Children's Chilean Fundraiser

Contributed by
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When 50 Bahá'ís walked up a candle-lighted path to a house in Stamford, Connecticut, they knew a special evening was ahead to raise funds for the Chilean House of Worship. What they didn't know was that they would return to their homes-nearby or as far away as New York City or Washington, DC-knowing more about Chile and its Bahá'í history, thanks to the efforts of five local youngsters who did the lion's share in planning and carrying the event out.

"We are very blessed here in Stamford to have a supportive Assembly and a warm community that loves our children and encourages them in their efforts," a parent said.

Welcomed warmly by Liang the Lion and Aviana D. Penguin (voiced respectively by puppeteers Lua and Maya, both 10), the guests enjoyed:

-Music in English and Spanish.

-The sharing of a manuscript by Janet Ruhe-Schoen with stories of the first Bahá'í pioneer in Chile, Martha Steward, and the first new believer there-Paul Bravo, age 12.

-Stories of sacrificial giving.

-A dinner featuring seven kinds of chili, a variety of rice dishes and lots of corn muffins and salad.

-The gift of a fold-up coin box where people may set aside extra money for the Chilean Temple (available from the Office of the Treasurer).

-Extra fund-raising projects offered by a massage practitioner and a fabric artist.

-Periodic reports on the contribution total by treasurer's assistant, a 7 year old boy-who colored a thermometer chart to the top early in the evening, adding the words "I'm full."

Guests left behind a warm spirit and a fund box filled with $4,637.34-a total that grew closer to $5,000 with added contributions arriving in the mail afterward. Heady news for the Spiritual Assembly of Stamford, which later noted that it had thought the goal too high for its small community and discussed how to manage the children's expectations.

"Needless to say, the Assembly is extremely pleased and surprised at the vision and audacity of the children in our community," the Assembly stated.