



# MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

## CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE  
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2018  
**WINTER**  
QUARTERLY  
REPORT

## LETTER FROM CAMERON JOYNER



Dear Friends,

It may seem that life at the Monastic Academy would be serene, peaceful and relaxing. The reality of the Monastic Academy is closer to a rapidly changing tech startup mixed with the intensity of military boot camp. Resident Tasshin Fogleman voiced it well, “training here may help you experience more relaxation but it isn’t relaxing.” This excitement and challenge are constant as we train the next generation of contemplative leaders. The need for this training is obscured by the growing confusion of the modern world but this makes the support and generosity you show us even more meaningful. We could not do this without your support.

This quarter continued our momentum while Soryu was away for his own training. The group cohesion and ability to run things smoothly without him is a testament to the training he has created for us. Assistant Teacher Peter Park guided our practice in Soryu’s absence. What we do here is bigger than any one person, even him. It is for the benefit of all living beings.

I’d like to share with you a few highlights of this past quarter. Fourth quarter retreats included an innovative new meditation retreat with neuromodulation. Led by the world-renowned meditation expert, Shinzen Young, the neuromodulation was directed by Dr. Baron Short. Building on last year’s success, we also offered an interpersonal meditation circling retreat.

Our California monastery officially adopted a new name. In keeping with the theme of trees, it was christened OAK (Optimizing Awakening and Kindness). OAK was instrumental in securing an additional \$50,000 loan forgiveness from a California lender. Jōshin, Harrison, and Tasshin continue to run and grow the nascent OAK monastery.

Our third apprenticeship program brought in three apprentices, with two interested in returning for residency. This program opens up a way for us to offer powerful training free of charge, so we can create opportunities for those who would otherwise be unable to make use of them.

We are still very early in the process of creating the village that will surround and integrate with the monastery. The village is our larger vision of a residential community with a monastic core. This will provide a unique way for “villagers” to live in close connection with the monastery while residing in their own homes and following their own livelihoods and schedules.

As the year comes to a close we are thankful. We have trekked new ground as a modern monastery with our neuromodulation meditation and interpersonal meditation retreats. We have lowered our outstanding debt. We have spent beautiful moments with our greater community members who buoy us up and give us strength. As founding members of the Monastic Academy in Lowell, you continue to make us stronger. Thank you for all your help in continuing the momentum we carry into this exciting new year.

In friendship,

**Cameron Joyner**  
Executive Director



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## CALIFORNIA

It's thrilling to be on the leading edge of establishing a new monastery in California. The generous donation by a local supporter of the use of their home in the San Francisco Bay Area has been vital. The value of this in kind donation of work/living space is estimated at \$57,000 per year or \$14,250 for the quarter. The California residents, Jōshin, Harrison, and Tasshin, have been busily making friends with potential residents, supporters, and community members. The residents at OAK have started hosting events and teaching meditation to their community, and Jōshin has led three full week-long silent retreats for the residents. The search continues to look for a larger location that will accommodate at least ten residents.

OAK has made many significant connections so far, both rekindling old friendships and forming new ones. Among the new friends are the folks at Leverage Research and Paradigm Academy, two organizations that share OAK's ambitions to preserve life on Earth and to resolve issues in the human mind.

OAK's financial backing has improved with a \$3,000 donation from one supporter as well as other donations in the amount of \$1,346. Additionally, OAK secured \$50,000 in loan forgiveness for the MAPLE monastery in Vermont. OAK is thankful to all our tremendous donors large and small whose financial support has allowed us to make great strides in our new location.



## MEDITATION AND NEUROMODULATION

MAPLE hosted a week-long retreat with optional neuromodulation led by meditation expert, Shinzen Young. Dr. Baron Short of E-Meditation brought ten transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) devices specially designed to enhance meditation. To our knowledge, this has never been done before. The week was an illuminating experiment for 25 guests as well as residents and apprentices. It brought in \$39,839.80 in fees and donations. Each day, each individual had two opportunities to use the tDCS devices for twenty minutes per session. During the retreat, many of the guests reported significant improvements in their practice, including relief from chronic physical pain. As a modern monastery, we relish every opportunity to explore ways in which modern technology optimizes the cultivation of ancient wisdom.



