

TRANSFORMATION FOR PEACE



WELCOME TO TRANSFORMATION FOR PEACE

We are delighted to be able to welcome you to Transformation for Peace this summer!

The following letter contains information for parents and for Junior Youth attending the Transformation for Peace summer program at Townshend International School.

CONTENTS

TFP Vision	p.2
Travel Information	p.3
Packing Information	p.4
Expectations for Junior Youth (TFP Rules)	p.5
The Gala	p.6
FAQ	p.7

THE TFP VISION

Transformation for Peace (TFP) is a **Baha'i-inspired** summer program that offers Junior Youth (aged 12-15) a fun and spiritually-uplifting opportunity to come together and to create a community based on the guiding principles of unity, justice, service, and consultation.

The overarching goals of the *Transformation for Peace* program are to help the Junior Youth self-evaluate and discover their own potential, to develop their participation in **community-building core activities**, and to assist in their preparation to accept their spiritual responsibilities upon reaching the **age of maturity**.

Transformation for Peace is about the joy available when we are individually and collectively unified. Personal **unity** unleashes creative power that brings joy to the person and to everyone around him. Unity in relationships unleashes a type of love that truly nourishes the spirit. Unified communities thrive and prosper. The ideal time to work on this is the period we call pre-youth. It is the end of childhood and the approach toward maturity. If we can help young people to taste the joy of unity within themselves and among themselves they will be well prepared for assuming their **spiritual responsibilities** at the age of fifteen.

It is important to remember that *Transformation for Peace* is a **school**, not a summer camp or a retreat. During the week the junior youth will engage in all sorts of educational and recreational activities, all under the care and guidance of their animators who have spent months preparing a rich and empowering educational program for them. Each aspect of TFP - whether it be sports, arts, music, games or consultation – builds around the central concept of building the **capacity to serve** and strengthening their **true identities as spiritual beings**.



"A generation of youth is being galvanized into action by a compelling vision of how they can contribute to building a new world... As consciousness is raised, they increasingly identify with the aims of the Bahá'í community and express eagerness to lend their energies to the work under way."

ARRIVAL

Parents must bring their Junior Youth to the Townshend International School campus on the first **Saturday** of the program between 13:00 (1pm) and 17:00 (5pm).



DEPARTURE

Parents must collect their Junior Youth from the Townshend International School campus on the final **Sunday** between 06:00 (6am) and 11:00 (11am).



IMPORTANT

- Parents should make every effort to bring participants to the Townshend International School Campus
- We recommend parents organize travelling in groups, car-pooling or travelling with a guardian as a cost-effective and safe way of travelling. Click this link for our [travel guidance](#).
- In cases where it is really not possible for Junior Youth to travel with parent/guardian, we can assist with collection and drop-off at Prague Airport and České Budějovice train station during allocated times. For details, please visit the information page through the following link: [Participant Arrivals & Departures](#)
- Arriving early or leaving late is **not** an option, as there will be no staff to supervise
- It is not possible to only attend parts of the program, all participants must remain for the entirety of TFP

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: Townshend International School
Hradcany 1070,
37341 Hluboka nad Vltavou
Czech Republic

Email: tfpadmin@townshend.cz

WHAT TO BRING

1. A warm sweater
2. A wind breaker.
3. Underwear and socks for 10 days.
4. A sun hat, sunscreen, mosquito repellent.
5. 5 - 6 T-shirts
6. Several cotton trousers and shorts
7. Bathing suit, flip-flops and towel
8. Digital camera, if desired
9. Refillable water bottle
10. Toilet articles: hygiene products; shaver, tooth brush and paste; deodorant, shampoo, conditioner etc.
11. Prayer book
12. Running shoes; dress-shoes (optional for gala evening).
13. Musical instrument (optional but welcome)
14. Pyjamas or sweat pants and sweat shirt
15. Medications which your child requires (Please inform the coordinators.)
16. Pen and notebook
17. Gala dress: casual smart:
 1. Boys - clean shirt; cotton trousers
 2. Girls - clean blouse or T-shirt; cotton skirt or pants, or modest dress

WHAT **NOT** TO BRING

1. Please do not bring any item which you may feel goes against the spiritual purposes of the school. This includes certain music, print-media, photos, clothing which may reflect violent or sexual images or slogans, electronic games, videos or other material which is not in keeping with the community's goal of strengthening and valuing the spiritual identity of its citizens.
2. Please pack only modest clothes.
3. Do not bring skateboards or any similar toys. There will simply be no opportunity to use them.
4. Do not bring any fire agents; such as lighters, matches, fireworks, caps etc. Also, do not bring potentially dangerous items, such as knives.
5. Please, no gum, candies or chocolates to keep in your room.
6. Cell phones, passports, iPods / MP3-players, iPads / tablets and travel-tickets will be looked after by the co-ordinators during the TFP-Program.



EXPECTATIONS

FOR THE JUNIOR YOUTH

A UNITED COMMUNITY

At Transformation for Peace we are all part of a community.

