



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

QUARTERLY REPORT, JANUARY

2018

LETTER FROM SORYU FORALL



Dear Supporters,

Since the founding of this organization, 2017 was the most important year in our history. When we began, we had a dream. This year, we made that dream a reality. Now, we're ready to dream again.

This end-of-year letter reviews our history and describes our vision. As Cameron Joyner takes the position of Executive Director, I will have more time to convey the vision. This letter will lead to a series of talks this winter that aim to explain and support our direction and the reasons we believe it is the most effective way to free people from suffering and preserve life on our beautiful planet.

Where We've Been

We started this organization in 2011 as the Center for Mindful Learning. It was created primarily to support my work in teaching mindfulness in schools. We realized as the first few years passed that our unique offering is our depth of training. We opened a residential training center dedicated to developing mindfulness teachers. After brave and unremitting hard work and a number of generous donations, the first resident came in April of 2013. This residential training, which we call the Monastic Academy for the Preservation of Life on Earth, grew year by year. We expanded to a larger location, continued to teach in schools alongside other community programming, and as our breadth of impact grew, became the Community for the Experience and Development of Awakening and Responsibility, the container that holds CML and MAPLE.

It amazes me to recall how fragile we were then. If even one fewer person had been inspired to help, if even one fewer donation had come in, we likely wouldn't be where we are now. It demonstrates how powerful each of you is.

Where We Are

Due to your generous support and our unyielding toil, we have acquired one of the most beautiful properties in the world. MAPLE offers those who live and train here a profundity of insight and compassion that is rare and imperative in the modern world. Thank you for making this possible. Your generosity is manifest here every morning as we wake up and chant at 4:30, every day as we eat in silent contemplation, every night as we meditate under the slowly curving path of the moon.

During my travels this past fall, I visited similar organizations. I was struck by how well we are doing. Our finances, our social cohesion, our impact on the surrounding community, our communication and internet presence, the competence of our residents, our physical space, and most important, the gravity of our training, are excellent, and as a whole perhaps unmatched.

Most important is our community of residents. They inspire and depend on each other, having seen how a strong group makes strong individuals and how strong individuals make a strong group. They welcome thirteen guests each month. They offer a beautiful community to guests, and guests offer gifts in appreciation. This is a tribe of excited, confident, harmonious heroes who have managed not only to meet the guest revenue targets over the last six months, but even exceeded them by \$1,305. Additionally, they've had more fun than they expected. Reality is tough and unpredictable, but their dedication allows us to continue to expand.



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We recorded a profit of \$8,219 for the quarter I was away. We far exceeded 2016's profit of \$77,015, which was unusually low since the second half of that year was the beginning of raising funds for the property purchase, with \$110,753 in total profit for 2017 (unconfirmed), as our fundraising efforts bore fruit in the first quarter of the year.

I have worked to grow this organization every year since I founded it, and it has, from 2011 to 2018, grown on average 102% per year. But this past year was different. Rather than growth, we focused on acquiring this beautiful property. We had less than half the year to initiate, publicize, and run programs, yet numbers of guests and income from guest programming were higher than projected. We grew by 38% in 2017, and in addition to that, have this physical base from which to grow in the coming decades and centuries. Your support made all of this possible.

Our debt for the property will reach its maximum on July 15, 2018, the date on which our first payments are due. It was projected to be \$1,223,065 at that time, but lender generosity has already reduced this burden. About half of the lenders have provided offerings that lowered our debt by \$49,570 to a projected \$1,173,495 for that date. This improves our entire future, and we thank you.

We enjoy this place every day. Winter here is joyful. White snow on silent, creaking trees; nights of bright stars on black eternity and mornings of vanishing fuschia on azure empyrean; endless exploration on skis and snowshoes: nature inspires us with a new invitation each day. We have connected our trail system with others that offer hundreds of miles of solitary groves, pristine views, and rivers bravely gurgling beneath knotted ice. I ski up the mountains, tie my jacket around my waist because I'm too hot, and then sail down the hillside in long, graceful turns with my jacket waving like a cape. This exercise, and our wonderful food, give a glow of health to residents and guests that adds glister to the bright complexion that comes naturally with meditation.

The reason for our meditation is not only health, however. We are working non-stop to create a group of luminaries: the next generation of contemplative leaders.

Where We're Going

Our mission isn't easy. It isn't even easy to explain. Some of it may be hard to believe. Over the next few months, I'll explicate it in evening talks, and we will share those talks with you, the themes of which are indicated by asterisks below. We'd love your questions and comment.

