



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH



CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2022
WINTER
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 member of CEDAR. Founded in 2020, 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,

As winter deepens and the snow falls, the shorter days and fewer projects make way for entering a more focused Awakening season. The community has built up significant momentum after the last few months of retreats, more seamlessly flowing between Awakening and Responsibility periods. We welcomed three solo retreatants back into the community in late January after their three-month-long cabin retreats. We now continue to support two more community members in their pursuit of this dedicated training. In the new year, our Head Teacher Soryu Forall will be offering two ten-day retreats, a seven-day retreat, and a two-week retreat leading up to our yearly Vesak celebration in May. In between these retreats, our Vision Quest guide, Darren Silver, will be co-leading an embodied dance retreat with Dayna Seraye in March.

For the final two months of 2022, the community entered a deep study of *Homo Deus* and *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari. By looking at the historical context for our current situation, we're establishing a foundation for understanding recent advancements in AI and the role that our practice plays in addressing the risks it poses. It has been helpful in relating to the widespread adoption of ChatGPT and Lensa AI and their impacts on both our minds and our societal systems. By studying the historical trajectory of our species and the way our minds have co-arisen with the world, we can be motivated by a commitment to transforming these systems with a mind of wisdom and compassion.

In the more Awakening-focused period in early 2023, we are diving into studies of the Buddhist doctrine using a new curriculum developed by Soryu and staff villager Bodhi Joe Pucci. With a mix of sutra study, group exercises, talks, and Q&As with Soryu, we are living the dharma more deeply in this community. We are grateful for this rare opportunity to study these profound teachings.

It has been heartening to expand and deepen our community at a time when isolation and confusion seem to be growing. We've welcomed three new residents, and a few existing residents have extended their commitments. Our new property manager Wenzday has also joined us this season. Despite waves of uncertainty for our collective future, it is encouraging to look around the meal table and be among so many committed to the path and to shaping a better world.

We're also grateful to be supported by our wider community. The end-of-year fundraiser for our scholarship fund was a great success! We've raised \$26,570 in order to enable first-year residents, long-term stewards, and retreat guests to participate in the training. We hope that this money will ensure that our programming remains accessible while also meeting our collective expenses so we may continue to serve. Each person who has contributed has touched us by nurturing and strengthening our community and our work.

May we all look towards the uncertain future knowing we are among friends.

In gratitude,

Sophia Karuna Gallagher



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TATA FELIPE & RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND

Our community has been enriched this year by a deepening connection with Tata* Felipe Kajkan Mejía Sepet, a Kaqchikel Maya day-keeper, a position of spiritual authority for keeping the count of the Maya sacred calendar and for performing ceremony in alignment with its energetic system.

Tata Felipe has supported us in maintaining right relationship with the land at MAPLE and the many beings who inhabit it: in May, we held a powerful fire ceremony for us at our Vision Quest basecamp site, to make offerings to the land and to connect with its myriad beings. Tata Felipe facilitated the ceremony simultaneously from Iximché, a sacred site in Guatemala for the Kaqchikel people. We held the opportunity with a sense of deep gratitude for the preciousness of being supported by a longstanding lineage of reciprocal connection to land and reverence for life.

Tata Felipe has offered talks to the community over Zoom. Most recently, he offered a talk as a complement to Soryu's ongoing talk series in which we are discussing the history of worldviews and empire, and investigating how certain worldviews have accumulated influence and power. Tata Felipe has encouraged each of us to establish a relationship with our nawal, a guardian spirit which imbues one's personal life energy and patterns, and each of us a mission to fulfill in this life. Through the connection with the nawal, we facilitate the flow of life energy through us and find a way to give our lives to something beyond ourselves.

We have also learned about the resilience of the Maya people and their Cosmovision in the face of five centuries of continued affronts by the modern global system, offering us a way to reflect on the qualities and values that we must cultivate to lend resilience amidst apocalyptic circumstances.

Foremost among these values are reverence for all of life, a commitment to collective harmony and practices, and a sense of responsibility for maintaining right relationships of reciprocity and respect. His is a precious offering for our community: a way of thinking and being that is rooted in a non-modern world, and which has deeply enriched our process of questioning assumptions embedded from our secular humanist society.

