



# MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

## CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE  
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF  
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2022  
**FALL**  
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](http://www.monasticacademy.org)  
[www.facebook.com/monasticacademy](https://www.facebook.com/monasticacademy)  
[www.youtube.com/c/CenterforMindfulLearning](https://www.youtube.com/c/CenterforMindfulLearning)  
[www.twitter.com/MonasticAcademy](https://www.twitter.com/MonasticAcademy)

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

Stepping into the role of Executive Director for the living, breathing organism that is MAPLE has been an incredible opportunity for growth. MAPLE has transitioned from a small, scrappy eight-person start-up to an established twenty-person operation. To accommodate these growing pains, we have started a restructuring that will improve information flow, management ability, and scaling capacity. Despite this flurry of change, we've continued to offer a steady variety of transformational events and programs, which benefit our trainees and guests alike.

As our community continues to transform, we keep these questions close to our hearts: What is ours to do? What are we offering the world? From this place of actionable inquiry, we step forward into uncertain futures with faith that each next step is guided by wisdom and taken alongside trusted friends.

For the first time in our history, we have a sizable group of dedicated individuals who have committed to staying with CEDAR long-term. Some of this group have entered into an "Action Inquiry" process to honestly and openly question, decide, act, and reflect as we move forward together, creating the future of the organization and in particular the MAPLE training program.

### **What happened this season**

This season, we've offered three Circling retreats, a Vision Quest with Darren Silver, an Awakening weekend plus day-longs, and dyadic emotional processing training. The Scotts invited us over to their lovely home to teach us bushcraft skills for a day. We hosted our Board member Kaishin Harrison Heyl for a solitary retreat on the land and were gifted with a heart-warming and inspiring post-retreat talk. We hosted a group of educators working together on developing a curriculum for wisdom education that can respond to the meta-crisis. This group included Zak Stein, John Vervaeke, Bonitta Roy, Soryu Forall, and others, and we wish them well on their quest to bring wisdom into more contexts.

We were ecstatic to finally welcome Keshin Renee Dee and Konshin Richard Dee as permanent villagers, helping them (and their dog Atticus) move into their new home. This is a huge step for us, to create not just a monastic training center but a whole ecosystem of people who live, work, and retire together.

### **Looking forward**

Our Head Teacher Soryu Forall will rejoin us in October, when we'll begin an intensive Awakening-focused period of training. To ready ourselves, we've been learning from the wisdom of our interim teachers, Joshin and Renshin. May this upcoming period dedicated to the purification of our minds and hearts enable us to become what is needed in this time of transition.

With gratitude,  
Sophia Karuna Gallagher



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## WILLOW (CANADA)

In July, Willow continued its summer of Circling and relational practices with two circling retreats and many guests and new friends coming through our doors. Several new, rich relationships were born, and we are so grateful for our growing community.

At the end of July, we transitioned back into a more awakening-focused container, starting with a week-long awakening week studying the beautiful Maha-Assapura Sutra. The group of residents and guests moved through it with grace and skill, and we are inspired by their hard work.

August brought a service trip into Virabhadra's training, allowing him to offer his monastic support at a conference of Effective Altruists in San Francisco. This is the first service trip Willow has done, and we are excited about future opportunities to support our broader communities in their endeavors.

In September, we held another iteration of our flagship offering, the Living Your Vow retreat - a week of connecting with our values, learning new ways of knowing, and discovering how to live in integrity with our vow. As part of our project to bridge the gap between Awakening and Responsibility, this iteration of the retreat includes 6 monthly follow-up group calls to support the group in their intentions as they return to their regular lives and bring what they have discovered into the world.

We ended September by saying goodbye to our 6-month resident, Jim. He has been a bright beacon in our community, and an endless source of inspiration and kindness. We wish him all the best as he continues the next part of his journey.

In October, Virabhadra and Seishin will be returning to MAPLE for a period of deep training with Soryu Forall. We are excited and humbled by this opportunity to train with our teacher.



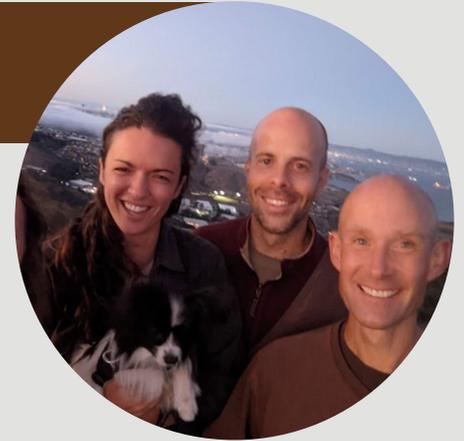
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## AI SAFETY RETREAT



In September our head teacher, a resident, and two former apprentices met to discuss how artificial intelligence might be used to support the practice of the Dharma in a world increasingly run by information processing systems. The outcome of the retreat was a much clearer picture of the relationship between artificial intelligence and suffering, and a technical paper presenting this understanding in the language of contemporary AI alignment discourse.