We are creating an innovative two-track training system.* In the first track, some of the residents are striving for awakening as their first priority, waiting to work on personal issues until after breaking through to insight. In the second track, the others are working on personal issues first, waiting to strive for awakening until after a period given to rest and heal. These programs complement each other, integrating transformation and transcendence.* In this way, those training here free themselves from greed and embody the solution to the problems of the world.* They grow into the next generation of contemplative leaders, free from vicissitude of mind, the most powerful people in the world, capable of changing the mind on which our civilization is based.* No longer pawns to the assumptions most never question, they join the ranks of those who create history.*

We are creating a culture that saves life on earth from human greed by creating leaders who have overcome their own



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greed.* When the residents finish their training, they are expected to lead new communities. Over the next few decades, we will create a community of communities.* Communities of communities create culture, and culture steers history.* It will be in the interactions between these communities, in particular the interactions between the leaders of these communities, that a new culture and a new future will be forged.*

We aim for exponential growth, doubling every five years.* We are currently on schedule, as we plan to send a group to live and train in the Bay Area of California this coming summer. In order to oversee this expansion, I will spend a few months there. We will gather social and financial resources to support and stabilize our central location in VT and increase our reach and impact in CA.

In order to make this possible, Cameron Joyner is stepping into the position of Executive Director. Our Board of Directors and I extend him congratulations and gratitude. Cameron has received an heroic charge. There are many possible ways to support him: donations, debt forgiveness, helping to find new residents who can help us to fulfill our mission, and in-kind gifts, to name just a few.

We have determined the most important goal right now: build a complex of appropriate meditation spaces here at MAPLE. The one drawback of our VT location is that there's no space designed specifically for meditation. It isn't feasible to run a world-class meditation center without a world-class meditation space. We are trying to raise \$349,943 and have already gathered \$175,335, enough to go ahead with Stage 1 of the project, the construction of a 41 foot round zendo. While this is a huge achievement, it's much like beating your personal best halfway through a marathon, while it's an accomplishment, the rest of the race still needs to be run. Building all three spaces will allow us to serve both residents and guests, leaving neither group stranded in an inadequate space. We hope to finish this campaign before breaking ground in the summer of 2018.

*Please listen to the talk on this topic that will be shared later this winter, and contribute questions or comments in reply and or in advance.

Thank You

Our organization's history has shown that a few people can change the course of history by creating a community that changes the course of history. This year, you made the acquisition of our property possible through your loans and gifts. Over the past few months, dozens of local and remote community members have become sustaining members. 44% of those who lent us resources to purchase this property have forgiven all or part of the loan, turning it into a gift. One of our supporters in CA has invited us to use his house to begin our work there. And in the past month, two other supporters have given generously for the building of the new meditation complex here, between them bringing us all the way through Stage 1 and over halfway to our total goal for the construction of new zendos.

We thank all of you for helping us to accomplish our mission, creating a new generation of leaders free from greed who can create a new culture that saves the world.

-Soryu Forall



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WHERE WE'RE GOING: EVENING TALK SERIES

At least a dozen talks over the course of the winter will help explain our vision and explore the role of deep practice in the modern world. Any and all questions and comments about these talks, about our vision, this letter, or meditation practice more generally are most welcome. Your input will greatly improve this series, and Soryu will use it to help craft the content for the talks. Below is a list of the talks mentioned in the opening letter.

- 1 Integrating transformation and transcendence
- 2 Our two-track training system
- 3 A world-class meditation space
- 4 Embodying the solution
- 5 The most powerful people in the world
- 6 Changing the mind on which our civilization is based
- 7 Joining the ranks of those who create history
- 8 Freeing leaders from their own greed
- 9 Creating a community of communities
- 10 Culture steers history
- 11 Forging a new future
- 12 Aiming for exponential growth

FINANCIAL SITUATION

Thanks to continued support from key major donors, to a motivated base that gives regularly, and to our revenue efforts with guests, we find ourselves in a strong financial position. One exciting development was significant loan and interest forgiveness from some of our lenders on the Lowell property. Our projected financial commitment for the date we begin paying off the loan (July 15, 2018) of \$1,173,495 to these lenders remains a top organizational priority. In order to achieve this, we must make





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room for more guests by creating a zendo meditation space in which they will have the optimal retreat experience. This is how we plan on reaching profitability independent of donations.

