



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2022
SUMMER
QUARTERLY
REPORT

ABOUT US



Description of CEDAR

CEDAR (Community for the Experience and Development of Awakening and Responsibility) is an international network of communities working together to create a more trustworthy culture through monastic training and leadership development. At CEDAR, we are creating monastic academies—twenty-first-century educational institutions for the spiritual leaders needed for this time of crisis. MAPLE in Vermont was the first established community, and we have now expanded to include Oak in California and Willow in Canada.

History of MAPLE

MAPLE (Monastic Academy for the Preservation of Life on Earth) is a full-time residential mindfulness and leadership training program to develop awakened leaders. Founded in 2011 in Burlington, VT, MAPLE now runs a world-class monastic training center on 125 acres in Lowell, VT. We are also building an adjacent village to scale trustworthy culture and values to impact the globe.

History of Oak

Oak is a monastic academy founded in 2018 that provides monastic training, trustworthy friendship, and spiritual guidance to those addressing society's greatest challenges in the San Francisco Bay Area.

History of Willow

Willow is the newest monastic academy located near Toronto—the first international branch of CEDAR. Founded in 2020 by Seishin Jasna Todorovic, Willow brings modern monastic training to the many beautiful communities in Canada, particularly those in Toronto and Montreal.

Center for Mindful Learning

Center for Mindful Learning (CML) is the legal, non-profit name of our United States 501(c)(3) organization founded in 2011. CML has supported mindfulness projects such as Modern Mindfulness for Schools (ModMind), the Monastic Academy, and Mindful City Project.

JOIN US

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ONLINE RESOURCES

www.monasticacademy.org
www.facebook.com/monasticacademy
www.youtube.com/c/CenterforMindfulLearning
www.twitter.com/MonasticAcademy

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

Over seven years ago, I joined the Monastic Academy. It's time for a change. Over the past several months, we have worked to transfer leadership. On June 2nd, CML's Board approved my replacement as Executive Director. However, I will continue as a part-time staff member to support the organization both in-person and remote.

Over the years, I took on many roles. I started as a resident (2015). Then I became Assistant Director (2017), Teacher (2018), and Executive Director (2019). We have accomplished a great deal including purchasing the Lowell property (2017), constructing two yurt zendos (2019?, 2021), refinancing our debt into manageable payments, leading over a dozen Circling retreats (2017-), and more.

In addition to my work as Executive Director, I've personally been privileged to introduce the practice of Circling, do three solitary cabin long-term retreats, and lead several retreats. I'm honored and awed by all of it.

Going forward, I look forward to traveling to visit other monasteries, communities, and projects. I also want to deepen my wisdom, love, and power to discover my new role and gifts I will offer. I'm terrified of what my future will entail, but I have faith that there will be a ground of friends beneath me when my chrysalis begins falling apart.

One of the greatest learnings MAPLE offered me was the importance of community—that we can go much further together than alone. Another great lesson has been overcoming my limiting beliefs of being a bad person. To have found an inner peace available at all times that can truly heal the mind. And to prove in my actions and responsibilities that I am a decent virtuous person. This strengthening of character is priceless. I vow to not forget to deepen and live those important truths.

I am proud and grateful to say Karunadhamma will be taking over as Executive Director. She has a remarkable history of service, having leadership experience in non-profits. She has served admirably as the Head of Care and as my Assistant Director. Her background in networks and community building is perfectly suited to the new horizons that MAPLE is moving towards. It has been a tremendous relief to know that I could leave for weeks at a time and Karuna could direct the center without me. And it is priceless to be able to hand off MAPLE into her capable, compassionate hands.

MAPLE is in a phase of great transition and great potential. Many of our projects and programs are undergoing transformation. It is an exciting time.



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Finally, my sincere thanks and gratitude to the many supporters and donors over the years. Many folks who gave their time, energy, funds, and friendship. Without their trust and faith in us, none of this would have been possible.

A thank you to our Board who worked together to overcome challenging quandaries while simultaneously doing their own good, full-time work in the world.

A thank you to the many generations of residents and apprentices who gave their lives while they were here to learn and develop what MAPLE is today. We struggled and cried and laughed together. And a thank you to the current residents whose maturity and skill has steadily increased over time. I am grateful that you are all stepping up to do what's needed so I can move on to my next phase.

A thank you to Ryūshin Daniel Thorson who first introduced me to MAPLE and his return strengthened my resolve to keep going.

