

# Junior Youth: Animating Our World



May 2007

Contents by Junior Youth!

Issue 3

\$2.00

All moneys go to the  
Anika James Memorial Garden

## Dedicating the Garden

By Varqa Kalantar

On Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, our Durham Junior Youth Group dedicated the Memorial Garden for Anika James we had been working on for several months.

The dedication lasted from 3-5 pm. There was a short program with prayers and songs. Afterwards, there was a slideshow presentation about the making of the memorial garden.

Later, everyone who attended went outside to see the garden. There were songs and prayers and a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Well over a hundred people attended, including many of Anika's classmates and one of her teachers.



Our junior youth group (with some friends) on the day of the Garden Dedication

## The Making of the Memorial Garden

By Sean Cortes &  
Emily Ferrell

Greetings everyone, Allah-u-abha. For those of you who have seen our beautiful garden, dedicated to Anika James, you may also know it was the hard work and the co-operation of the junior youth who made it.

As you all know, we couldn't have done any work on this garden without our fundraising. We have had numerous bake sales, all of which were extremely successful. The James family has also cooked Persian food and sweets and sold them for our cause. We have sold two newsletters, and this one about the Memorial Garden Opening (cont'd on 2)

## Some final thoughts about our Project

By Nabil Kavari &  
Calum O'Mara

Unfortunately this is the last newsletter we will have. This newsletter is one many are waiting for because of the new story Ari wrote which will be continued in this edition (p.3). But we are here to talk about the money.

We hope that the funds earned with this newsletter and any extra money left will go to the maintenance of Anika's garden. This includes taking care of the bench, the flowers and any other things that may be damaged over the course of the many years

this memorial garden will stand.

Other than the physical work (tipping Nabil in the wheelbarrow), it took much financial effort from our Bahá'í community. We ask that you now pat yourself on the back for your contributions to the Anika Memorial Garden fund.

Just to say, recently the junior youth cleared out the back area of the Durham Bahá'í Center. We hope others will venture past the limits of the fence and go beyond to expand our Bahá'í Center even more.

We admit it will cost a little more but even the little things like telling the kids to pull up some weeds or just putting some grass down will make our Bahá'í Center look even better.

A few days ago, Mark told us in class if there was anything we should learn in this junior youth class, it was that it's one thing to say something, but going out to take action was a whole different thing. That's what we did and that is one lesson we should always remember when starting a project.

## Making the Garden (cont'd)

Celebration. Overall we have raised over 2,000 dollars for Anika's Garden.

We started out first on the planning of where to place the garden, what would we have in it, and how much money would it cost. We first picked a spot we thought was good for the garden.



We found a spot that captured the light very well and placed our foundation there. We then started many fundraisers, in which many of you contributed and we thank you very much for that.



Then we cleared out all the overgrowth and weeds to plant new grass and place woodchips.



After that, we placed a nice stone pathway and started plant-



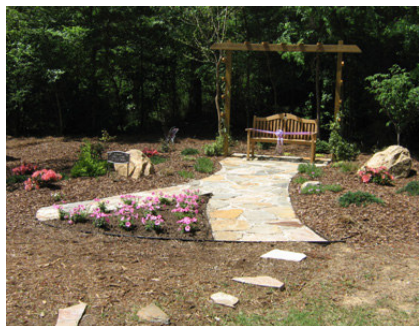
ing trees and flowers.

We then set a bench at the end of the path and placed a few boulders, and put up an arch that vines could grow up on.

Finally we got rid of all the extra dead branches and leaves to make the area much nicer.



It has taken a lot of time and effort but we are very proud of our work and hope you are too.



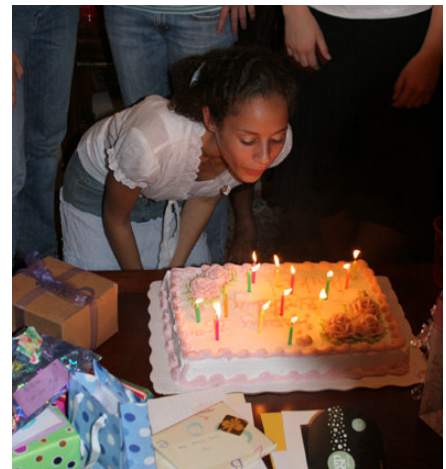
## Spring Flowers

Beautiful flowers are beginning to sprout  
Beautiful flowers are blossoming out  
These flowers are lovely, though I have one fear  
And that is if they are eaten by deer

