Baha'i Clubs meet for peace

By Effie Dracopoulos
Lantern staff writer

The Baha'i Peace Committee of Central Ohio and the OSU Baha'i Club will present their fifth annual peace conference, “Building Blocks for World Peace: Universal Education and World Citizenship” at the Ohio Union Saturday.

The conference will feature workshops, displays, speakers, panel discussions and a separate conference for children, said Kambiz Sabouri, a member of the Baha'i Peace Committee of Central Ohio.

“We would like this conference to be a forum of different people getting together to work for peace,” Sabouri said.

The OSU Baha'i Club is involved to help promote the principles of the Baha'i Faith, including the unity of humanity and world religions, and the promotion of a universal language, said Monaiza Setudehnia, president of the OSU Baha'i Club and second year medical student.

The Baha'i believes that world peace is inevitable and that all citizens of the world are responsible for eliminating barriers to peace, such as all forms of racial, sexual and religious prejudice, Setudehnia said.

The strive for peace has to come from individuals who can no longer sit aside and wait for someone else to take charge, Setudehnia said.

“I think it’s about time the students on campus got active and involved in the idea of peace and unity,” Setudehnia said.

A Kids Peace Now conference was developed to bring adults and children together to experience and expand the ideas of peace and how it is to be accomplished, said Dawn Garrott, conference coordinator for the Kids Peace Now conference. The capacity of 140 children has been reached, she added.

The children will be asked to define peace and develop goals in expressing their individuality, dealing with their families and relating to the world, Garrott said.

“We would like adults to be inspired by the conference to help the children to develop their peace goals,” Garrott said.

Garrott said adults should define the capacity of peace for children, but should encourage children to use their creativity to determine how peace can be established.

“Teachers should be qualified not just to teach, but to inspire,” said Suheil Badi Bushrui, professor in values and peace at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland.

Bushrui will speak at the conference on how education in spiritual, social, human and ecological areas can serve peace.

The universities have failed students miserably because they promote research in the pure sciences and dismiss subjects such as music and art, Bushrui said.

“We have produced people with competence and skills, but not imagination,” Bushrui said.

Universities should restore a balance of subjects and encourage professors to deal with people and not numbers, Bushrui said.

“No education can be an education unless by example,” Bushrui said.

The world’s human and material resources should be used for building peace and not tearing it down, said Barbara Stovall, director of the Southside Settlement House in Columbus. Stovall is also scheduled to speak at the conference.