**Tata, literally "father" in many Maya languages, is an honorific used to address elders and spiritual leaders*



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RENUNCIATE PATH



Renunciation moves us toward freedom from grasping and accumulation. Everyone gets to practice some degree of renunciation at MAPLE and taste the liberation that comes from simple living. For those in the training who wish to take that all the way, MAPLE has introduced the role of Renunciate to the program.

Renunciates take a vow of celibacy, live in small cabins with few possessions, and prioritize their practice above all else. MAPLE did not previously have the affordance to have Renunciates on the land—because all our residents were needed to help run the non-profit. Now, we have made the shifts necessary to support practitioners to live a life devoted to Awakening for the sake of all beings. We honor their sacrifice by making them offerings of food and shelter, and we work even harder and with more enthusiasm and conviction, knowing that we are supporting deep practice.



PLEASE JOIN US

Vesak - Friday, May 5 2023

&

10-Year Anniversary - Saturday, May 6 2023

We would love for our larger community to be with us in person for these special occasions.

Please save the dates!

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON MATTHEW BARRIEAU



Matthew was born, raised, and educated in Greater Boston. He wanted to be a doctor when he was a kid, but his love of stories led him to study literature in college. He spent a postgraduate fellowship on organic farms in Ireland, where he cultivated (along with potatoes) a passion for museums and cultural preservation. He left this field during the pandemic, feeling called to directly address the root of suffering in his own life and in the world.

He sat his first meditation retreat at MAPLE and joined as an apprentice in the fall of 2021. He applied for residency without being accepted, but continued to visit MAPLE for retreats while pursuing personal development through modalities like IFS and Circling. After traveling for three months with the Mobile Monastery Chautauqua Tour, he re-applied, and his residency began this season.

INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW:

Why did you join the MAPLE Residency Program?

A year ago, I had some noble aspirations, but I was also running away: from a failing relationship, work that didn't satisfy me, most of all my own habits. I had hoped training here would re-make me from scratch, so I wouldn't have to take responsibility for myself. It turns out to be quite the opposite. I'm here to put this life to good use, and I can't if I refuse to acknowledge any part of it. Of course, that's not the same as clinging to old patterns. It's seeing them, making peace with them, letting them go. And when you're here full-time, there's nowhere for them—or you—to hide.

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

During my first retreat here, I learned that meditation is more than thinking I'm meditating. There's actually something I can bring forth, but it doesn't look like my idea of it. So that shook me out of my complacency. When I came back as an apprentice, I came to realize that everything, every circumstance and reaction, is just a mirror for my own mind. And then on the Chautauqua Tour, I was pushed into my edges again and again, so I couldn't help but grow all the time. The biggest gains have been in self-confidence, which has deepened my capacity for trust.

What has been your biggest challenge?

I thought it was dealing with anger, but that's not really true. That keeps coming up, but the real issue there is my unwillingness to accept and show up in my imperfections. And that's fueled by this relentless effort to conceptualize my experience. It's the story of myself as imperfect I can't accept; it's the story of my body's energy as anger, of anger as wrong, that I judge. When I'm just here, now, there's no problem—so the challenge is to trust the here and now.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to as you continue as a Resident?

I'm really looking forward to seeing the seasons roll through the mountains here, the dance we're in with this land. As for my goals, right now I'm investigating integrity. If I can continue that without turning it into a concept, I'll be on track.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON HONSHIN GE



INTERVIEW WITH HONSHIN:

Since finishing your residency at MAPLE, how has your training informed your next phases of life?

Living in community at MAPLE and learning from every person I met has opened my eyes up to possible life and career paths outside of the strict confines of business, government, or academia. I was raised with a very narrow standard of what success or fulfillment in life means, so seeing beyond that view has been very important (to the point that I am considering whether to take up a formal monastic commitment after graduation).

What have been your biggest challenges integrating the practice outside of MAPLE?

Through my time at MAPLE I have been able to deepen my relationship to an unconditional connection between all beings. Ironically, my inability to directly convey that connection has led to some loneliness and alienation around many of my peers. I have a sense of being out of place and yearning for a lost time. But I also have faith that these feelings of conditional separation in my mind will fall away with practice. I was warned that although being at a training center like MAPLE is hard, living in accordance with truth while outside of that disciplined container is far more difficult—and I couldn't appreciate how true that was until after I left. No one is there to hold a mirror to your conduct and thoughts for you, whereas that is always present at MAPLE.

