

22 April 2019

To the believers in British Columbia

Dearly cherished friends,

Our hearts are filled with awe and wonder at the potent forces at work during this incredible Bicentennial period. The recently released Ridván message states that, 'The accelerated development of the Bahá'í community, its rising capacity, and its ability to draw on the energies of more of its members emerge vividly from a summary of its recent global attainments.'¹

You may recall that at the start of the current Five Year Plan, in April of 2016, the Regional Bahá'í Council wrote to all the Local Spiritual Assemblies in British Columbia regarding the immense exertions required from every believer of Bahá'u'lláh to meet the demands of the hour and the outpouring of material means necessary to make possible such a significant advance in the process of entry by troops. We would like to take this opportunity to reflect back to the community some of the advances that have been made in our region thus far and encourage every lover of the Blessed Beauty to support the teaching work through their personal exertion and or, through contributions to the Funds of the Faith.

Since late 2016, and with the release of unit one of the Ruhi Institute's book 10, our training institute has been propelled to further intensify its efforts to strengthen the process of human resource development with the aim of raising "communities whose habit of thought and action are rooted in Bahá'u'lláh's revelation."² As such, a regional effort was launched to strengthen collective capacity to accompany youth who represent "a most responsive element of every receptive population"³ in arising to serve their younger peers, building momentum towards an irrepressible movement.

Below is a snapshot of some of the advances that have been made by an increasing army of youth who have arisen to serve in the vanguard of this process. To keep the analysis concise, we provide you with some key indicators of growth during the past three years:

1. Youth in conversation regarding the Faith and its community building activities

2016	2019	Net increase	
1133	1622	489	43%

2. Youth studying the training institute materials

2016	2019	Net increase	
475	1006	531	112%

3. Youth sustaining core activities

2016	2019	Net increase	
150	205	55	37%

4. Youth accompanying others and/or coordinating activities

2016	2019	Net increase	
36	90	54	150%

¹ Universal House of Justice Ridván message of 2019

² Universal House of Justice message of 29 December 2015 to the Continental Boards of Counsellors

³ Ibid.

It is important to note that young and old, veteran and new believers have all contributed to the growth processes; however, we are witnessing significant advances in centers of intense focus and activity in neighbourhoods and villages where often one or several youth are offering a period of dedicated service. Some of these youth, who are labouring in 51 neighbourhoods in 19 clusters, are being supported by the Funds of the Faith. The minimal support that these friends receive enables them to serve full-time. Currently, of the 205 youth who are sustaining core activities, 24 (12%) are receiving financial support. With plans to intensify efforts, it is envisioned that this number will increase to 36.

It is clear from the indicators above that many advances have been made during this plan. However, we have not been able to sustain or increase the material means necessary to support such growth and our contributions to the national and global growth process have actually declined year over year during the same period. Below is a snapshot of contributions received from British Columbia:

Year	Total Contributions from BC
2015-2016	\$2,342,450.00
2016-2017	\$1,970,700.00
2017-2018	\$1,949,994.00

Year	Contributions to the Deputization Fund
2015-2016	\$99,930.79
2016-2017	\$81,277.87
2017-2018	\$79,601.31

The current annual cost of supporting 24 youth requiring financial support is \$459,096. Supporting 36 youth will likely require \$688,644. We know from our contribution history in the previous plan, that our region has the capacity to contribute more than the current inflow indicates. Furthermore, as activities intensify and numbers grow larger, the provision of adequate space becomes crucial and it becomes necessary to lease or purchase property that will ensure community building processes continue to grow and are not hindered by lack of financial means.

With this in mind, we propose the following two goals:

1. An overall contribution goal of \$3.5 million for the current fiscal year. We have achieved this amount in the past and the Bahá'í Council is confident that the friends will strive to reach this level once again. What portion of this goal will your community and Assembly adopt?
2. A Deputization Fund goal of \$1,377,288 - a subset of the overall goal mentioned above. This is to ensure that support of youth offering full time service to the end of the current plan can be met by contributions within our region. This amount when broken down to units of \$50 comes to 13,733 units per year. How many units can you, as an individual, as families, as neighbourhoods, or as communities, pledge to support?

“The prospects for advancing this spiritual enterprise are made the more thrilling by the approach of the bicentenary of the Birth of the Báb. Like the bicentenary that preceded it, this anniversary is a moment incalculably precious.”⁴ In its Ridván message of 2018, the House of Justice expressed the hope that the same all-consuming, all surpassing love that spurred the Dawn-breakers would inspire us to great deeds. How will each of us respond to this hope?

We request that you share your goals and pledges with the Regional Bahá'í Council as early as possible, but by no later than the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

The Regional Bahá'í Council of British Columbia

cc Counsellor Borna Nouredin & Auxiliary Board Members
 National Spiritual Assembly of Canada
 Institute Board of British Columbia & Yukon
 All Regional & Cluster Agencies

⁴ Universal House of Justice Ridván message of 2019