The goal of our community is to reflect and put into action the Bahá'í teachings, and thereby create an environment which is spiritually uplifting and promotes the wellbeing of every individual. The main goal of the TFP community is UNITY. For everyone to be united we need to avoid things that create disunity, such as backbiting, exclusion and conflict, and rather encourage each other to embody **virtues** and follow teaching such as:

- “A kindly tongue is a loadstone of the human heart”
- Cooperation and trustworthiness
- “Let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path”
- Justice and chastity
- “Walking on a path of service in the company of others”
- Respect for each other, for the staff and for the school

A SPIRITUAL CIVILIZATION

The pressures and influences on junior youth, world-wide, have never before been so universally heinous, abusive and damaging. Societies are collectively losing sight of their spiritual realities. The power of materialism to excite, entertain and invite the attention of consumers into its hold is nowhere felt with more force than on the lives of our youth.

During the week of TFP, we live together in a spiritual “bubble”, detached from the outside world. This gives us the opportunity to leave the forces of disintegration that are taking place in society, such as materialism, hopelessness and the vanities of the world, at the threshold, and instead embrace the ideals that will bring joy, harmony and spiritual empowerment to all the members at TFP.

Next to leaving our homes, our electronic devices and even our parents behind, we also encourage the youth and their animators to leave the disruptive forces of a decaying society behind, and to direct their sight upon the divine teachings and the virtues that will help us create the future civilization.

LIFE DURING AND AFTER TFP

During the week of TFP you can expect a wide range of activities: Deepening, consultation, reflection, arts, music, prayer, sports, games, social activities and trips. During the whole program, you will be closely accompanied by your amazing animators. They are there for you, and have spent months creating a unique program just for you.

At the camp, you will learn many things, and our goal is that all these gems of knowledge that you will acquire will become tools that can assist you in your service activities in at home.

Our animators are very experienced protagonists in the 9 year plan. Use this opportunity to build bonds with your animators and your friendships with animators and fellow JY after the camp to encourage each other in your service efforts.

On the last **Saturday** of TFP the family and friends of the Junior Youth are welcome to our Gala Presentation. During this presentation, the junior youth get a chance to show their parents and local residents all the things they have learned during the week, including artistic performances, creative presentations and a joyful program of music, dance and celebration.

The Gala evening usually begins at 19:00 (7pm) on the last Saturday of the TFP week, with dinner starting at 18:00 (6pm). Parents will receive an email during the TFP week to register for the Gala and the Gala dinner. Although parents who pick up their junior youth by car have always enjoyed this evening, there certainly is no expectation or necessity for all parents to attend.

After the Gala presentations there will be our final Closing of the Day (evening devotional) which parents are invited to join. However parents are asked to come as silent observers and not to participate in this very special space for the junior youth. After closing of the day parents can return to their accommodation off campus and we will see them again the next morning for departure.



WHAT SHOULD **STUDENTS** WEAR TO THE GALA?

For many of the students, a costume change will be required. A student might be in the dance or drama presentation. So, an outfit that is simple, can easily be put on, is modest and clean and makes the student feel good, would be appropriate.

WHAT SHOULD **PARENTS** WEAR TO THE GALA?

This is a big night for the students, not formal in a physical sense, but rather it is a formal closure of their experience at TFP this summer. As well, most parents when traveling do not bring along their ball gowns. (Nor do we!) Wear whatever you feel comfortable in. Your mere presence will be appreciated by our community.

QUESTIONS

LIST OF QUESTIONS

1. Why are parents discouraged from staying on campus?
2. Why can't parents phone whenever they feel like it?
3. Can participants join late or leave TFP early?
4. Why can't the junior youth keep their cell phones?
5. Why can't my child room with her cousin or best friend?
6. What are the TFP expectations regarding modesty in clothing?
7. What should I do if my child's birthday falls during TFP?
8. Where can parents stay if they come for the Gala?

1. Why are parents discouraged from staying on campus during the operation of the camp?

Parents are very important to us for the success of TFP. They are our strongest supporters. We love and value our students' parents, and where necessary, we would turn to them for consultation if a student continually encounters difficulty adjusting.

Transformation for Peace is an exercise in practical community building, based on the spiritual principles of Unity, Justice, Diversity and Consultation. We have only 7, fairly intense days to reach this goal. It is important that the junior youth and the staff turn to each other to consult and solve problems. It is through the process of solving these problems that individual responsibility is learned, personal bonds are formed and spiritual realities are glimpsed.

If a parent stays on the campus, due to the bond between child and parent being already strong, the junior youth would not need to turn to the community in a time of difficulty or when dealing with problems and decisions. Instead of turning to the community, thus forming an emotional and spiritual resource for himself, the first response will likely be to turn to the parent. This choice will directly impact on the growth of independence, personal empowerment and growing spiritual resourcefulness.