How have you been able to interdependently embody MAPLE's vision and mission out in the world?

I can't pretend to be a teacher and give complete answers or training on the path, but I can help inspire others to ask the right questions. I try to bring up the possibility of a different view in deep conversations—something beyond the materialistic and self-interested perspective that society grants us. There is always a precious chance that it clicks and someone realizes there could be truth outside of that rigid framework.

Honshin Ge grew up studying visual arts and trained at a traditional artist's atelier, hoping to move towards a career in illustration. They first took up meditation to overcome the critical thoughts, perfectionism, and self-consciousness that impeded their art practice. Their inability to change that pattern of perfectionism and self-obsession incited a desperate attempt to understand what the self actually was. That inquiry led to the end of life as they knew it, and a search for truth beyond mind and thought. Through serendipity, they found Ryūshin's Emerge podcast and learned about MAPLE and its mission. Their deep interest in the podcast's discussions of spiritual practice, systems change, and collapse led them to volunteer as a transcription and writing assistant for Emerge—after which they were invited for a MAPLE apprenticeship. They were later accepted as a resident, and lived in the MAPLE community for eight months in 2021. Currently, Honshin is pursuing a degree in Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems at University of California Davis.



FINANCIALS

The Center for Mindful Learning, Inc. (CML), consisting of CEDAR, Oak, and MAPLE, is celebrating a strong finish to an overall positive year. MAPLE is creating a scholarship fund designed to make the training more accessible to everyone. For this year's end-of-year fundraising campaign, all of the donations received went into the new fund. The campaign began with a successful Giving Tuesday that brought in \$14,766. MAPLE then received another \$11,804 throughout December for a total of \$26,570.



This quarter, CML's total income was \$287,359 with operating expenses of \$110,107. For the year, the total income earned was \$995,238 and total operating expenses were \$557,893. \$295,000 of the income earned this year was in the form of a grant designated for research in the field of Artificial Intelligence to be completed over the next several years. Also, a \$250,000 donation was received this quarter and is intended for infrastructure investments and personnel costs over the next two years.

Roughly \$135,000 (17%) of CML's total money spent this year is not captured in the operating budget because the acquisition of assets are expensed over time. In addition, 50% of the total income this year was from individual donations.

CML invested \$110,446 in several building projects this year, including the creation of new housing, into which several residents will transition out of the dorms as they take on greater responsibilities at the organization. The largest expense this quarter was \$24,000 to complete the two new cabins MAPLE began building this summer. This additional staff housing has allowed CML to free up more space for working together on collaborative projects.

CML continued to steadily pay off its debt throughout the year. Its current total debt is \$1,055,869—consisting of the mortgage for the Lowell property at \$280,000, and the government SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan at \$775,869.

CML 2022 YEAR-TO-DATE

GUEST INCOME	DONATIONS & GRANTS	TOTAL INCOME*	TOTAL EXPENSES
\$158,245	\$824,083	\$995,238	\$557,893

*This includes more income than the three types listed.