— Jacob Cortes

## Some Other Activities & Services done in Anika's name

- 6 monthly devotional gatherings held at the James' home.
- Several other area gatherings including an ongoing study circle
- Many youth get-togethers, devotional gatherings and service projects around the Triangle
- Other devotional gatherings were held in Charlotte NC, Nashville TN, and Tehran, Iran.
- A food drive, a project of the Anika James Foundation, brought in close to 700 pounds of food that was sent to the Food Bank of America
- A scholarship fund established at Jordan High School to promote the performing arts by providing scholarships to those in need.
- The curriculum of an arts & character education program called "Drama Circle" was dedicated to Anika's memory.
- Several free dance classes were offered to the community in Anika's memory
- A song written for Anika by North Carolina Kids Theatre and recorded. The CDs will be sold to provide scholarships for children interested in performing arts but needing financial assistance.
- A relative of Anika's from Iran traveled to Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa and climbed it and posted a note dedicating that journey to Anika.



## The Last Dance, Part II (Cont'd from our March issue)

By Ari Borhanian

He stood up straighter, a sure sign that he was about to tell me a story.

"When I was your age," he began, "I was just like you. I felt stressed, and I felt different."

It was true. I was a member of the Baha'i Faith, a rather new religion. I always felt different from all the other kids.

"Now, I wasn't a Baha'i then, but I had to put up with bullies, and I always was shy. I had a terrible school life. One day when I went to a new school, the kids roared with laughter the minute I went in!"

Wow. That was new.

"Why, Grandpa?" I asked.

"Because," he said, "I was the most dorky looking kid. I had huge glasses, I was short, and I had just moved to the city from Nebraska, so I wasn't used to the styles. My hair was messy, I was dressed badly, and I was the kind of kid who looks shy." He laughed.

"One day," he continued, "The class received locker numbers and combinations. I stuffed all my important books into my locker. Guess what?"

"What?"

"I forgot my locker number *and* combination. I was too embarrassed to ask. I went through the year without a locker or my school books."

"The whole year???"

"Yep! I'll tell you, it was something. I flunked.

"Anyway, many years later, in Junior high school, my school was sup-

posed to have a dance. I went. I couldn't find anyone who wasn't already dancing, until I saw this one girl. I was really nervous, but I asked her to dance.

"Sure!" She answered.

"But I don't know how to dance. Could you teach me how?"

"She was shocked. 'Don't know how to dance?' She cried.

"No." I answered. 'Could you teach me?'

"No!" She answered.



"I just walked away. I was determined to show that girl that I could learn how to dance. I practiced at home, at school, everywhere.

"At the next school dance, I was the best dancer in the school. I was determined to teach that girl a lesson. I walked up to the girl, and would ask everyone around her to dance, but never her. I did that for six years."

"Six years?!!!" I cried.

"Yeah. Finally, in twelfth grade, I felt sorry for her and asked her to dance.

"Finally?!!!" She cried. I told her I was teaching her a lesson for what she had done six years ago. She didn't know what I was talking about! She had forgotten! I felt like a fool."

"So did you dance with her?" I asked.

"Yes! We finally danced. Everyone else stopped dancing to watch us. It was amazing."

I was beginning to understand what he was talking about. He had gone from worst dancer in the school to the best. I realized that if I really tried, I could survive this year. Come on! A few curses? Bring 'um on! A girl asking for a date? Bah! I simple distraction from my daily life! I began to feel more human.

Me and my Grandpa talked like this for many hours. Four, to be exact. When my Grandpa drove me home in the black of night, I thought even more about what he had said. By the time I got home, I had my mind set.

"So!" My Mom said as I entered. "You still want to be Home schooled?"

I smiled. This moment decided my future. "No, Mom." I said with a brave smile. "No."

"The progress of man's spirit in the divine world, after the severance of its connection with the body of dust, is through the bounty and grace of the Lord alone, or through the intercession and the sincere prayers of other human souls, or through the charities and important good works which are performed in its name."

(Abdu'l-Baha, Some Answered Questions, p. 239)