

## North Carolina youth poised to serve and learn

From August 15-17 in Cary, North Carolina 167 youth came together in the third of four regional youth gatherings convened by the [Regional Bahá'í Council of the Atlantic States](#).

The Baha'i youth did a fantastic job in reaching out to their friends as participation from the greater community was at 37%. The youth represented many clusters located from the coast to the mountains! The age range of participants was from 15-30 but the participants were primarily from the younger age groups – 40% were 15-17 years old and another 40% were 18-25 years old.



*North Carolina youth gathering participants*

The purpose of the North Carolina gathering continued with a focus on the creation of a space for youth to engage in conversation and study of themes which included the positive effect of service on the younger generation, how society impacts junior youth, and how the spiritual empowerment program can provide the junior youth with the abilities to grow spiritually and to contribute to their communities and to society.

It was insightful to learn how the youths' enthusiasm can influence their conversations as they reached out to their friends to join in the youth movement. One high school aged youth from Cary invited four of her friends from the community to participate. They knew a little about the Faith and the youth conference materials and happily accepted the invitation. Two of these friends were so interested and enthused about the upcoming gathering that they reached out and each invited one friend to join them for the weekend. These two young women had not heard about the Faith nor the gathering but with open hearts and minds accepted the invitation. It was as though there was a spiritual infusion amongst this group of friends. This group of young women were deeply influenced and enthused through their participation in the gathering. During the small group planning session they immediately made plans to begin a Book 1 intensive study circle with the intension of taking Book 5 to begin service as animators. They planned to scout two areas for two potential junior youth groups.

The group from Carrboro identified clear plans for the next few months including starting a weekly Book 1 study circle, starting a junior youth group and children's class in the Royal Park neighborhood, and learn how to outreach to local youth to join their circle and activities.

They plan to outreach to the youth in the cluster's upcoming expansion phase.

Towards the last day each group of youth from geographic areas presented their plans with much clarity. Some groups thoughtfully brought in the arts to enhance their group's focus.



*Some participants from around the Triangle cluster*