INVESTMENTS AND DEBT

TOTAL REMAINING DEBT	YEAR-TO-DATE CAPEX**
\$1,055,869	\$136,242

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

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



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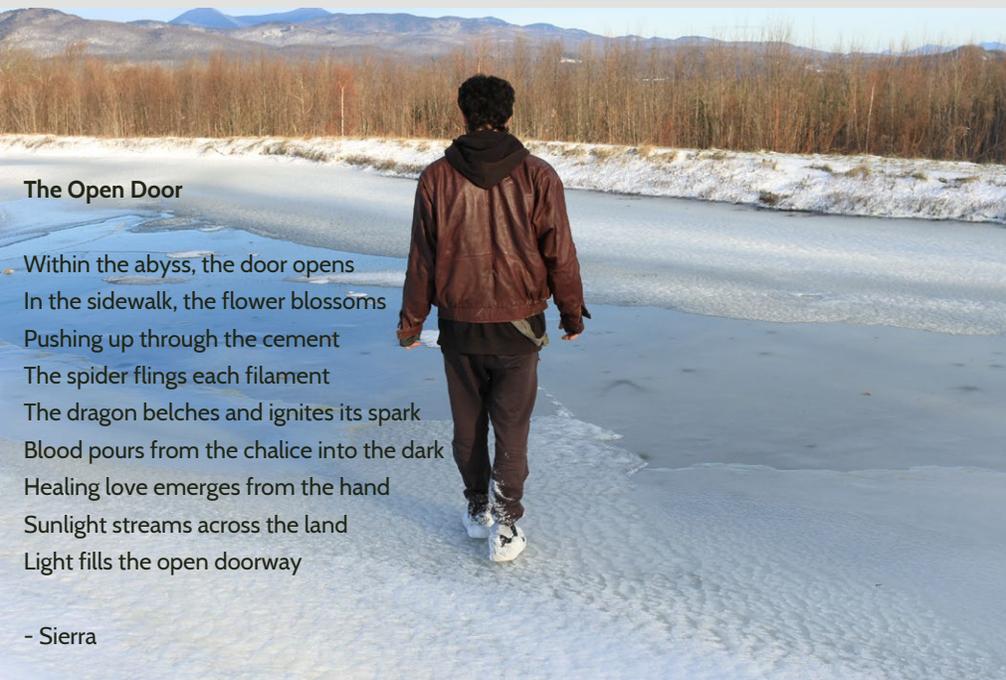
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POETRY & PHOTOS

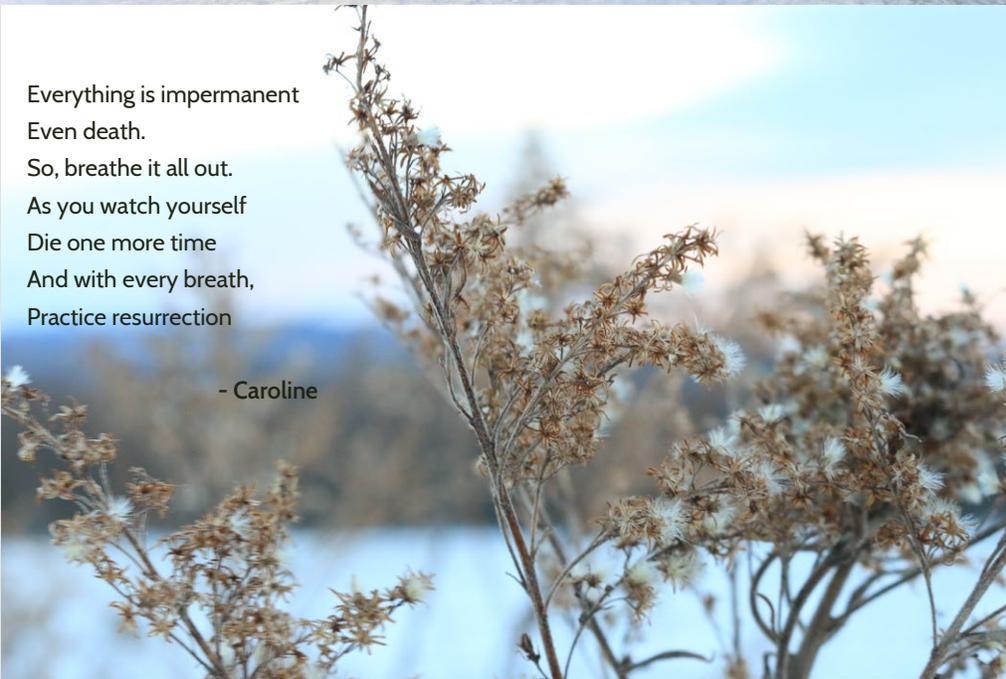
We began the Awakening Poetry Integration Initiative to hold our insights that have arisen from the clarity of retreat. Here is a collection of our favorite poems by the community.