The week would be an opportunity for your child to experience himself or herself away from the family-nest and among a peer group practicing shared moral and social values. In a safe and controlled environment, your child will be able to start forging a separate sense of learning - to rely more upon God through prayer, confidence in His assistance and to experience a degree of personal empowerment within a community infused with these powerful spiritual principles. When you see your child at the end of the school, this strengthened spirit should be visible.

But what if I think my child is too young to stay here by himself?

The Transformation for Peace program, as it exists, with the occasional exception, is unsuitable for children who are younger than 12. Junior youth do mature at varying rates and if your 12-year-old is too young to be left without the presence of a parent, it would be far more in his interest to wait until the next summer.

2. Why can't parents phone whenever they feel like it?

We believe the parent-child bond is one of the most important resources a child has, not only during the maturation process, but also during the full course of his or her life. In many Baha'i families, parents are pioneering or serving the Faith in a variety of ways. This often can mean the children are in school some distance away. Until they can arrange to meet, the telephone, cell phone, pager and email are their only vehicles of contact.

At Transformation for Peace, we must focus very quickly and quite intensely on directing all our energies to forming a community of people who identify themselves in an immediate and spiritual way. Your child's detachment from his material identity, by which he knows himself at home, will proceed more quickly, smoothly and completely if his contact with home is limited.

This does not mean he may not phone home. If there is an emergency, please be assured that you will be contacted immediately. We do however request that you, as the parent and co-creator of the TFP community, consider applying the following guidelines to phone calls with your child:

Once he has arrived at Townshend and the programme has started, please do not continue to phone your child "just to chat". It might give the impression that you are worried about him or her. Instead, if worries arise, please message one of the coordinators who will look into the situation and answer all of your questions.

If your child phones in tears, for any reason (some item has been lost, a friend has hurt his feelings, he's having trouble making friends, or plainly, he is miserable and wants to go home now), please do not entertain a lengthy telling of the story. Please instil confidence in your child by assuring him or her that she/he can deal with this test. Please ask the child to go directly to a staff member to discuss the situation.

Junior Youth need time to begin to solve their own problems, practicing how to trust in God and practice justice and consultation. First, the child must realize that to begin the process of finding a solution, he must share the matter with a member of the staff.

3. Why can't students keep their cell phones or check messages?

In recent years, we have become increasingly dependent on cell-phones and computers for instant gratification and contact with a wide variety of people. These are used for text and instant messaging and conversations that distract them from the community and the activities for which the staff works very hard to help them experience. For some junior youth, it is a form of an addiction, and removing the cell-phone for a short period of time helps them to realize that they can live without the device, and actually learn, have fun, and detach from perceived needs of self. The Townshend International School computer lab is not available to students during the summer. This is a shared policy of Townshend and TFP.

4. Can participants join late or leave TFP early?

Transformation for Peace is an 8-day program where each day is crucial to the spiritual development and learning of the participants. It is **not** possible to arrive a day late or leave the program early – the program must be followed in its fullness. There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important ones has to do with the bonding and friendship between the junior youth and animators as a group. They go through the program together and they experience empowerment and transformation together. No part of the program is dispensable.

5. Why may the students not change their assigned rooming partners?

- ▶ Because we want the junior youth to be more inclusive and less exclusive in their friendship groups.
- ▶ Because night-time is for sleeping, not for any other activity.
- ▶ 15 year-olds may be housed together so they can have a late evening deepening and not disturb the younger students.
- ▶ Because fire regulations demand that we know exactly who is sleeping where.
- ▶ Because if we agree to even one request to change, a watershed opens and we must address this issue every day, usually unnecessarily often with the same students., and some tender hearts might get hurt or feel rejected.

6. What are the expectations for modesty of dress and deportment?

Of course, junior youth who are of the wider community are most welcome, and they will understand that this is a Baha'i summer programme. Our focus for the camp is to create a community based on the Baha'i principles of Unity, Justice, Equality, the value of Diversity, and the power of Consultation and Prayer. Other Baha'i principles are also included in the formation of this community, for example, the principle of modesty, so please ensure only modest and sensible clothes are packed.

7. What should I do if my child's birthday falls during TFP?

Birthdays of children that occur during TFP are warmly celebrated within the TFP community with singing and recognition, and a birthday cake at the Evening Program. We ask that you do not send any gifts or cakes since this can set up an expectation that can cause disappointment, embarrassment and anxiety for other students who might prefer to only celebrate with their families later, at home.

8. Where can parents stay if they come for the Gala?

There are nearby accommodations available for visiting parents.
(A large selection of hotels and pensions can also be found on [booking.com](https://www.booking.com) or on the Hluboka nad Vlt. website, which can be viewed in different languages): <http://www.hluboka.cz/en/accommodation>.

Due to school regulations, we are not able to host parents at the school.
Please note that you are responsible for your own travel and accommodation plans as we do not have the resources to make these arrangements for parents. **A Travel Guidance for Parents** document is available on our [webpage](#) to help you.