

WORLD NEWS

Stories from Pioneer Post

These extracts from "letters home" to the Committee for pioneering and travel teaching give us a glimpse into some of the lives of the stalwart souls who are sharing the Bahá'í Faith overseas - our UK pioneers -

Jessica Dacey - MONGOLIA

Jessica recently returned from a year in Mongolia. She writes:

Before moving to Mongolia, I made a fateful first visit during their National Convention last year. I was very moved by the spirit of this young community, and was hooked as the Convention ended and everyone lined the walls of the large room, holding hands and singing endless prayers and songs. After the convention I was able to travel with Counsellor Rosalie Tran, Auxiliary Board member Lois Lambert and several of the friends to a distant community known for a vegetable growing project and for having a strong presence in their small town. We spent four days there, as the Bahá'ís attended a women's institute, opened a new Bahá'í Centre and offered us true hospitality. By the end of the trip I was asking myself how I could stay on in Mongolia and help the Bahá'ís, and the day before leaving I saw an advertisement in an English newspaper for an Editor. I applied and left it in Bahá'u'lláh's hands. Three weeks later I was back with a new job and already feeling at home.

Immediately travel teachers started arriving one by one for summer projects and going all over the country. The National Teaching Committee assigned youth to travel with them and help with translation. And very luckily for us all, Drs Peter and Janet Khan from the Bahá'í World Centre had also planned to come for a "holiday", but predictably ended up working tirelessly. The community really welcomed them, and they too were touched by the pure hearts and love of the friends. The Khans stayed for the national summer school. Normally, regional schools are held as the country is enormous and travelling difficult, and there are just a handful of paved roads outside the capital. About 30 people travelled from Ulaanbaatar to the school in an old bus that broke down 25 times on the 24-hour trip. Although other transport became available during the journey, everyone wanted to stay together on the bus to the end and no one left until it eventually died at 5am in the middle of nowhere. When we finally arrived at the summer school at 6am, it was already busy with people running to dawn-prayers.

The Khans gave talks during the day and evenings were full of music. Unity is already a Mongolian trait, as is hospitality. What the Bahá'ís offer on top of these qualities are real love in the community, and a love of prayer (everyone says a prayer at feast) and teaching.

Ten years after Mongolia opened up, there are now 2500 Bahá'ís, and people are regularly and happily attending