The loan and interest forgiveness has provided a crucial cushion upon which to launch our capital campaign to build new zendos. Our current financial position and thus the ability to move forward with the zendos was arrived at through the generosity of our donors and lenders and through the hustle of our team with their efforts in both programing and fundraising.

Progress

- Demonstrated profitability for the year, earning \$110,753 (unconfirmed) in 2017, despite not having programs for half the year due to the disruption of the move
- Reduced our debt on the Lowell property by \$46,000 through gifts and loan forgiveness, bringing the total debt projected for July 15, 2018 from \$1,223,065 to \$1,173,495
- Rejoiced in the generosity of one of our lenders, a friend from the Montpelier region, who forgave the entirety of her \$25,000 loan
- Accepted the extraordinary generosity of one family that decided to donate all interest payments on their loan in 2018
- Launched a monthly giving campaign, bringing the number of monthly donors to 13 and the total revenue to \$2,977 per month
- Received hundreds of individual donations from our community in Burlington and around the world
- Posted solid guest numbers, earning \$12,243 in revenue in the fourth quarter

Challenges

- Keep the revenue growing from guest visits throughout the winter
- Acquire the funds to finish the zendos

Intentions

- Build the new zendos to facilitate growth and increase revenue
- Continue to reduce the debt that made the Lowell property possible
- Maintain profitability even as we expand





MAPLE: MONASTIC ACADEMY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

With the successful completion of one new resident's trial period and the introduction of two other new residents to their own trial periods, our ranks are growing. Additionally, our process of integrating residents has improved, helping to pave the way for future growth. On the Responsibility side, i.e. action that cares for the world, the team has more clearly defined roles and goals leading improved functioning in our day-to-day operations. On the Awakening side, i.e. striving for spiritual liberation, the residents are demonstrating more vigor than ever. As the snow covers this stunning land, in perhaps the most alluring season of all, we're blessed to live in an social environment of harmony and forward momentum.



Progress

- Increased resident numbers with Dan Grossman becoming a full-time resident and Autumn Turley and Rosie Jaye in the second stage of their trial period, we anticipate further growth with 2-4 new potential residents in the first quarter of 2018
- Continued to grow the Rest & Heal program, allowing us to host public Awakening weeks and integrate new residents more smoothly
- Freed Soryu from some of his management roles so he can now teach more
- Experienced a particularly powerful retreat in December during which many members of the community achieved a new depth in practice
- Welcomed women into the long-term residency program
- Enjoyed the breathing room that additional hands creates, as we left behind some of the strain of understaffing
- Improved the onboarding process by giving new residents clearer and more manageable tasks
- Enjoyed the return of alumni for retreats, including Harrison Heyl and Daniel Thorson
- Saw new and creative uses of free time emerge, including cold water swimming and circling (a form of interpersonal meditation)
- Hosted Thanksgiving dinner for over forty community members
- Launched a new Dharma talk series





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MAPLE: MONASTIC ACADEMY
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Challenges

- Create new zendos for expanded meditation space
- Continue to grow the resident body

Intentions

- Break ground on the new zendos in the summer of 2018 and complete all three by the fall
- Deepen the harmony of the group while welcoming new residents
- Create new methods of outreach to attract new residents
- Continue and expand our *Where Are We Going?* Dharma talk series





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GUESTS

Our guest numbers, while slightly lower than last quarter, remained strong. In addition to our offering of solitary retreats and co-working, we opened our Awakening weeks to the public and launched a circling weekend, both of which we intend to expand in the future. Retreat guests continue to contribute to the health, vitality, and diversity of the community, and also provide revenue. As noted earlier, the greatest constraint to expansion, is the lack of the zendos for meditation space. Building these three new structures will dramatically improve the guest experience and also free up space in the main buildings for more guest rooms.



