

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Atlantic States

*Delaware · District of Columbia · Kentucky · Maryland · North Carolina
Tennessee · Virginia · West Virginia*

3 Mashíyyat 172 B.E.
September 29, 2015

To: Friends gathered in the Unit Conventions in the Atlantic Region

Dearly loved friends,

The Regional Council sends each of you its warmest greetings and highest hopes for an uplifting and informative Unit Convention.

The Council wanted to share some wonderful news about the advancement of the region over the past several months; and, a request for your thoughtful consultation and consideration.

The region is blessed with strong advances on numerous fronts. In cluster after cluster we have seen the friends respond to the call for increasing the devotional character within their communities and clusters. Over the past ten months there has been a marked increase of the number of devotional meetings from 243 to 302 with a corresponding increase in the participants from 1,841 to 2,452 and in the friends of the Faith from 637 to 664. This process alone can and has attracted abundant blessings as we call upon the spiritual world to assist us in our undertakings. The Universal House of Justice has lovingly guided us on this sacred process: *In diverse settings...groups of believer are uniting with others in prayer, turning their hearts in supplication to their Maker, and calling to their aid those spiritual forces upon which the efficacy of their individual and collective efforts depends.*

The numbers of youth and young adults who are engaged in the youth movement have increased during this time period as well. We now have a total of 783 in the process of being mobilized into the field of service: 323 engaged in a meaningful conversation, 222 engaged in the institute process, 166 holding a core activity, and 72 accompanying others in their path of service. Many of these youth participated in one of four summer youth gatherings which helped to provide an environment where they could strengthen their bonds of friendship and their commitment to service in their neighborhood/cluster. At least 45% of these youth are friends of the Faith.

Through these two processes - an increase in the devotional character of our communities and clusters and an increase in the number of youth engaged in the youth movement - we have seen a corresponding increase in the generality of the number of friends who are engaged in the Plan. 5,068 participants are now engaged in a devotional meeting, children's class, junior youth group or study circle. Many additional friends are engaged in teaching through their personal initiatives through firesides and home visits. Every person's effort has contributed towards the rising spirit of service and sacrifice in the region.

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Dear friends, we have a little less than seven months before the end of this Five Year Plan. It has been a bounty and privilege to serve and learn together with you. As all the friends know, there is one goal that was given to us from the Universal House of Justice - to establish 5,000 programs of growth throughout the world. The Atlantic Region's contribution towards this goal is to have 105 programs of growth established. We are delighted to share that we now have 87 programs of growth. Throughout the region we have been blessed with dozens of friends who have arisen to serve as mobile tutors and resources to these goal clusters. Some friends, including entire families, have arisen to homefront pioneer.

We have included a list of clusters where work is underway to help us achieve our goal of 105 programs of growth. Maps are also included for your reference. The maps can be accessed at www.rbcatlantic.org.

We kindly ask the friends gathered in the Convention today to consult on how the friends can arise to help win the goals of the Plan. We have also included an excerpt from the guidance which may assist your consultation. All friends who are inspired and wish to step forward and assist us with the remaining goals please contact the Regional Council at secretariat@rbcatlantic.org or call 919-349-7913.

We are honored and blessed by your continued support and services to the region. We pray that each of you will be swiftly and generously aided in your careful considerations and commitments to service.

With tender and loving affection,
REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL of the ATLANTIC STATES

cc: Counsellor Anita Williams
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States