirs. He, verily, is the Munificent, the All-Bountiful.

Should the son of the deceased have passed away in the days of his father and have left children, they will inherit their father's share, as prescribed in the Book of God. Divide ye their share amongst them with perfect justice. Thus have the billows of the Ocean of Utterance surged, casting forth the pearls of the laws decreed by the Lord of all mankind.

If the deceased should leave children who are under age, their share of the inheritance must be entrusted to a reliable individual, or to a company, that it may be invested on their behalf in trade and business until they come of age.

The trustee should be assigned a due share of the profit that hath accrued to it from being thus employed.

Division of the estate should take place only after the Huququ'lláh hath been paid, any debts have been settled, the expenses of the funeral and burial defrayed, and such provision made that the deceased may be carried to his resting-place with dignity and honor.

Thus hath it been ordained by Him Who is Lord of the beginning and the end. (*Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 26*)

What should be engraved on the burial rings for men and women?

The inscription on these rings should read, for men: "Unto God belongeth all that is in the heavens and on the earth and whatsoever is between them, and He, in truth, hath knowledge of all things"; and for women: "Unto God belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is between them, and He, in truth, is potent over all things". These are the verses that were revealed aforetime, but lo, the Point of the Bayan now calleth out, exclaiming, "O Best-Beloved of the worlds! Reveal Thou in their stead such words as will waft the fragrance of Thy gracious favours over all mankind. We have announced unto everyone that one single word from Thee excelleth all that hath been sent down in the Bayan. Thou, indeed, hast power to do what pleaseth Thee. Deprive not Thy servants of the overflowing bounties of the ocean of Thy mercy! Thou, in truth, art He Whose grace is infinite."

Behold, We have hearkened to His call, and now fulfill His wish. He, verily, is the Best-Beloved, the Answerer of prayers. If the following verse, which hath at this moment been sent down by God, be engraved upon the burial-rings of both men and women, it shall be better for them; We, of a certainty, are the Supreme Ordainer: "I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Thus doth the Lord single out whomsoever He desireth for a bounty from His presence. He is, in very truth, the God of might and power. (*Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 64, paragraph*)

Children & Junior Youth Classes

Several classes are struggling due to a lack of teachers. If you have been trained in Rubi Book 3 and would like to assist a class in your neighborhood, whether you have prior experience or not, even on a temporary or stand-by basis, please contact Monette Van Lith at 646-717 3844. Turn your desire to serve into action!

Brooklyn:

Children's Class
Day/Time: Sundays, 10 AM
Location: Bed-Sty
Contact: Ivy McSweeney, 718-662-4930,
imcsweeney@hotmail.com

Animator's Junior Youth Group – Breezes of Confirmation
Day/Time: Sundays, 3 PM
Location: Flatbush
Contact: Samir Ashraf, 201-704-8059,
and Stephany Martinez 413-835-1439

On hold:

Children's Class and Animator's Junior Youth Group (ages 4 – 17)
Day/Time: Sundays at 4 PM
Location: Caton Ave., Flatbush
Contact: Riaz Parsiani, 503-701-7409, riaz9@yahoo.com,
and Saman Farid, 646-725-9923, samanfarid@gmail.com

Queens:

Children's Class – (ages 3 – 9)
Day/Time: Sundays, 11 AM – 1 PM
Location: 111-38 125th St., South Ozone Park
Contact: Lincoln Resauladin, 646-523-5333

On hold:

Children's Class – (ages 4-11, all non-Bahá'í)
Day/Time: Mondays late afternoon
Location: The Merino's home, Elmhurst, Queens
Teacher: Helen Merino. At least *one* experienced teacher is needed to start the class up again.
Contact: 646-619-7027

Manhattan:

Animator's Junior Youth Group
Location: Upper West Side
Contact: Adib Birkland, 651-216-1055

Children's Class
Day/Time: Sundays, 2 PM
Location: East Harlem (111th Street)
Contact: Paula Absolon, 917-576-5487, absolonp@yahoo.com

Manhattan cont'd:

Children's Class – CTC Group 1 (ages 4 – 6)
Day/Time: Saturdays, 2 PM
Location: Bahá'í Center
Contact: Mehr, 646-217-9568

Children's Class – CTC Group 2 (ages 7 – 11)
Day/Time: Saturdays, 2 PM
(on hiatus during the summer)
Location: Bahá'í Center
Contact: Mehr, 646-217-9568

Children's Classes
Day/Time: Weekly
Location: Washington Heights
Contact: Berglind, 651-216-1056, berglindhb@gmail.com,
and Cecily David, 310-614-6090, cecilydavid@gmail.com

Animator's Junior Youth Group
Day/Time: Sundays, 2 PM
Location: East Harlem (111th Street)
Contact: Paula Absolon, 917-576-5487, absolonp@yahoo.com

Animator's Junior Youth Group – Glimmerings of Hope
Day/Time: Friday evenings
Location: Upper West Side
Contact: Sonya Shadravan, 917-721-5149
and Milly Farid, 646-884-0045

Staten Island:

Children's Class (ages 5 – 11)
Day/Time: Sundays, 2 PM
Location: Paul Kinney and Andrea Temple's home
Eme Ekpe-Enyosiobi, eket@verizon.net

Currently there are no children's classes in the Bronx.

The information provided is subject to change. Please contact the children's class coordinator if you'd like to serve as an assistant to an existing class or start a new children's class in your neighborhood.

Among the greatest of all services that
can possibly be rendered by man to
Almighty God is the education and train-
ing of children.

– Abdu'l-Baha

Announcements!