The team identified two long-standing hard problems at the center of the AI alignment puzzle. The first of these is about the goals that a powerful AI system ought to pursue. The Dharma as taught by the Buddha tells us that the purpose of life is not to arrange the material world into some ultimate configuration, but in fact to escape from preferences and find an end to suffering. The basic challenge faced during the research retreat was: how can an AI system – which is based on information gathering and goal-achievement – help with this? The answer the team came to is that any such AI system would need to be able to measure true spiritual practice. However, measuring spiritual practice is fraught, and attempts to measure practice via sensors seem to consistently miss the mark.

The difficult thing, it seems, about using artificial intelligence to spread the Dharma, is that we are accustomed to using our own intelligence to do the work of designing artificial intelligence systems. If we use only our intelligence to build artificial intelligence systems then we will simply perpetuate the delusions present in our own limited intelligence. The challenge, then, is to engage in conceptual and engineering work from a mind that is not limited in this way.

The good news is that this is exactly what our community has to offer the world: a willingness to engage with technical problems from a mind of practice. In order to do this, we need both an established base of spiritual practice, and a community that is engaged at the cutting edge of the technical problems that affect the well-being of life on Earth. Many institutions in the world today offer one of these; few offer both. Our goal with this work is to engage in both of these worlds simultaneously.

The technical paper is being finalized; a draft can be viewed on the “writings” page of our website.



## BUSHCRAFT DAY

This past July, our longtime friends, mentors, and dearest supporters, Charles and Judy Scott (parents of Soryu) hosted us for a full day experience in knife work, outdoor survival, shelter building, knot tying, fire-starting, archery, and slingshots.

Gathering in a semicircle in front of the Scotts' beautiful home before stunning vistas, it has become somewhat of a tradition that we offer Judy each of our names. With lay ordination being a rite of passage for many trainees, name updates are significant. Each year that the Scotts have hosted us, there have been upwards of 15 of us. Judy repeats all of our names back to us, one after the other. Her oceanic presence, precision and attention to each name and its person seem to stop time.

Following that, Scotty led us in an intricately planned hands-on Bushcraft seminar with, individual work stations, a knife work demonstration that reflected a lifelong devotion, and a spectral array of natural and handmade substances from which fire might spring: char cloth, pyrite, flint, amadou fluff and punk wood to name a few.

We learned to strike and merge these elements to give rise to life sustaining flame. Fire starting is a language spoken between human hands, flint, steel, and an infinite array of burnables. There is poetry, rhyme and reason to it.

After a delectable picnic of pizza and corn on the cob prepared by Judy, Scotty led us in slingshot and archery practice. The pinging of ball bearings against a frying pan meant progress. Six bow stations were set up in order of increasing draw weight. There are very few more satisfying feelings than the sound of an arrow burying its point in its target. It's the feeling of returning home.

Among the most precious of all, in Scotty sent each of us home with many generous gifts— an illustriously hand-packed kit of ignitable substances and survival necessities, knives from his collection, outdoor gloves, outdoor gear of many kinds, a bow and a set of arrows so that we might continue to actualize our skills throughout the year.



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### CHATAUQUA TOUR

The second annual Mobile Monastery Chautauqua Tour has officially begun. The Chautauqua is a spiritual community on wheels that organizes events and builds community connection. Through it, we leverage an ecology of practices including modern monasticism, earth-based modalities, and healing arts. By providing all of our offerings by dāna instead of for a fixed price, the Mobile Monastery Chautauqua Tour is moving beyond old models of passive consumption and stewarding a new economic system of exchange and empowerment.



Actualized and led by Autumn Turley, this year's tour includes current MAPLE resident Sky Taylor, and former MAPLE stewards Matthew Barrieau, Thea Hinkle, and Michael Kris Welsh. They will travel across the country for 3.5 months teaching new spiritual practices to hundreds of people, modeling dāna as an alternative economic model, and demonstrating what it means to bring CEDAR teachings into the world. Visit <https://www.chautauqua.tours/> to learn more.

### RESPOND RETREAT



Wisdom is not a state, but an unfolding process guided by practice and connection. In recent years, many forums and channels have emerged for talking about wisdom. The Respond Network aims to shift the conversation around wisdom beyond discussion and into action.