The Open Door

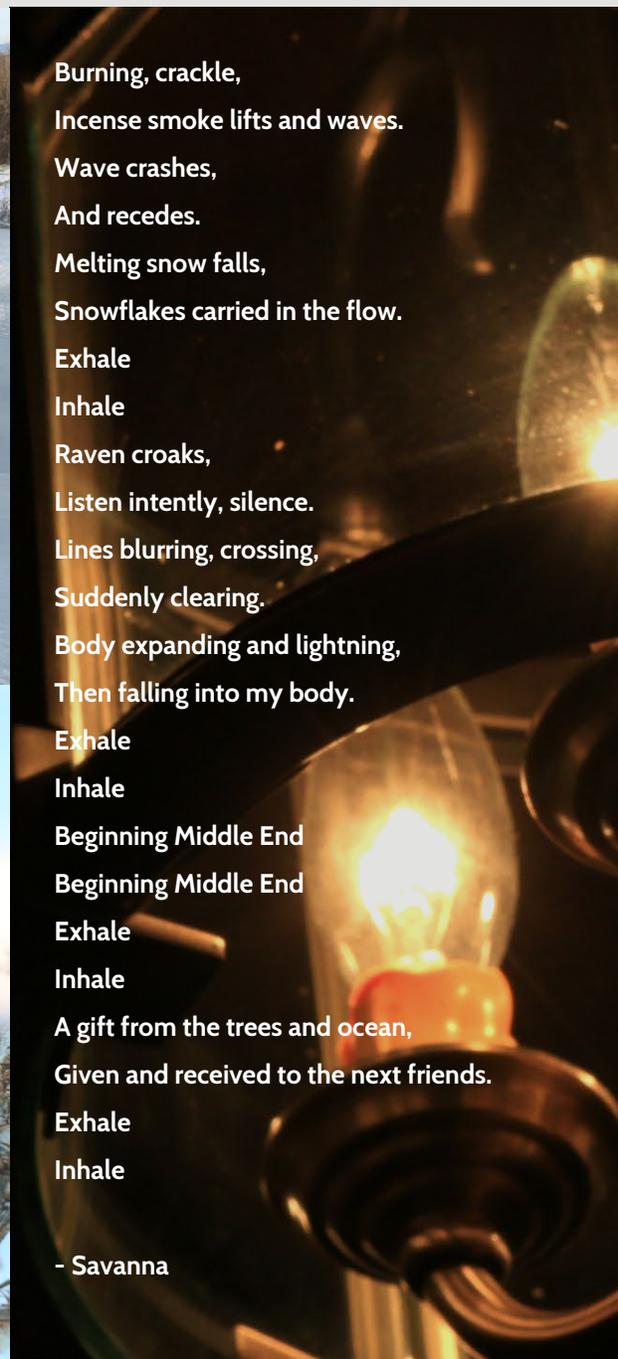
Within the abyss, the door opens
In the sidewalk, the flower blossoms
Pushing up through the cement
The spider flings each filament
The dragon belches and ignites its spark
Blood pours from the chalice into the dark
Healing love emerges from the hand
Sunlight streams across the land
Light fills the open doorway

- Sierra



Everything is impermanent
Even death.
So, breathe it all out.
As you watch yourself
Die one more time
And with every breath,
Practice resurrection

- Caroline



Burning, crackle,
Incense smoke lifts and waves.
Wave crashes,
And recedes.
Melting snow falls,
Snowflakes carried in the flow.
Exhale
Inhale
Raven croaks,
Listen intently, silence.
Lines blurring, crossing,
Suddenly clearing.
Body expanding and lightning,
Then falling into my body.

Exhale
Inhale
Beginning Middle End
Beginning Middle End

Exhale
Inhale
A gift from the trees and ocean,
Given and received to the next friends.

Exhale
Inhale
- Savanna

FUTURE EVENTS

January 13 - 23 2023

Awakening 10-Day with Soryu Forall

February 15 - 25 2023

Awakening 10-Day with Soryu Forall

March 17 - 24 2023

Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

March 30 - April 2 2023

Embody Your Medicine with Darren Silver and Dayna Seraye

April 17 - May 1 2023

Awakening Two-Weeks 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 or call 802-540-0820.

Our address is:

751 Page Rd

Lowell, VT 05847

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EMBODY YOUR MEDICINE IMMERSION

Join Darren Silver and Dayna Seraye in this 4-day immersion where using rhythm and movement, we will go beyond the mind—into the realm of body and soul—to access your essential nature and unique medicine.

dates: March 30th - April 2nd, 2023

location: Monastic Academy (Lowell, VT)

info: monasticacademy.org/events

