

# WORLD NEWS

## Bahá'í International News Service

Extracts from reports received at the Bahá'í World Centre

### Spirit Run

Running with faith for Bahá'u'lláh and race unity across the United States

After three months and 3,000 miles of sore feet, tired legs, prayers and spiritual confirmations, the Spirit Run has crossed the finish line in New York. The nine runners, each of different ethnic background and ranging in age from 13 to 24, plus three vans of supporters, crossed the northern part of the United States from Seattle to New York, running 54 miles a day.

The run began in the west on 29th May, with the morning sun warming the ground at the Flathead Indian reservation near Seattle, and finished in the east, on 15th August, at the Shinnecock Reserve outside New York City, the final destination of the Spirit Run. Their goal was to carry the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to American Indian reservations, to spread the Teachings of the Faith, and to raise a call for race unity from coast to coast.

The idea for the Spirit Run began with Arthur Fernandez-Scarberry, a 30-year old Bahá'í with Choctaw heritage. "It was like a flood of loud thoughts," he recalls. "Basically, it haunted me." Haunted him enough to make it a reality. Five years later he saw his dream materialised. "We're no longer living in a time when words are enough. We must take action, for it is our actions that bring to life our words and beliefs. Spirit Run is unity in action."

That unity was visible as these nine ethnically diverse youth arrived at each destination chanting "Ya Bahá'u'l-Abha" to the beat of a drum. At each stop they found souls thirsty for the Word of Bahá'u'lláh.

Each runner covered six miles each day, taking turns carrying a sacred bundle - a hand-made leather satchel containing 'talking leaves', a booklet with passages from Bahá'u'lláh, a medicinal packet of buffalo eyeteeth and hide, rose petals, cedar, sage, tobacco, and sweet grass.

The bundle also contained an eagle feather given to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum by American Indian Bahá'ís decades ago. Amatu'l-Bahá had returned the feather just before her passing, asking that it be conveyed to the Spirit Run project.

Tied to the runners' backs, the bundle was carried on foot because it would emphasize to the American Indians the sacred nature of the message.

Just before they reached their final destination, the Spirit Run team was recognised at the United Nations in the opening ceremonies of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People on 9th August. The runners were subsequently invited to participate in a two-day consultation about 'Indigenous Children and Youth', and preparations for the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

Reports from The American Bahá'í for 13th July and United Nations Press Release No. 5622 dated 9th August

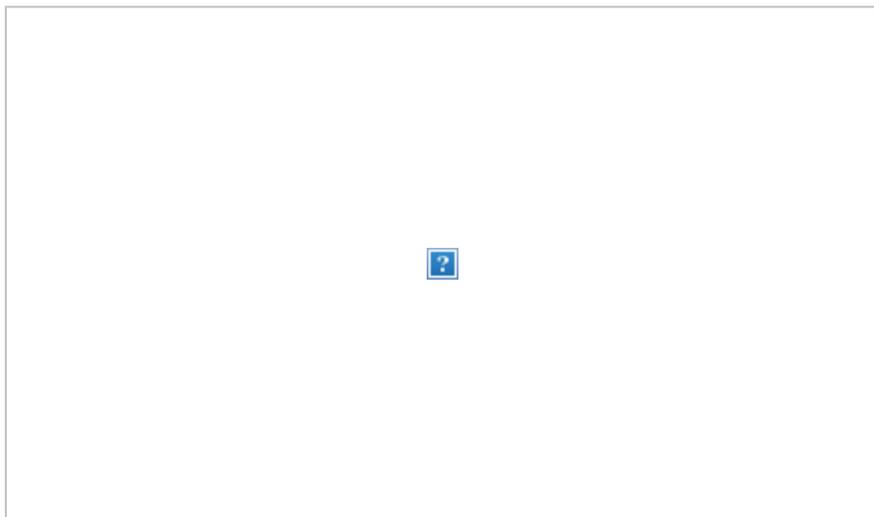
### Carnival of Culture in Luxembourg

The Luxembourg Association of Bahá'í Women participated, with many other organisations, in a Carnival of Cultures which was held on 8th July. The event included a colourful procession and a display of highly varied food from all over the world. The Bahá'ís had prepared oriental pastries and home-made cakes and tea, a

mixture which led to many questions about the Bahá'í community.

At the suggestion of the Bahá'ís, the Carnival organisers had invited Kevin Locke, an American Bahá'í, to perform ritual dances of the Lakota Indian tribe as one of the highlights of the cultural programme. His presentation delighted the audience, particularly his plea as an artist for unity and collaboration among peoples.

Reports from the Bahá'í Newsletter, April 2000



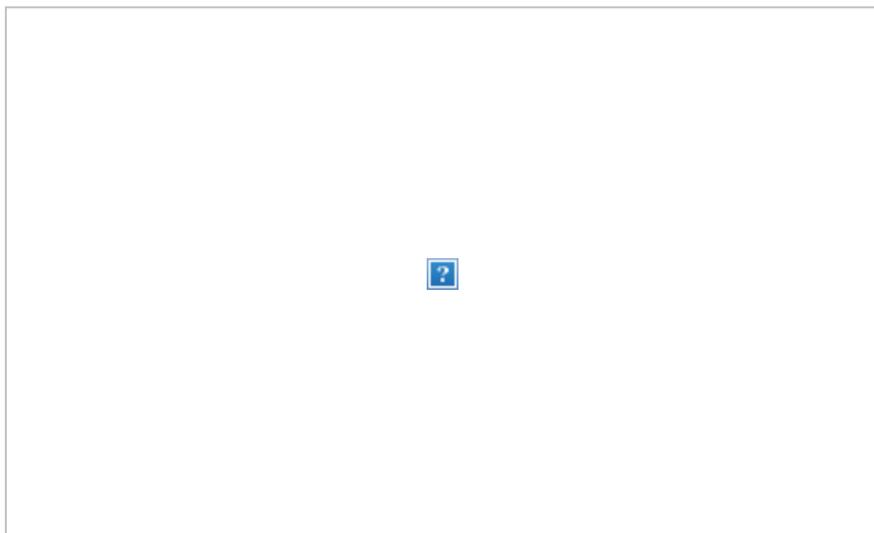
In the USA nine Bahá'í youth are seen participating in Spirit Run a 3-month, 3,000-mile journey across the country to promote racial unity. The runners began in Seattle, Washington, on 29th May and ended at the Shinnecock Reserve outside New York City on 13th August.

## STAMPS

Postage stamp donations have raised over £8,500 for the Bahá'í International Fund. Keep sending them - new, old or unused to: Jon Atkinson, 12 Boythorpe Crescent, Boythorpe, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 2NX Tel: 01246 211753 Donations need to be receipted, so please include sender's name & address (preferably on a SAE).

## Bahá'í International News in photos

**Unity of purpose - Bahá'í communities world-wide are trying to make the world a better place**



In Uganda, the Bahá'ís of Mbale participate in the parade held as part of the celebration of International Women's Day on 8th March. The banner reads: "National Bahá'í Committee for the Advancement of Women Promotes Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities".



In India, graduates of the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women who live in Sondwa, Madhya Pradesh, organised a rally on 5th June in celebration of world Environment Day. Here they are shown carrying banners which read: "Environment Millennium - a Time to Act".



In Norway, the choir of the Paulus Church, Oslo, sang the Bahá'í prayer which begins, "Mon Dieu, Mon Adoré" with music written by Lasse Thoresen - during an interfaith service held in the church on 9th June.

## **MALTA Spring School**

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