This August, MAPLE hosted a high-octane gathering of nine internationally renowned wisdom teachers including John Vervaeke, Bonnitta Roy, Zak Stein, Beena Sharma, Rafe Kelley, Kati Devany, Layman Pascal, Steve March and our founder and head teacher, Soryu Forall. Each of these teachers brought a unique perspective on how to cultivate wisdom in the contemporary context. The teachers discussed such topics as X-Risk and Wisdom, Wisdom and Culture, Wisdom and Collective Intelligence, and much more. These conversations will be used to design innovative curriculums for wisdom training.

The gathering represents an exciting culmination of Daniel Ryūshin Thorson's life work. Respond participants wrestled in good faith with the problem of cultivating wisdom in a time of planetary crisis. Respond's future collaborations will design and implement wisdom cultivation curriculums in a wide variety of communities, organizations, and institutions.

## VILLAGER SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON KESHIN & KONSHIN DEE



*Keshin (Renee Anthony) Dee is a retired symphonic bassoonist, professor of bassoon and music theory, and arts advocate active in roles from board president to theater producer to union administrator. A lifelong calling to facilitate understanding and connection is woven into the fabric of her life. A shift away from her arts career created space for the MAPLE community. Certified as a Unified Mindfulness Coach, she was a major support in developing UM's annual online global event, Immersion, as well as helping to launch the UM Pathways program in India.*

*Konshin (Richard) Dee fell in love with MAPLE when he visited his son, Jōshin, in 2016. He was moved by the early morning chanting and jolted out of his stupor by the work ethic. His former selves have included: clarinet performer and teacher, corporate CFO and COO for a major rubber additive distributor, 20+ years of 12-step work, meditation and mindfulness coach, bicyclist, yoga and fitness enthusiast, father, loving husband, and grateful son. Konshin will be an active member of the community, with special focus on gardening, land conservation, and systems improvement.*

*Keshin and Konshin met as young musicians in graduate school. Over the course of their 44-year marriage they founded and performed in chamber music ensembles in Wisconsin, New York City, and Akron, Ohio. They were blessed with the challenge and joy of raising son Jōshin and daughter Emily, the hardest and most rewarding job they have ever had. Their new home has been designed to be a welcoming presence for the entire CML family. They are thrilled to be among the first families to join the MAPLE Village.*

INTERVIEW WITH KESHIN & KONSHIN:

### **What's it like to finally come home to the MAPLE Village?**

It's like falling in love for the first time – the unreasonable joy of being seen, held, known by one you trust, who trusts and cares for you. Feeling more deeply every day that this joy is why we started this journey. Multiply that first love experience by the community, the land, the home we've built = unreasonable joy.

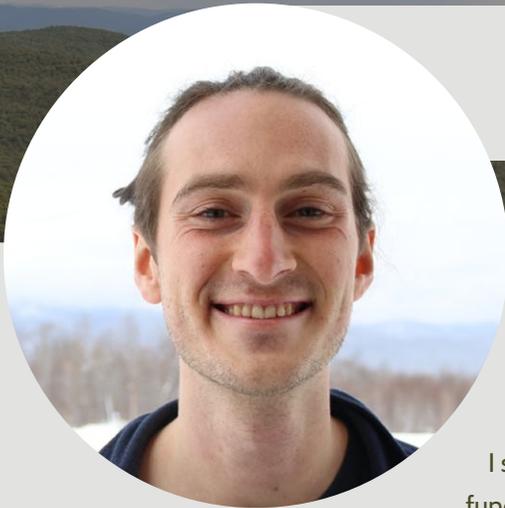
### **What were some challenges you faced in getting here?**

Building a home during Covid was the icing on the challenge cake, resulting in delays and financial setbacks. A cancer diagnosis during lockdown was another challenge. Coming to terms with our differences about the design of our house presented much grist for the practice mill. The process of downsizing was one of the biggest challenges. We're grateful to have done this work ourselves, rather than leaving it to our kids when we die.

### **What are your hopes for the rest of your life with us?**

To see this community grow in love and joy as families join us in co-creating a way of life that is a model for nourishing connection, deepening practice, and sustaining life on earth. To give all the kinds of support we can while we are able, and to gracefully receive the support we will need as we age. To die at peace and without regret, having lived such a life in such a community.

# LEADERSHIP EMERGES: PROFILE ON BODHI JOE PUCCI



## INTERVIEW WITH BODHI

### *Why did you join the MAPLE Residency Program?*

I sensed that meditation was critical to my own personal growth and happiness, and fundamental to the maturation of humankind. Meditation has transformed not only my wellbeing, but also my relational and sense-making capacities. I intuited a connection between spirituality and systems change. When searching for a vocation at the nexus of this intersection, MAPLE graced my radar. I was touched deeply by the community as a guest, experienced unprecedented growth and happiness during my apprenticeship, and stayed as a resident due to a newfound vow to realize awakening and create systems of education for ethical worldbuilding.

