

# REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCIL OF THE SOUTHERN STATES

September 30, 2006

To the family of Anika James

Distressed and grieved in learning of the passing of Anika James, we extend our loving sympathy to her father and our fellow Council member Robert James, and to her mother and Bob's dear wife Mahtaj. We also send loving condolences to her brother, Shawheen, and to all the family and friends whose hearts are heavy with profound feelings of loss.

We too share feelings of loss and anguish, not only because of our closeness to Bob, but because we loved Anika as one of our own. In addition to meeting with dear Anika in person on several occasions, we took great pleasure and delight in hearing Bob talk at every Council meeting, always with such love and fatherly pride, about the accomplishments of this very sweet, highly intelligent, multitalented, precious youth.

We recall writing a personal letter to dear Anika on July 5, 2002. Having been made aware of her recent accomplishments in school, that included being a straight A student and winning an essay writing contest, as well as her active participation in Bahá'í community life, we let her and her family know "how happy and proud we are that we have such exemplary Bahá'í junior youth like yourself in our midst." Anika blossomed so much since then and in the process touched the lives of countless people.

She continued to be an excellent student in school and active in service-related extracurricular activities. Blessed with an exquisite singing voice, and an accomplished voice student she won several awards for singing in local and regional competitions and recitals. She also brought immeasurable joy to the Bahá'í community by frequently singing at Bahá'í gatherings. When she sang, it was not only the pure, sweet quality and tone of her voice that touched the souls, but it was her radiant spirit and luminous smile that simply made our hearts soar.

And yet, with all her pursuits, Anika, a devoted Bahá'í youth, made time to serve as a teacher of junior youth classes, and was on her way to completing the sequence of institute courses so she can be of greater resource to the community. This precious youth, with so many wonderful attributes led a purposeful life. She was loved by many and will be greatly missed. She was a bright candle who brought warmth, affection, joy and light to so many who knew her. This is how we will always remember her, in our hearts and in our thoughts. And now that her spirit has flown to the Heavenly Kingdom, where her reunion with her Beloved will be for an eternity, we can and will pray for the progress of her luminous soul and ask her to intercede for all of us and to give you the necessary strength and fortitude to continue on.

While the pain we feel at this time is palpable and beyond measure, through prayer and the love of and trust in Bahá'u'lláh we may take comfort in these words:

“That beloved child addresseth thee from the hidden world: `O thou kind Mother, thank divine Providence that I have been freed from a small and gloomy cage and, like the birds of the meadows, have soared to the divine world—a world which is spacious, illumined, and ever... jubilant. Therefore, lament not, O Mother, and be not grieved; I am not of the lost, nor have I been obliterated and destroyed. I have shaken off the mortal form and have raised my banner in this spiritual world. Following this separation is everlasting companionship. Thou shalt find me in the heaven of the Lord, immersed in an ocean of light.”

Be assured of the Council's sustained and fervent prayers for the progress of her soul in all the worlds of God and for your healing and consolation.

With profound love,

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