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## CIRCLING RETREAT

MAPLE hosted our second annual circling retreat in October. Circling is a form of interpersonal meditation practiced at the Monastic Academy. Peter Park first introduced it to the residents in 2015. Last year, MAPLE held its first experimental week-long circling retreat. Both guests and residents agreed it was a major success. What was learned from the experience last year was used to make this year even better. The benefits included more guests staying longer, increased revenue, and guest facilitators. Twenty guests came for the retreat with eleven staying for the whole week. We brought in a total of \$8,693.49 which more than doubled the revenue of \$3,721.76 that was earned from last year's retreat.

Perhaps the greatest value of this particular form of retreat is the consistent enrichment of the community's sense of group cohesion and flow. Because they are beneficial to our residential community, because they are financially worthwhile, and because they offer an innovative social-spiritual technology to share with the world, the residents plan to offer more circling retreats in 2019.





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## FALL APPRENTICESHIP

MAPLE's third apprenticeship program brought in three apprentices, with two interested in returning for residency. The three included Kyoshin, Ashley, and George. Kyoshin is a long-time Buddhist practitioner who was a participant in the August Shinzen Young retreat. He signed up afterwards to be an apprentice. He has contributed a great deal to the buildings and grounds operations with his knowledge of woodworking and to the community with his relentless cultivation of compassion. Ashley was a former guest who is profiled in this quarter's Profile later in the report. George came all the way from England to join us for three months. As he wrote on Facebook, "I had probably the most meaningful few months of my life, my practice deepened and I made great friends. I now know that I am going to dedicate the next couple of years of my life to monastic/intensive meditation training." The residents look forward to having him back.

The apprenticeship program shows promise in becoming a steady funnel to bring in potential residents. It's a joy to witness the apprentices undergo life-changing experiences living in community and practicing deep meditation. Their service throughout the center including kitchen management and building upkeep was a great benefit for all and the deepening of their meditation practices contributed to the betterment of the world. The apprenticeship program will expand to year-round in 2019.



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## RATIONALISTS' VISIT

In California, a strong connection has been built with the rationality community. This community is striving to think more clearly, and many of its members are working on projects that they hope will reduce existential risk or contribute to human flourishing. Many of them are located in Berkeley, California, but there are other hubs around the world.

This quarter, 14 guests from the rationality community visited the Vermont location for a week or longer. Although many of them had had minimal experience with meditation, they enthusiastically jumped into MAPLE's community practice and reported gaining much benefit from it. Several of these guests continued on to do group week-long retreats or returned for further programs.



## VILLAGE

The vision of the village includes homes within walking distance of the monastery but out of sight of it. The people in these homes will have opportunities to involve themselves in the life and practice of the monastery while maintaining private homes as well as their own work and family routines. The Monastic Academy will provide services to the villagers who in turn will provide financial support to cover the cost of those services.

Children, pets, retirees, and members from all walks of life would be welcomed to live on our large property in community together. This next year, the foundations for this larger community will be laid down step by step. The first family is planning to move here and live in the apartment while the process of creating the first house on this property takes place. The steps required for permitting and for creating infrastructure are complex but we have begun the process.



## FINANCIAL SITUATION

We finished this year with a strong quarter financially. We had a net positive revenue of \$7,690. This allowed us to finish the year in the black while making significant improvements to the building and property as well as opening our second location in California. We also received another \$50,000 of loan forgiveness bringing our remaining loan balance down to \$992,178. Since we have moved to this property in May 2017, seven lenders have forgiven part or all of their loan or loan interest. Our total forgiveness to date is \$209,100. Eliminating the loan remains an organizational priority for the sake of our lenders and our future stability. We are grateful to all of our wonderful donors small and large. Several of our largest donors have given gifts of \$5,000 to \$50,000 for several years and have enabled us to grow and thrive. We have also received significant gifts this past year enabling the construction of our apartment and investment into the infrastructure for our village.