Progress

- Roughly matched our projected income from guests for the quarter, bringing in \$12,243, 98% of the anticipated \$12,500 (see chart below)
- Hosted a circling weekend led by residents, generating \$2,448 in revenue and involving 17 guests
- Opened our Awakening week to the public; this was made possible by our new two-track system. Our January, February, and March retreats will also be open to the public
- Continued to see repeat guests with eight people returning for a second time indicating that we are indeed building a family of practitioners who deeply appreciate what we offer
- Streamlined and formalized the guest management system making it easier on both our administrative staff and the guests who join us



Challenges

- Overcome the lack of proper meditation space

Intentions

- Systematize our dana talk (donation ask) so that guests are more likely to contribute
- Schedule retreats further in advance and promote them more widely
- Stay connected to past guests to encourage future visits
- Fold our new dharma talks series into a coherent outreach plan for new guests by sharing mp3s online
- Earn over \$3,000 on our next circling retreat





GUEST NUMBERS

ACTUAL GUEST NUMBERS (FOURTH QUARTER)

# OF GUESTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF NGHTS GUESTS SPEND HERE	REVENUE FROM GUEST PAYMENTS	REVENUE FROM GUEST DONATIONS	TOTAL REVENUE FROM GUESTS	REVENUE PER GUEST PER NIGHT
38	129	\$10,146	\$2,097	\$12,243	\$78

PER MONTH AVERAGE GUEST NUMBERS (FOURTH QUARTER)

# OF GUESTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF NGHTS GUESTS SPEND HERE	REVENUE FROM GUEST PAYMENTS	REVENUE FROM GUEST DONATIONS	TOTAL REVENUE FROM GUESTS	REVENUE PER GUEST PER NIGHT
13	43	\$3,382	\$699	\$4,081	\$78

ANTICIPATED AVERAGE MONTHLY GUEST NUMBERS FOR YEAR 1 (BASED ON THE PROSPECTUS)

# OF GUESTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF NGHTS GUESTS SPEND HERE	REVENUE FROM GUEST PAYMENTS	REVENUE FROM GUEST DONATIONS	TOTAL REVENUE FROM GUESTS	REVENUE PER GUEST PER NIGHT
.83	175	N/A	N/A	\$4,167	\$238



LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON PETER PARK

Born to an immigrant family of limited means, Peter worked hard and eventually earned a full scholarship for college at the University of Delaware. Ever the seeker, he went on to earn a Masters in Buddhist and Existential Philosophy from American University. After graduating, he worked as an IT developer and started a number of small business ventures. While living in Boston, Peter founded a small community dedicated to meditation practice. But his relentlessly high standards drove him to keep seeking, eventually leading him to courageously leave his job and seek further instruction at the Monastic Academy.

Over his 2.5 year tenure, Peter has filled just about every role imaginable, including the management of marketing, recruitment, the Modern Mindfulness program, and operations. Last winter he took over as the Assistant Director. He played a crucial role in crafting the prospectus and securing the funds that led to the purchase of the Lowell property. Since then he has managed our large retreats and taken over the business side of our operation.

Despite these many roles, Peter remains ever unflappable and understated. No job is too menial for him, and no person is undeserving of his attention and care. He wields his power in the community with an unwavering fairness and consideration, and brings harmony by staying calm even when everyone around him is uneasy.

Slowly and steadily, Peter worked to knit circling, a form of interpersonal mediation, into the fabric of life at the Monastic Academy. The cohesiveness, trust, and authenticity this practice has brought forth in the community is a gift for which we owe Peter a great debt. In the zendo, his quiet and fierce dedication to the practice of awakening inspires others to dig in harder themselves.

It's hard to imagine the Monastic Academy without Peter's steady, soft power and unyielding commitment to our success. He has served as a model within our community by stepping more squarely into that power. Speaking louder and standing taller, we have all witnessed a well-deserved confidence take root and grow within him.

INTERVIEW WITH PETER:

Why did you join the MAPLE Mindfulness and Leadership training residency?

Initially, I was intrigued by the idea of a 'modern monastery' training that incorporates leadership skills, service to the world, and deep awakening practice. It was challenging for me to leave my job, which paid well, but, as my practice deepened, I felt the call to commit to practice with a teacher and monastic community. I had already tried to find happiness through maximum independence: living in an RV while traveling across the country, starting business ventures, etc. I knew my time was running out and had to trade my freedom for commitment. I needed to find out if awakening was real or not.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

My confidence as a leader has grown significantly over the last two years. I've been in many roles here, and all of them pushed my edges and helped me learn how to lead from a place of confidence, of not knowing, and of compassion. I have also been leading our circling nights and retreats.

I imagine the gift of the ethical lifestyle and culture will stay with me forever. I've noticed that alumni of this program, while they do very different things, invariably live lives of service. As I talk and joke with other residents, both current and past, it's clear none of us could ever show our face if we took a job we know is wrong.

What has been your biggest challenge?