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

I've learned how to facilitate, design training programs, and run an education non-profit. I've shed layers of masks, deepened my vulnerability and power, and formed spiritual friendships that are as intimate as any relationships I've had in my life. I've come to see how the ways of seeing that have run my life—the need to feel comfortable, to mentally understand, to be independent—have been behind the suffering that pervades my being and this world. I've gained the capacity to incrementally get over myself and see that this life isn't about me – that giving myself to something beyond is the way to true peace.

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

In the beginning, my biggest challenge was not being able to understand and express my emotional life, and feeling the pain of how this limited others' ability to relate to and feel inspired by me. Being around other vulnerable male leaders has been huge for my growth in this area. Lately, my biggest challenge has been related to the fear of letting go of the mundane life, and being humbled by the colossal task of becoming who I need to be in order to walk this path to its end and give my life completely to answering the plea of suffering beings.

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

I recently stepped into serving Karuna as Director's Assistant and supporting our community members in the Care role. Learning how to run a non-profit organization and help people overcome their deepest psychological, emotional, and relational blockages will be critical to my future goal of building and leading a youth vocational academy for civilizational redesign.

Bodhi was born and raised in NYC in a family of musicians, architects, and athletes. His childhood and college years were filled with competitive sports, which were his main sources of joy and leadership. During his sophomore year of college, in what he can only now call a spiritual flash, he knew he was here to reform systems of education that enable people to mature in their capacity to live lives of supreme happiness and service. Awarded a post-graduate grant to travel across a dozen countries, he gained insight into creating transformative learning environments. A Thai forest monastery stood out above all, but he sensed that something more was needed. In the midst of subsequent existential angst, he discovered MAPLE. After nearly two years of training here, he is committed to growing a network of transformative wisdom institutions that will play a critical role in addressing the catastrophic risks to life on Earth.



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## FINANCIALS

The changing color of the leaves that surround us signals the arrival of the Fall season and reminds us that the building season will be over soon. As we wrap up our building projects for the year we celebrate all of the physical indications of a growing organization. By the time the snow falls we will have invested more than \$100,000 in various new assets this year, including the conversion of the barn into a workshop and new housing for staff.

This quarter CML had a total income of \$59,910 with operating expenses of \$89,118. In addition, about 60% of the total income this quarter was from guest payments. CML also received a generous \$30,000 donation to support the Respond Retreat that was held in July.

The largest single expense this quarter was paying off our remaining \$14,056 owed on the organization's Toyota Prius resulting in the achievement of our goal to own both of our organizational vehicles outright by the end of this year.

Regarding liabilities, CML has a total debt of \$1,066,555, which consists of our Lowell mortgage at \$280,000, and our government SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan at \$786,555 (at 2.75% annual interest). In July we finally received the last disbursement deposit of the SBA loan of \$320,002. We initially applied for the disaster relief funds at the beginning of the pandemic as we were experiencing significant decreases in revenue from our programming — having to pause accepting new guests for a time. Thanks to this government program and the rallying of our generous donors we were able to weather the storm.

As we look ahead at this upcoming quarter, we are excited to foresee continued support from our compassionate network of donors, without whom our work would not be possible. We plan to close out the year with a Fall fundraising campaign ending on "Giving Tuesday" to jump start our 2023 programming.



### CML 2022 YEAR-TO-DATE

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS & GRANTS	TOTAL INCOME*	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$137,838	\$532,843	\$681,949	\$415,776

\*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 REMAINING DEBT	YEAR-TO-DATE CAPEX**
\$1,066,555	\$104,638

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



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POETRY & PHOTOS



**The River**

The river is flowing  
So deeply through my being  
Unhindered by worry  
Unhindered by doubt

The river is growing  
Faster than ever before  
Pushing the edges  
Ready to burst forth  
and flood the plains

The river is flowing  
So deeply through my being  
Propelled by the mystery  
Propelled by faith

The river reminds me  
Of my wildness,  
My true nature

The river re-wilds me  
Back to what's real,  
Back to connection

Together, with the river  
I flow. Together,  
In love  
We grow

- Dan

# FUTURE EVENTS

**October 13 - 16 2022**

LevelUp Immersion with CircleAnywhere

**October 21 - 28 2022**

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

**November 11 - 18 2022**

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

**December 1 - 4 2022**

Circling Europe SAS

**January 6 - 20 2023**

Two-Week Awakening Period 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.

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

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