

**REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL
OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE MIDWESTERN STATES
OF INDIANA, MICHIGAN AND OHIO**

Bahá'í

February 12, 2020/ 6 Mulk (Dominion) 176 B.E.

To the followers of the Blessed Beauty in the Midwestern Region

Dearest Friends,

As we approach the final year of the Five Year Plan, the Council is encouraged by progress made by communities around the region. Energized by unprecedented celebrations of the Bicentenary of the Báb, Bahá'ís around the region have arisen to a new level of spiritual activity.

The Franklin County (Columbus) Cluster reached a new level of community building with more than 100 core activities attended by hundreds of participants, giving our region its first 3rd Milestone cluster. The Flint/Davison cluster passed the second milestone by hosting 20 core activities attended by more than one hundred participants. With eight junior youth groups attended by 58 participants, 53 of whom are friends of the Faith, the cluster has the strongest junior youth program in the region. Teaching conferences planned by Area Teaching Committees and Assemblies, which have been held in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Indianapolis, Indiana; Kettering and Columbus, Ohio have led to a record number of new devotional meetings, where souls inhale the sweet fragrances of the Abhá Beauty.

Our region's collective capacity to move populations closer to Bahá'u'lláh's vision has never been greater, with strong community-building efforts in at least a dozen neighborhoods that have successfully welcomed dozens of new youth and adults as protagonists into the Training Institute's world-transforming courses. All of these developments provide a strong, stable foundation for launching the final year of the Plan.

In January of this year, the seven North American Counselors gathered with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Canada and the United States, along with representatives of Council and Training Institutes of all 20 North American Regions, to unveil a bold and ambitious strategy to achieve the remaining goals of the Five Year Plan.

The basic elements of this strategy are for groups of friends in clusters everywhere in the continent to commit themselves to systematic action within the framework of the Plan. In the Midwest region, every cluster and every neighborhood where two or three Bahá'ís reside is called upon to form a nucleus of friends who engage in systematic outreach to move the population where they reside closer to Bahá'u'lláh. These teams, operating in a learning mode, will be supported by assistants to the Auxiliary Board and capable tutors as they develop their skills in engaging in elevated conversations that attract new friends to become protagonists in this world-transforming movement. In this region, our goal is to double the number of core activities overall, while advancing 34 new clusters to the second milestone and four new clusters to the third milestone. This will give our region a total of 42 intensive programs of growth, thus

Indiana Michigan Ohio
616 610 2504 Telephone secretary@rbcmws.org Email
5847 Sage River Ct. SW Wyoming, Michigan, 49418

fulfilling our region's commitment towards the goal of 750 intensive programs of growth on the North American Continent.

Achieving this goal will require an unparalleled level of consecrated activity. Believers everywhere will have to arise to new heights of generosity where "teaching becomes a way of life." The level of consecration will require new levels of "being and doing."

To launch this historic effort, the Regional Council in collaboration with the Auxiliary Board and Institute Coordinators are planning a region-wide trip to the House of Worship, the completion of which marked the "inception of the Kingdom of God on earth." The dates have been set for the weekend of April 4th and 5th. The Council hopes that Assemblies in the five reservoir clusters will join their sister Assemblies in nearby clusters to plan transportation for this pilgrimage to the Mother Temple of the West. The program planned by the Regional Council will start at 12:30 p.m. on April 4th and will conclude with the House of Worship service that starts at 12:30 pm on April 5. A special program for youth ages 15 to 30 will be part of the weekend launch activities.

Groups of friends who are committed to systematically working and learning together about the process of community building are encouraged to deepen together in preparation for the gathering, travel together, and continue the journey of becoming an expanding nucleus in the community-building process after the gathering.

For those who are not able to participate in this historic pilgrimage, materials will be provided for local study, reflection and planning. In due course, sub-regional teaching conferences being planned will create opportunities for all to participate and contribute their share to achieving the goals of the Plan.

The Council prays for universal participation in the herculean endeavor and the overwhelming success of the Plan.

"O Lord increase my astonishment at Thee." -

With loving regards,

Regional Bahá'í Council of the Midwestern States
David Douglas, Secretary

Indiana Michigan Ohio
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