Letting go of my immature coping mechanism of doubt and skepticism is a real challenge. I'm cultivating the trust and confidence of surrendering into not knowing and realizing that things are deep down already connected and fundamentally good. Being at the monastery has stretched me in aiming for the highest good even if it's risky and challenging.

What are your goals/what are you looking forward to as you continue to train here?

This year, the awakening practice feels like the priority. I'm aiming to finish what I came here to finish and see for myself what meditation can actually yield.



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CALIFORNIA LOCATION

As part of our vision, we intend to double the number of centers every five years. In a step towards this goal, we are in preliminary talks for planning a second location in the San Francisco Bay Area. This center would be near one of the most influential hubs in the world. As such, an outpost there could significantly help with fundraising and publicity, two vital organizational goals. While much benefit could come of this, we will be careful to move forward with prudence and patience.

Progress

- Accepted the extraordinary offer of a house, free-of-charge, from a friend of the Monastic Academy
- Found an executive director for the California location, Harrison Heyl, who has agreed to serve for at least the first ten months
- Continued to cultivate strong relationships with key partners in the Bay Area

Challenges

- Further build a network of supporters and friends in California
- Continue to work out logistics of this bold move

Intentions

- Be sure that the California location strengthens our overall financial position
- Continue to increase the momentum in Vermont





PROPERTY

This place is a wonderland in winter. The buildings are well equipped to handle the cold weather, and this region is one of the premier winter sports destinations in the country. With the completion of phase one of our trail system, we now have hundreds of miles of trails to share with our guests for endless cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, meditative walks, and all forms of exploring.



Progress

- Built and improved - 3 miles of trails that connect to two neighboring systems with over 200 miles of trails.
- Oversaw renovations in the main room of our central building
- Purchased a tractor and UTV
- Conducted a deep clean and reorganization of key spaces in the building, including the kitchen and storage rooms

Challenges

- Find contractors we trust for future renovations and expansions

Intentions

- Continue to expand and improve the trails
- Continue to maintain the buildings in excellent condition
- Continue the deep clean and organizing



As our guest numbers stay strong and our resident numbers continue to tick upwards, the need for proper meditation spaces grows more acute. Towards this end, we envision building three stunning round buildings this summer. Due to the loan forgiveness, interest forgiveness, strong donor support, and solid guest numbers, we are in a financial position to approach this new capital campaign with confidence. We've already secured enough funds to begin construction of Stage 1 this spring. We hope to reach our full fundraising goal soon since building all three structures at once would cost less, make the construction easier and less disruptive, and finally resolve the drawbacks of training at this property.

Total raised:

\$175,335 of \$349,943 50.01%

Stage 1:

Raise funds to build a 41 foot zendo

Cost: \$175,335
Raised: \$175,335

Stage 2:

Raise funds to build a 30 foot zendo and a room for teachers and students to meet for one-on-one instruction

Cost: \$174,608
Raised: \$0

These zendos will

- Allow for growth of the residency program
- Increase the center's overnight capacity from 30 to 40
- Increase income from programming
- Increase our space for dedicated meditators from 18 to 65+
- Improve the guest experience

These zendos will feature

- Simple, elegant design
- Soaring ceilings
- High quality materials including wooden interiors and exteriors
- The ability to withstand heavy Vermont snows
- Excellent insulation
- Durable construction



Photo of proposed ceiling detail



Artist rendering of 20ft hall



Satellite image showing placement of three meditation halls

The total cost of the project is \$349,943, and we've already raised over 50%.



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MOVING FORWARD

Buying the Lowell property, moving and settling into our new location, and starting up a wide variety of programs has all made for a dizzying and victorious year! This created an incredible pressure on the team to stay steady amidst the storm and create, often from scratch, new systems that we are finally starting to rely on. While we are proud of our progress, the push onwards continues. This place is not about a self-satisfied ease, it's about standing up to the structures both in our own minds and in the culture at large that create the conditions for immense suffering. Needless to say, there is still work to be done.

Thanks for being on this wild journey with us; together we plow forward.



WINTER SCHEDULE

February Retreat Dates: 9th - 16th

March Retreat Dates: 9th - 16th

Join us for one of these. Also keep your ear to the ground, as we may launch more.

JOIN US

You are always welcome to visit for a day, a week, a month, or longer.

Our address is:

751 Page Rd

Lowell, VT 05847

If you'd like to come, or to be in touch for any reason, please email at info@monastic.academy or call at 802-540-0820.

Thanks again for your support. Together we are building a whole new culture.

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