



# MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

## CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE  
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2019  
**SPRING**  
QUARTERLY  
REPORT

## LETTER FROM CAMERON JOYNER



Dear friends,

Reflecting on your part in our work, as I prepare to write the Quarterly Report, always brings me great joy. The ways in which your support has advanced our work are minute as well as immeasurable and concrete as well as ineffable. The generosity of supporters like you is the life blood of our organization. This care comes financially and also through the loving support we receive from visitors, friends, family, and the Monastic Academy residents. Knowing how rare this sense of community is in modern culture, we deeply appreciate each of you who contributes to the vitality of our mission to preserve life on Earth.

This first quarter of the calendar year has been an exciting time as we are building the foundation for the year and beyond. Last quarter's emphasis on spreading the word about the apprenticeship program and guest retreats led to an influx of guests, residents and apprentices. One particular guest, Jasna Todorovic, was a co-working guest for two months. She is featured in our interview section below. The apartment we renovated inside our building has been consistently used by visitors. This space will continue to host guest families and act as a staging area for those building houses here in the village (see below in the Village section for more information).

Our monastery in the San Francisco Bay Area, OAK (Optimizing Awakening and Kindness), has continued its forward momentum and growth. OAK has steadily increased the number of its public meditation offerings. Its residents have deepened collaborations with like-minded organizations and increased our connections with friends and supporters.

When I joined the Monastic Academy, I never would have imagined becoming the Executive Director. I joined with the plan of moving on after a year. My two and a half years here, with one year and three months as ED, have been both challenging and transformational. It is with both sadness and excitement that I write that life is taking me in a direction different from what we had planned. This will be the last quarterly report I write as Executive Director. As the next phase of my life unfolds, I will be living locally in St. Albans. I will continue to be a member of this community and I look forward to developing that relationship in a new way. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Soryu for his creation of this magnificent place of training as well as for his dedication, care, and guidance. I also thank those of you who made the purchase of this property possible, allowing us to touch the lives of countless people and living beings.

You will be left in more than capable hands as my responsibilities will be taken over by my good friend, Peter Park, who currently holds the roles of Assistant Director and Assistant Teacher. Peter's wisdom has been an integral and invaluable force in shaping this organization.

In friendship,

**Cameron Joyner**  
Executive Director



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## APPRENTICESHIP & RESIDENCY

This past quarter saw a significant increase in residents and apprentices. Two new residents joined us along with three new apprentices. One of the new residents, Daniel Thorson, is a former resident whose insightful Emerge podcast is now officially sponsored by MAPLE. We also have commitments from more residents and apprentices to join us next quarter. With this strong team, we continue to train a new generation of spiritual leaders.

We did our first pilot of the apprenticeship program in the summer of 2017 with three young adults from Brown and Emory Universities. This year, we expanded our apprenticeship program to be year-round. This all-inclusive program allows people to stay for eight to twelve weeks for free. This includes training in mindfulness, authentic relating, and monthly retreats and programs. We envision this will allow many people to get a taste of monastic life that they would otherwise not be able to afford. In return, MAPLE benefits from the enthusiastic energy of the apprentices supporting the residents in various areas from cooking meals to trail clearing.

The apprenticeship also provides a stepping stone for more people to be exposed to the Academy, preparing them to choose if they wish to continue as a resident to train for at least a year. Last year, one apprentice chose to become a resident and another past apprentice plans to join us next quarter.



## PHOENIX & EMERGE PODCAST

Last year, we initiated the Phoenix Program, a training emphasizing rest and healing for new residents and guests, in contrast to our Dragon Program which emphasizes rigorous training for the sake of awakening to spiritual insights beyond our self-centered perspective. We have designed these programs to complement and enrich each other. This year, we are expanding the Phoenix curriculum as a comprehensive, developmental training through the inclusion of authentic relating practices, mental models, and peer coaching practices.

Daniel Thorson started the Emerge podcast focusing on new paradigms shaping the future of culture and society. He started the podcast while in residency at MAPLE in 2016. Through it, he interviews leading figures and authors to explore the ideas of existential risk, politics, and new technology. MAPLE is honored to sponsor the podcast. In the episode *(Meta)Modern Monasticism and Existential Risk*, he interviewed one of our own, Peter Park.