Events @ The Center

53 East 11th St., 212-674-8998

Worship Service

Sundays at 11 AM. The theme for the first Sunday of the month is “health and healing”. The second Sunday of the month is a Latin devotional with prayers and singing in Spanish and English, as well as food and fellowship. Volunteer speakers and musicians, please contact the Office of the Secretary at secretariat@bahainyc.org, 212-674-8998.

Urban Juke Joint: A Monthly Open Mic

For readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and hearers! The last Friday of every month, 8 PM. Contact: Kenneth Ray, 917-331-9189

Jazz @ the NYC Bahá'í Center

Tuesdays, 8 – 9:30 PM

\$15, \$10 for students

Tickets sold at the door, or call 212-222-5159 for reservations and information.

www.bahainyc.org/jazz.html

- Jan. 12: Flautist Claudia Hayden
- Jan. 19: Bassist Santi Debriano's Quartet
- Jan 26: Mike Longo's 17-piece Big Band “The NY State of the Art Jazz Ensemble” with vocalist Miss Hilary Gardner

Devotionals and Classes!

Lots of new classes are being planned during this cycle of growth. Please ask during the consultative portion of your neighborhood Feast about how you can get involved!

Calling all teachers!

A children's class in Elmhurst, Queens, is on hold for lack of an additional experienced teacher. If you can help get this terrific class started again, please call Helen Merino at 646-619-7027.

Contact your Institute coordinators for more information –

Join or start a study circle: Carmel Irandoust,
carmel.irandoust@gmail.com

Cluster Institute Coordinator: Jessica Koehs,
jkoehs@gmail.com, 906-250-9099

Junior Youth Coordinator: Samir Ashraf,
ashr.samir@gmail.com, 201-704-8059

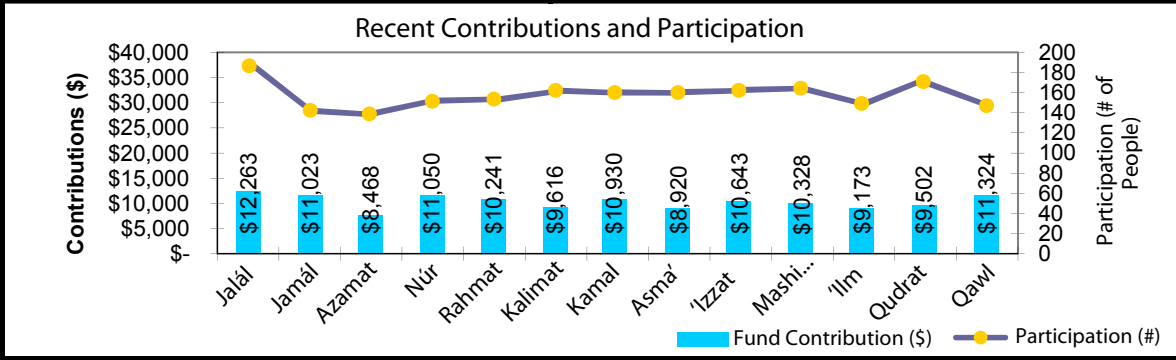
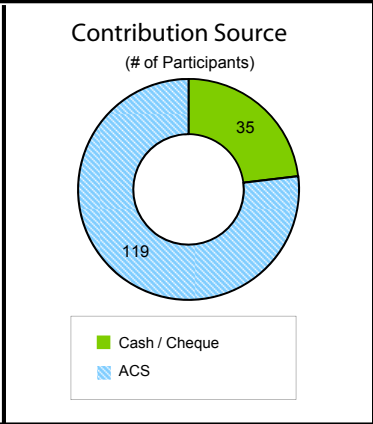
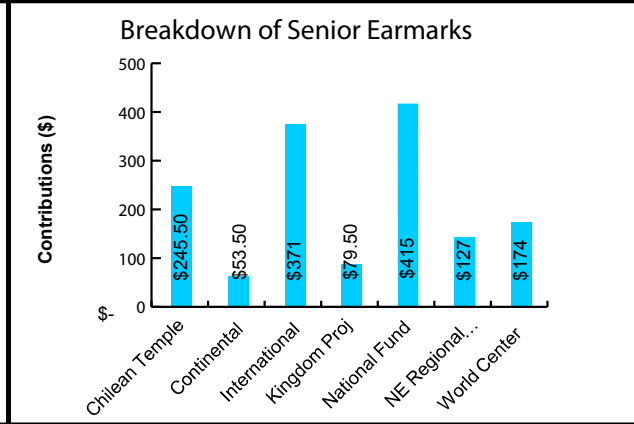
Children's Class Coordinator: Monette Van Lith,
monettevanlith@yahoo.com, 646-717-3844

Area Teaching Committee: Neika Masroori,
grownyc@gmail.com

FUND REPORT

Fund Report for the Month of Qawl/Speech (Nov 23 - Dec 11)

Summary		
Contributions		
Local	\$	9,858.50
Local Contributions		9,858.50
Senior Funds Earmarks	\$	1,465.50
Total	\$	11,324.00
Total Participation		154 People



Strive, therefore, to create love in the hearts in order that they may become glowing and radiant. When that love is shining, it will permeate other hearts even as this electric light illumines its surroundings. When the love of God is established, everything else will be realized. This is the true foundation of all economics. Reflect upon it.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Brooklyn has thrown down the gauntlet to its borough-der and sister communities!

The dear souls of Kings County have pledged to raise \$12,000 by Ridvan to go towards both the National Fund and expenses for the NYC Baha’i Center!

If any other borough would like to arise to the challenge, we will be happy to track your progress. Just let the Treasury know your goal and be sure to mark your contributions accordingly.

Please remember to make all checks payable to the "Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of New York" or "New York City Baha'i Fund".