## INCOME NUMBERS

### 4TH QUARTER

GUEST INCOME	RETREAT INCOME	DONATIONS	*TOTAL INCOME
\$6,050	\$13,166	\$53,086	\$76,262

### YEAR TO DATE

GUEST INCOME	RETREAT INCOME	DONATIONS	*TOTAL INCOME
\$20,990	\$83,890	\$477,541	\$606,936

\*This includes more income than the three types listed

## LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON ASHLEY WOLF



Ashley has been an apprentice at MAPLE since September. Her positive attitude and maturity led her to hold the leadership role of kitchen manager which is usually only held by residents.

Ashley was born in Newport Beach, California where she spent much of her life. She earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of California, Davis and went on to get her Master's in Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. This is where she met current resident Rosie Jaye and former resident Miles Bukiet which led her to the Monastic Academy.

Ashley developed her passion for working with kids during her time as a volunteer counselor and administrator for Camp Kesem UC Davis, a non-profit organization that provides a free week of summer camp for kids with a parent who has or has had cancer. She continued to work with kids when she taught English in Israel for a year, volunteered in youth shelters, and worked as a child care counselor for youth in foster care. It was in her experience working as a child care counselor that she realized how different volunteering with kids was from actually being responsible for their care. The responsibility of being a part-time caretaker for six boys felt tremendous, and she did not feel that she had the proper training or tools to continue doing so. The Monastic Academy seemed to offer the training she felt she needed.

### INTERVIEW WITH ASHLEY:

#### *Why did you join the MAPLE Mindfulness and Leadership training apprenticeship?*

I have always loved working with kids in volunteer settings and found it deeply fulfilling. When it was my job, things got real. It fully hit me that raising kids was one of the hardest, triggering, important jobs out there; doing the job well, however, meant leaning into the uncomfortable 99% of the time. It meant that many of my patterns did not hold up; it meant that I needed to actually change my behavior. When I quit my job working at the residential home with foster youth, I thought that I would never be able to work with kids in the way I wanted, or show up in the way that they needed me to. The Monastic Academy offered me hope that it is possible for me to learn how to show up in the way the world needed me.

#### *How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?*

I don't think that I am even aware of all the ways that I have benefited from my time at MAPLE. I can confidently say that my time here has been life-changing. My time at MAPLE has given me direct practice at being more assertive and setting boundaries, and this is extremely important, as direct practice is the only way I see of building compassion. Many of my old patterns didn't hold up at the Monastic Academy and there was no choice but to change. It was expected that I show up anyways, and that in itself makes a huge difference.

#### *What has been your biggest challenge?*

Surrendering to love. Not believing my fearful thoughts that keep me from loving and that keep me from experiencing happiness. Giving in to something greater than myself and having faith in it.

#### *What are your goals? What are you looking forward to as you continue to train here?*

My goals are to do what God asks of me, even if that means not getting what I want or doing what I am scared to do. This could mean coming back to the Monastic Academy as a resident. Being here and watching Soryu show up for us every day, gives me hope that I could do the same for others in the future, which is something I had lost faith in after my time working at the residential home with foster youth. I think that the training at MAPLE is some of the most important training in the world. I know that I have learned much more here about helping others than I did in receiving my undergraduate degree in psychology. The Monastic Academy is like a school for how to live well, where living well means being trustworthy and acting with integrity.



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## MOVING FORWARD

Being a modern monastery in the U.S. is challenging. We don't have the history of support that many Asian monasteries have enjoyed for millennia. Conceiving and establishing our modern monasteries is a demanding, exciting, fun, and sometimes hair-raising adventure. We're courageously moving in the right direction in new and creative ways. Our cutting edge explorations into circling and neuromodulation retreats are drawing attendees from all over the country. Our innovative residency and apprenticeship programs continue to attract residents worldwide. Our monastery in California, OAK, is drawing interest from many new supporters. All of these endeavors are putting us on the map and helping to build a strong financial foundation. None of this would be possible without the love and kind support of our community and of our generous donors. Many, many thanks to all of you for partnering with us to change world culture and preserve life on earth.



# WINTER SCHEDULE

**February 8 - 22**

Winter Intensive Awakening Meditation Retreat

**March 1 - May 1**

First Apprenticeship Period

**March 8 - 15**

Awakening Meditation Retreat

**March 29 - April 4**

Circling Interpersonal Meditation Retreat

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## 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](mailto: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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