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## 2019 SPRING QUARTERLY REPORT

### FINANCIAL SITUATION



It has been a generative financial quarter. Thanks to the success of our guest programs and to the generosity of our financial supporters, our revenue exceeded our expenses by \$50,330.29 (\$50,000 of which was loan forgiveness). We have fully executed our obligations regarding interest payments every quarter on time. Our total loan principal has been reduced to \$932,179 from \$1,135,000. Thanks to your support, we are on track to be debt free within the next eight years.

We have had a high number of visitors both old and new. This quarter had 54 guests coming from everywhere from Ireland to California. Our Circling interpersonal meditation program brought in 14 guests with a revenue of \$11,827.54.

We received a \$10,000 gift to renovate and upgrade our MAPLE kitchen. The donor was inspired to do so after spending a week in the kitchen with the monastics preparing meals. This gift will enable us to improve the kitchen's efficiency and scalability so we can nourish more meditators with ease for years to come.

OAK has had several successes. OAK has been fortunate to enjoy the ongoing donation from a local supporter of the use of their home, a value of about \$14,250 per quarter. We also secured a second loan forgiveness of \$50,000 from a lender who previously forgave \$50,000 of their loan in December. A new California supporter gave a \$25,000 gift after hearing about the model already established in Vermont and the aim to do the same in California. OAK is thankful to all the kind donors whose financial support has nurtured our growth.

#### 1ST QUARTER

GUEST INCOME	RETREAT INCOME	DONATIONS	LOAN FORGIVENESS	*TOTAL INCOME
\$6,530.00	\$21,802.54	\$51,721.00	\$50,000.00	\$139,892.43

\*This includes more income than the four types listed

#### AUDITED 2018 YEAR-END

GUEST INCOME	RETREAT INCOME	***DONATIONS	**LOAN FORGIVENESS	*TOTAL INCOME
\$20,990.00	\$83,890.65	\$478,525.58	\$164,100.00	\$771,036.20

\*\*\*\$310,571 of donations were special one-time gifts, not expected for 2019

\*\*Loan forgiveness was not included in previous report total income

\*This includes more income than the four types listed





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### CALIFORNIA OAK

In the first quarter of 2019, OAK's Head Teacher Jōshin offered four public meditation sessions and two week-long meditation retreats for OAK's residents. In February, the three OAK residents spent most of the month visiting the MAPLE monastery for its annual two-week intensive retreat. It was a joy for OAK to reconnect with its roots and to work and practice with friends and colleagues in Vermont. In March, Jōshin and Tashin traveled to Los Angeles for a week to visit with friends, supporters, and donors; it was a fruitful trip on many levels.

### MAPLE VILLAGE

Compelling research demonstrates that people with fulfilling relationships and a caring community have fewer health problems, are happier, and live longer. Lack of connection is associated with depression and shorter lifespan. Within the walls of MAPLE's main building, we are working every day to create a vibrant, healthy community founded on the interaction of care, love, and truth.

This year, we will expand our efforts to encompass a village of homes near our main building. This village will be an opportunity to develop a healthy and happy community integrated with the life of the Monastic Academy. When the infrastructure is completed, families will be able to construct their own homes within walking distance of the Monastic Academy. Children and adults of all ages will be able to walk with their pets along the hiking trails. Villagers will be part of the community joining in for meditation, meals, and talks. In this way, we will all feel and share a healthy social ecology of care.

During this quarter, several guests have enjoyed our newly-created apartment space. This allows them the freedom to pursue their own schedule while staying within the monastery. The apartment will also provide a much-needed living space for families when they are visiting to oversee the construction of their homes in the village. We're working with planners, architects, and engineers to thoroughly plan the site for the village and to define each step in the process of its creation. Because it is a complex process, we're moving deliberately now to build the foundation and infrastructure for the future.



## LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON JASNA TODOROVIC



### INTERVIEW WITH JASNA:

#### *Why did you join the MAPLE CoWorking Program over the winter?*

Towards the end of 2018, it became clear to me that I had been pushing myself unsustainably hard with a more-than-full-time job at a cryptocurrency startup, running my own software consultancy, constant travel between 3 countries, and doing university courses part-time. I was starting to lose my health, my mental well-being, and my productivity. I had been a long-time supporter and visitor of MAPLE, and as soon as it became clear to me that my life had become over-full and my mind utterly jumbled, I knew exactly what I needed to do. MAPLE has always been a place of healing and self-betterment for me, so I decided to restructure my life for a few months and throw myself into healing my internal world.