And, of course, a thank you to Soryu Forall for his relentless pursuit, for the sake of all living beings, to do what is right and to stop doing what is wrong. It has been an amazing gift to learn from and learn with you. Your trust in me to lead the community is a mystery and treasure. And I thank you for never asking me to take on a hard job but allowing me to find my way to faith and service.

Everything that arises passes away. May I realize this truth ever more completely and do what is most important every single day. One day, when I look my nephew in the eye, and he asks, "What happened to the elephants? What happened to the Earth?" may I answer without shame that I tried to make a true difference.

In friendship,

Peter Xūramitra Park
Executive Director

LETTER FROM KARUNA



Dear Friends,

I'm honored to take on the role of Executive Director with humility and a willingness to do what is needed.

I've been extremely fortunate to work alongside Mitra (our nickname for Peter) for the last year and a half. Through his example, I've learned how to make decisions that balance a priority for Awakening training with a grounded practicality towards what it takes to run this organization. Mitra has shown me how to lead a community while caring equally for each person and the community as a whole.

In combining Awakening training with a commitment to addressing the world's greatest challenges, we're attempting to do something extremely hard—without an existing model. In always acknowledging this difficulty, Mitra has taught me how to look squarely at our mistakes while also celebrating what we've managed to accomplish. It's through watching, with admiration, the wisdom and compassion of his example that I can feel confident in taking on this role.

I'm also grateful to Soryu for exhibiting how to move through the world with a mind that takes into account all beings, while never compromising to our culture's unexamined assumptions. Soryu's unyielding commitment to our Awakening has provided a steady foundation on which everything else rests.

I'm committed to preserving the precious qualities of MAPLE and ensuring that our work continues to be grounded in purification and transformation of the mind, while also addressing the threats to life on Earth.

For the rest of 2022, we'll be focusing on improving our training curriculum. In our view, it's time for "all hands on deck", and we intend to be a refuge for those who say "Here I am, I'm ready." This training teaches people how to hold power with integrity, maintain humility and sanity amidst a world of complexity and uncertainty, and sustain emotional acuity to hold space for the immense grief of these times.

I'm honored by this opportunity to serve this community and the mission. May all who wish to give their lives to awakening and service be supported in doing so.

In gratitude,
Sophia Karuna Gallagher



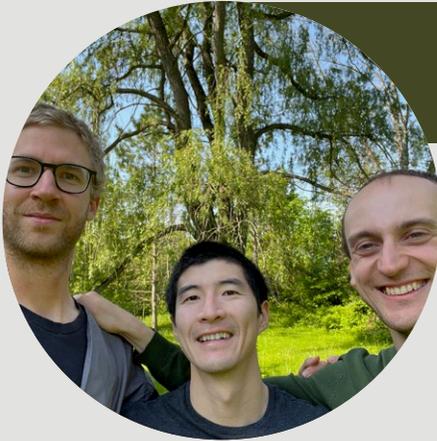
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WILLOW (CANADA)

As many plants and animals wake up throughout our grounds, the Willow ecosystem continues to grow with new guests, services, and retreats. Willow began April by welcoming our new resident Jim back to the community after his participation in last fall's Three-Month Intensive. We continue to be touched by his persistence in facing the challenges, responsibilities, and opportunities of beginning residency. April also brought Willow a lovely two-month service guest and the return of Virabhadra from his time training at Great Vow and Korinji Zen Monasteries.

To finish April, Willow had our best-attended retreat yet, a vow-and-values retreat focusing on getting in touch with our bodies, emotions, and values and then supporting each other to live in integrity with what we know to be right. This retreat continues to be part of our bridge program supporting the integration of awakening and responsibility.

May brought Willow the opportunity for increased awakening training. While Seishin trained at Daishu-in West in California, Willow residents and guests were able to spend many hours in practice through working on Willow's buildings and grounds as well as diving into a full week of awakening retreat practice.

In June, Willow welcomed past MAPLE resident Stephen to share his wisdom and skills with us for a training period of two months. We're very glad to have him, and we look forward to the deeper Circling, sutra study, and somatic work afforded by his presence.

Throughout the summer, Willow will be running Circling and Awakening retreats and will continue to build out our coworking offerings through connections in the Toronto and Montreal communities. Through our growing guest program as well as Seishin's coaching calls, we will be continuing to offer more opportunities for in-person training and one-on-one support. We're grateful to be able to do this work that brings us closer to harmony on the individual, cultural, and global level.



