

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C., celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith

Washington D.C., October 8, 2017 — The Bahá'í community of Washington, D.C., will mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, on Oct. 22, 2017, with a city-wide celebration focused on upholding the principle of the oneness of humanity.

The program – highlighting the themes of race unity and the transformative power of the Bahá'í Faith – will take place from **3:30 to 5 p.m. at the Woodrow Wilson High School Auditorium, [3950 Chesapeake Street NW](#)**. A reception will follow from 5 to 6 p.m. Inspired by the rich cultural heritage of Washington, D.C., the celebration will feature presentations and artistic performances in both English and Spanish. It will also pay tribute to the Bahá'í Faith's more than 100-year history in D.C. and the United States. The public is invited to attend.

Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), whose name means “The Glory of God,” is considered by Bahá'ís to be the Divine Educator for this age. In 1863, He announced that He was the Bearer of a new revelation from God. In response, the Persian and Ottoman empires condemned Him to 40 years of imprisonment and exile. His teachings have spread around the world, forming the basis of a process of social transformation and community building that is unique in its global scope and diversity of participants.

Throughout Washington, D.C., nearly 1,000 people from all belief backgrounds participate in more than 100 activities organized by the local Bahá'í community. Neighborhood children's class teachers help develop virtues and create foundations for lifelong material and spiritual excellence. Adults and high school youth mentor middle schoolers in groups that assist them in discovering their own talents and serving others. Adults attend small-group sessions to study Bahá'u'lláh's writings and cultivate the skills, attitudes and qualities needed to uplift their communities. Participants of all ages gather to pray and reflect, connecting with their innermost desires for a better world.

Week after week, Bahá'ís and others advancing these activities meet in homes and public places to have spiritual conversations – breaking barriers of class, race and culture. Through these gatherings, Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the oneness of humanity is proving an antidote to the racial prejudice and materialism corroding American society.

“Now more than ever, we need positive models of social change that integrate diverse perspectives and bring people together rather than divide them,” said Dr. Jennifer Chapman, chairperson of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C. “This vision of



unity in diversity is what we will be celebrating as we commemorate the bicentenary of Bahá'u'lláh's birth."

Bahá'í communities across the United States will join the more than 5 million Bahá'ís worldwide to honor the occasion. To learn more, visit <https://www.dcbahai.org> and <https://www.bahai.us>.

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About the Bahá'í Community of Washington, D.C.

The [Bahá'í community of Washington, D.C.](#) strives to put the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith into practice through active community building. It welcomes people of all backgrounds to Sunday morning programs, devotional gatherings, children's classes, study groups and junior youth empowerment programs. Through these local endeavors, the D.C. Bahá'í community creates environments where diversity is celebrated and young people are inspired to practice virtues and render service to others.

The Bahá'ís of D.C. have a strong legacy of working to build racial unity. In 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Son of Bahá'u'lláh, spoke about interracial harmony at Howard University's Rankin Chapel, marking one of the earliest racially integrated gatherings in the city. Prominent African-American Bahá'ís spent formative years in D.C., including Alain Locke, "the dean" of the Harlem Renaissance; Louis Gregory, a Howard-educated attorney; Robert Turner, the first African-American Bahá'í; and Helen Elsie Austin, a U.S. foreign service officer and the first African-American woman to serve as assistant attorney general in Ohio.

Now celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bahá'ís of Washington, D.C., are even more inspired to continue advancing His vision: "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

About the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'u'lláh is considered by millions around the world as the Divine Educator for this age, Whose coming was foretold by all of the Divine Messengers of the past. In His writings, Bahá'u'lláh outlines a framework for the development of a global civilization centered around the recognition of the oneness of humanity, offering a compelling vision of a future world defined by justice, peace and prosperity.

Bahá'u'lláh teaches that the successive Founders of the world's religions – among them Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus Christ and Muhammad – are Manifestations of God, Who each brought a message suited to the age and place in which it was revealed. In essence, the religion of God is one and is progressively unfolding. The international Bahá'í community, numbering more than 5 million, is quite possibly the most diverse organized body of people on the planet. In fewer than 200 years, it has become a global faith present in every country in the world with adherents from virtually every national and religious background, including about 2,100 indigenous tribes, races and ethnic groups.