#### *How have you benefited from your time here?*

There was a franticness in me prior to coming here - a constant question of what's next, what do I still need to do, how can I use this time most optimally, let's go let's go let's go. Harder better faster stronger. The sentiment itself wasn't bad, but my approach to it was at best immature and at worst harmful. In my time at MAPLE, the drive to be better hasn't disappeared (if anything, it's stronger) but the unhelpful franticness has faded. I've been managing to tap into a calmness which is both restful and invigorating. The change has been gradual, and I hadn't even realized how much had changed until I stopped to reflect towards the end of my two-month stay and realized how much more grounded and invigorated and happy I was.

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

There's a certain stigma, still, perhaps especially in the fast-paced tech entrepreneurial world I am embedded in, that slowing down is a sign of weakness. My friends and colleagues were very supportive of me - much more than I expected, actually - but there were still small jabs from various directions. Can't you just do therapy? (Sure, and I am, and I think most people would benefit from therapy - but it's not mutually exclusive with what I'm doing here.) Do you really believe thinking is a bad thing? (what? no!) Are you just gonna be blissed out all the time now? (Oh my love, if you think meditation is blissful...)

More important, of course, were the jabs coming from inside. Am I weak for doing this? Am I just *running away*?

It's been helpful to have these arguments with myself, because I have consistently been able to answer no to all of them. After all, what could I possibly do with my time that would be more beneficial to me (to my work, to my productivity, to my well-being, to my relationships, and to the way I engage in the world) than intensely working with and becoming more familiar with the way my mind and body work? If those things aren't optimal, how can anything else be? I am getting to the roots, to the base layer, so that the things I build on top of it are more stable and more wonderful.

Jasna is a computer scientist turned jack-of-all-trades. She has worked as a software developer, product manager, project manager, engineering manager, founder, and has worn whatever other hats she found lying on the ground.

Throughout her life and her career, Jasna has found the greatest value and joy in the communities she has been part of. Whether the worldwide community of swing and blues dancers she has been part of for a decade, or the colleagues she has had through various jobs, or her extended crew of alternative-lifestyle-weirdos in Toronto, she has always found that the people around her are what make life worth living, and that fostering community is one of the most worthwhile endeavors in the world. This community focus and interpersonal growth is a large part of what drew her to do an extended stay at the Monastic Academy, and she has expressed profound gratitude for everything she has learned in her two months here.

Read about Jasna's experience at MAPLE on her blog at [www.todorovic.ca/](http://www.todorovic.ca/)



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## MOVING FORWARD

The first quarter of 2019 has been one of transition. We are seeing a changing of the guard with the departure of our Executive Director, Cameron, and Peter's taking on the Director role. In addition, this quarter has been devoted to getting to know new residents and apprentices as they join our ranks as well as the many guests who fill the bedrooms and the apartment.

As we move into the Spring season, it is a time for new life. We aim to fill all of our available training spots with 16 total residents and apprentices. With a strong and full apprenticeship program, we will have an optimal number of training residents to fulfill our mission.

The interest and support from many people in our community wanting to live in deep, loving community energizes us to break new ground on the village. The generous gifts received this quarter enable us to work with planners, architects, and engineers to create a site plan and begin the permitting and infrastructure for the village.

The challenges are great. Much of this work is complex and unknown. Yet, the sincerity of this community, both those in residence and those in our greater community, is what creates our core vitality. A small group of dedicated people can change the world. We can create a community and culture that we can be proud of, that aims to create omni-win outcomes for all life. Through your support, we know it is possible. Through our direct experience, we know that our nature is trustworthy, loving, caring, and connected.

In this time of crisis in the world, we are working together to build a more beautiful future for all. A future for the next generation of our planet to live lives which are more sane, more at peace, more in connection.



## SPRING SCHEDULE

**April 19 - 26**

Awakening Meditation Retreat

**May 17 - 24**

Awakening Meditation Retreat

**June 21 - June 28**

Circling Interpersonal Meditation Retreat

## 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@monasticacademy.org](mailto:info@monasticacademy.org) or call at 802-540-0820.

Thank you for your support. Together we are building a whole new culture.

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