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FINANCIALS



As the building season begins, CML (composed of MAPLE, Oak, and CEDAR) is investing significant resources into MAPLE infrastructure. This includes the ongoing work on MAPLE village planning, repair and renovations of our physical structures (cabins and barns), and additions like expansion of our parking lot and adding small storage sheds.

This quarter CML had a total income of \$181,178 with operating expenses of \$156,476. We received a generous \$50,000 donation from one of our long-time supporters and collaborators. In addition, about 40% of the total income this quarter was from guest payments for the April and May awakening weeks as well as the SAS circling intensive and the July Circling retreat. CML also received \$17,948 in crypto donations.

The largest expense this quarter was paying off our remaining \$24,847 owed on the organization's Kia Telluride. It is likely CML will also pay off the remaining \$17,914 on the Toyota Prius this year.

Regarding liabilities, CML has a total debt of \$774,967, which is comprised of our Lowell mortgage at \$280,000, our government SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan at \$477,053 (at 2.75% annual interest) with monthly payments of \$3,500, and our remaining car loan for the Toyota Prius.

Given the financial instability of the world and rising inflation, MAPLE continues to rely on the generosity of our donors and guest programming to ensure our continued ability to offer these precious teachings, invest in our physical infrastructure, and respond to the suffering of the world. This year's income includes an earmarked \$295,000 grant for future retreats around artificial intelligence over the next few years. Our needs for the physical maintenance, village costs, and paying back our debt require more funding.

CML 2022 YEAR-TO-DATE

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS & GRANTS	TOTAL INCOME*	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$123,173	\$488,571	\$621,000	\$261,651

*This includes more income than the types listed.

*Figures listed do not include Willow, our Canadian location, which is a separate legal entity.
The above financial tables reflect the combined financials of CEDAR, MAPLE, and Oak.*

INVESTMENTS AND DEBT

TOTAL DEBT	CAPEX**
\$774,967	\$434,066

**Large asset purchases & investments (CAPEX) are not included in annual operating expenses listed above but depreciated over many years.

LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON PHILIP TURNER



Philip Turner grew up in New York City. As a pianist, he went to a performing arts high school. At 18 he decided to go to Myanmar and become a Buddhist monk. Philip was ordained at the Pa-Auk Monastery later that same year, only to disrobe after 15 months. Philip soon moved to Finland, his mother's native land, and lived there for some years. He studied acting, played music, served in the Finnish Defense Forces, and worked in construction before eventually applying for the apprentice program at MAPLE.

INTERVIEW WITH PHILIP:

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

After disrobing, I came back to New York, to my parent's home. There, my dad told me about this revolutionary teacher named "Soryu" and suggested that a possible path forward for me would be to go and train with him. The idea excited and terrified me, but I was done. I was done with spirituality. With sanghas and doctrines and the whole darn thing. So I flew across the Atlantic and tried to live under a rock. Five years later, after quitting my job, I decided I'd give this "Soryu" guy a chance. Thinking, so very naively, "What do I have to lose?"

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

I don't like these kinds of questions. It feels immodest to answer directly, and almost like I'm ungrateful if I don't. What surprises me most about the way I am being taught here is how I'm consistently encouraged or forced to make this training, this path, these teachings real. To really investigate what is true. Occasionally, it is actually demanded of me that I find out what matters. What's important. What is sacred? Yes. Being forced to grapple with real questions in real time is how I have benefited from my stay. Is that immodest to say?

What has been your biggest challenge?

Oh, you know, the mind. It's hard. Very hard having one. Seeing the world through one. So difficult. Things become so complicated. So personal. So confusing! Thinking this, feeling that. Wishing things were otherwise, or always as they are. Living shoulder to shoulder in a space where a question could get asked at any moment which might change everything. It's hard. Then fun. Then harder.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to?

Yes, I don't like these kinds of questions. Let me be coy! I'll answer in prayer. May I look forward to the journey as much as the destination. May I be happy, and may all beings be happier than me.

LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON ZAK STEIN



Zak Stein grew up on the East Coast of the US and managed to find a way through several school systems as a “high achieving dyslexic.” During doctoral training in psychology and philosophy at Harvard, he discovered the field of existential risk and has since dedicated his life to working on the resolution of the world’s most pressing problems. Zak currently works as a writer, researcher, and thought leader at the front edge of understanding how educational systems and approaches are related to problems of civilizational collapse. Zak is also a consultant to governments and businesses seeking to mitigate catastrophic risks through educational innovation, as well as a mentor to individuals seeking to use their power responsibly. His work can be found at The Consilience Project, and at the Center for World Philosophy and Religion (formerly the Center for Integral Wisdom). His book *Education in a Time Between Worlds* has been widely acclaimed, considered by some as one of the most important books on the philosophy of education to be published this century. Zak has been a longtime caregiver and musician, as well as a practitioner of both Zen and Jewish mysticism.

INTERVIEW WITH ZAK:

Why did you come to MAPLE?

During a time of major personal change, I decided to take steps to live in a community where I could completely dedicate myself to practice and service. MAPLE is unique in the world in combining deep spiritual practices with profound awareness of existential risks, and holding these in a monastic container. There was no other choice for me to make as I entered this new phase of my life.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

Living in a monastic community has eased my mind and enlivened my spirits. It has been profound and inspiring to share time and space with others who deeply value meditation and hold a serious sense of religiosity, and who frame this in terms of a realistic and articulate view of just how precarious the planetary situation is. I am supported by the routine and discipline as well as the culture of reflection, earnestness, and love.

What has been your biggest challenge?

Having never lived in community before, it has taken time to get used to having all these people around who care about my well being and what I am doing. I am slowly overcoming my introversion, and struggle to give and receive affection to the degree that MAPLE makes possible. My work is intensely intellectual (I brought with me hundreds of books), and so there is a generative tension between all these words, ideas, and concepts that I must grapple with and the spacious mindful emptiness that permeates the grounds here. This is a good problem to have.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to?

I hope to continue to deepen my practice and to solidify my awareness and vows to benefit all beings. In the coming year my work in the fields of education and existential risk will take on greater intensity and consequence. It is my goal to enroll MAPLE as an important center in a growing network of innovative educational efforts addressing planetary crises. I seek to help MAPLE become a place where world historical individuals can engage in trainings that change their lives— where a viable future can be forged in the fires of compassionate awareness.



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POETRY & PHOTOS

We began the Awakening Poetry Integration Initiative to hold our insights that have arisen from the clarity of retreat. Here is a collection of our favorite poems by the community.



Fare Well Again

I was born for good-byes,
I die with every hello—
with every universe
that comes before me
draped in the skin and
scent of consequence.
I will slip into your alchemical heart
and leave a flower at its shrine
with every tear you shed—
every bounce of laughter—
every moment linking these.
Because, there must be a place
of goodness in the making;
It must spin itself out of
each illuminated atom,
belong to each cell of this flesh
on this tiny patch of voiceless earth
having swallowed the sky, for perspective.
If each can be no such place
explain to me this hope—
this crystal vision of incendiary hearts;
tell me that this exquisite pain
is a tarnished lie unworthy of the endless
stream of tears and exultation—
then, tell the children the same.
I dare you.

—Ani Choetso



With every stroke of the paintbrush
the artist outlines the body
and the mind fills it in

With every touch of the breeze
the lines sway and flutter
detaching from each other
and drifting away
like leaves

And where once appeared a body
there is only birdsong

—Seishin





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POETRY & PHOTOS



Thank you Soryu
for teaching me the words
keep going
so I could hear it
when the mountain path was yelling it
to my running shoes
step for step
heartbeat for heartbeat
heading home
so I could hear it
when my heart was yelling it
to my being
heartbeat for heartbeat
coming home

—Anežka Sokol

From the depths of not knowing
all that is hidden comes alive.
And yet, when all is perfectly reflected,
we ask 'but what is True?'
Though I would give countless lifetimes
to become such a mirror for the world,
when it is my own confusion that lights the Way
what is left do
but in Great Faith cry out
Please! Take me!
This imperfect tool of many contradictions
Please. Use me up.
Until there can be no doubt
that this precious life was well lived.

—Karuna Gallagher



FUTURE EVENTS

June 2 - December 4 2022

Circling Europe SAS

July 7 - 10 2022

LevelUp Immersion with CircleAnywhere

July 12 - 17 2022

Circling Retreat

August 29 - September 6 2022

Vision Quest with Darren Silver

September 23 - 28 2022

Retreat (More Info Soon)

October 21 - 28 2022

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

All events are subject to change or cancellation.

JOIN US

If you are interested in our events please don't hesitate to reserve a spot.

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

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