



MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

CEDAR

COMMUNITY FOR THE
EXPERIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF
AWAKENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

2023
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 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,

Alongside the change in seasons, the community moves from a focused Awakening training to more direct engagement with the needs of the world. We brought our first three-month Awakening Intensive to a close in the same way it began—with 108 prostrations. Our Head Teacher Soryu and Bodhi, our training coordinator, partnered to create 26 Dharma Study sessions, significantly deepening the group's understanding of the buddhadharma. Bodhi is now working to make these sessions available for remote study.

Following our annual two-week retreat in April, we came together to celebrate Vesak, a joyous occasion honoring the birth, enlightenment, and final nirvana of the Buddha. It was a remarkable moment as 24 community members took refuge with Kyabje Dagpo Rinpoche, deepening their commitment to the Dharma and dedicating their lives to the spiritual path.

The celebration of Vesak was followed by another momentous occasion—the commemoration of our ten-year anniversary as an organization offering full-time intensive training. Ten years of history were displayed in talks and photos by some of our longest standing members. Their words and images led us collectively to witness our history and to consider our future. We are deeply grateful for both the old and new friends who support our mission.

The celebration concluded with a gathering of over 100 people to chant our evening mantra, "Om Mani Padme Hum." The circle was composed of supporters who have been with us through various stages of our journey, as well as new friends, former trainees, generous donors, local community members, and people from across the United States and Canada.

As we begin a season of training which embraces the emergence of new technologies, we have balanced their integration with practices that ground us in our bodies and foster our connection with nature and each other. The Anti-Fragile Heart retreat brought together six of our senior facilitators and thirty community members for an intensive week of coaching, emotional healing, Circling, and embodiment. It was a rich opportunity to celebrate the depth of relationship, curiosity, and care in our community.

During a three-day retreat led by Matt Furnari, we focused on embodiment through Qi Gong and Martial Arts fundamentals; the practice of listening to nature pervaded every aspect of our journey. Additionally, long-time community member Autumn Turley has been generously offering weekly embodiment training during her six-month season of service to the community. These trainings provide us with an opportunity to delve deeper into our physical presence and explore the wisdom held within our bodies.

As we enter the heart of the summer training season, I am moved by the increasing maturity of our residents, their commitment to the path, and their willingness to grapple with the world's direction. Remaining in the inquiry of how to best be of service in times of uncertainty and an unfathomable speed of change, we look towards a season of exploration, experimentation, and striving for ever increasing clarity and compassion.

In gratitude,

Sophia Karuna Gallagher
Executive Director



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AI TEAM

This quarter we ran our first meditation retreat facilitated by an AI. Using recent developments in machine learning, we asked a language model to deliver guided meditations based on our head teacher Soryu Forall's teachings. We then used an AI voice synthesizer to read this guidance out to the group. This is the latest phase of our research into AI and the ways that it might be used to support the practice of the Dharma.

In the inaugural episode of Layman Pascal's new series, "The Soul of AI", Soryu Forall laid out MAPLE's analysis of the AI problem, and vision for a solution.

There is now a full-time AI team at MAPLE—a mixture of MAPLE residents and villagers. They are running a series of small experiments on how AI systems can be of benefit to the world, while practicing with the community in the context of spiritual friendship.





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WILLOW UPDATE

Willow had a productive and transformative last quarter. One of the highlights of the quarter was the organization of multiple meditation retreats. Willow hosted an Awakening Week, providing participants with an immersive experience to deepen their mindfulness practice and foster personal growth. Additionally, they organized three Awakening Weekends, offering individuals an opportunity to take a step back from their busy schedules and focus on cultivating a peaceful mind. Furthermore, Willow organized an Awakening day-long event, providing an opportunity for people to get acquainted with us and the practice.

Willow also partnered with A.J. Bond to host an event in Toronto focused on the intersection of shame and Buddhism. This event provided attendees with valuable insights and perspectives on personal healing and spiritual growth. The same day, Willow organized a Sit & Social event in Toronto. This gathering brought together friends of our community who support us and share our values. We also led an Awakening day-long event in Orangeville, in collaboration with another community called New Forest.

In addition to these events, Willow also provided a space for co-working, hosting ten guests during the quarter, offering a serene and focused environment where individuals could work productively while benefiting from the community atmosphere.

Behind the scenes, we have been diligently working on designing a five-month residency program. This program aims to create a scalable model for a data-driven network of co-living communities focused on wisdom and ethics.





RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON DAN RUDOLPH

INTERVIEW WITH DAN:

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

Being at MAPLE has been humbling, affirming and encouraging for me. When coming to MAPLE I had a sense that I knew a lot about meditation. After working with Soryu and experienced members of the community I quickly learned that I was barely a beginner! This both humbled me and gave me a deeper sense of confidence and clarity.

On the flip side, I have been affirmed in my positive qualities and have had a chance to recognize my unique beauty on a deeper level based on the feedback and reflections shared by Soryu and other community members. I have had a chance to show myself and be seen. In addition to being deeply humbling, this has also been deeply healing!

Over my time at MAPLE I have had a chance to deepen into my current 'vow', namely clowning and playfulness. I have been supported by the organization, through a Vow Grant and other more indirect ways, to pursue my vow. Over my time living in the community I have been able to study and learn clowning during my free time. I have offered over 20 workshops to the community! This has been transformational for me in developing confidence and to start to see more possibilities for integrating mindfulness and playfulness.

What has been your biggest challenge?

I fell in love shortly after committing to my second year of residency. Rehana and I got married in March 2023. Being in this rigorous training environment while trying to be a supportive partner has been a challenge for me (as well as for Rehana!). I visualized this struggle as carrying a boulder up a hill with a rope that was tied to my waist.

This challenge forced Rehana and me to be creative in maintaining intimacy, which has led to the cultivation of a strong trusting foundation in our relationship. Similarly, this challenge enabled the practice, teachings and training to become much more REAL for me!

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to here or beyond your time at MAPLE?

I am looking forward to being an increasingly loving and wise husband and stepfather! And, in the process, to continue to deepen my practice. As Shinzen Young wrote, "Intimate relationships are the householder's monastery"!

I am interested in applying my creativity to pursue a path of Right Livelihood and Service. My current vision is to develop a methodology that teaches mindfulness through clowning and other play-based practices. I hope to share this through leading workshops and offering 1-1 coaching. I plan to continue working in alternative higher-education spaces, including with the Ecoversties Alliance. I will be moving to Montreal in August and am excited to start learning French and new cooking recipes and to explore the city!

*Dan has been working in education for the past 10+ years doing research, curriculum design, teaching and teacher training. Working in mainstream education systems in different parts of the world, Dan has seen the urgent need for alternatives. He is passionate about play and mindfulness, and hopes to integrate this into his offering, Unified Playfulness. In August he will be moving to Montreal to live with his wife and step-daughter, and to explore ways that he can be of service to the world. Feel free to connect:
danrudolph108@gmail.com*

STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: PROFILE ON TYLER STUART



Tyler lives on the traditional territories of the Lekungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples, on the southern coast of Vancouver Island. He's spent the last few years studying a group of poet-philosophers living in the same bioregion. In particular, he's interested in how contemplative practices can remedy the poverty of North America's colonial imaginary. How can we come home to ourselves in the places we live?

INTERVIEW WITH TYLER:

Why did you join the MAPLE Stewardship Program?

In my stewardship application, I described my desire to attend MAPLE, and the words still resonate with me: "I am longing for a kind of perceptual/conceptual sobriety—which I know I don't possess, but which I know is possible. I'm longing to live from a deeper place; to connect more authentically to those I love; to become a servant of life and beauty. I want to become more responsible—for myself and for others—because I know now this is fundamental to a meaningful, ethical life. I want to cultivate the confidence and integrity of a tree: rooted, and so willing to dance in the wind."

How have you benefited from your time at MAPLE?

My time at MAPLE has helped clarify patterns of mind that alienate me from the life and love flowing through me. It has helped me become more available to loss, and more willing to wield power. It has affirmed the sacred gift of relinquishment.

What has been your biggest challenge?

As a steward, I've had to encounter various ways in which I don't take responsibility—indeed, how I've gone out of my way to avoid it. When I started working as the kitchen assistant, there was a period of feeling overwhelmed by the responsibility and work, and I had to confront my tendency to offload that responsibility onto others while shutting others out from my internal experience. Over time, I feel like my capacity to take responsibility has grown—not just in roles within the organization, but in my life. I had to be humbled to finally ask for help.

What are your goals? What are you looking forward to here or beyond your time at MAPLE?

Nothing tangible arises when I ask myself these questions. This feels important to me. I've spent much of my life turning my goals into a false refuge. But right now I feel determined to trust that my goals will come from without, that I'll simply be called upon to act. I think this is what is meant by the word vocation: my calling is not mine.



FINANCIALS



Shortly after the last of the several feet of accumulated snow had finally melted, we gathered together as an extended community for back-to-back celebrations in May—Vesak and our Ten-Year Anniversary—culminating in the exciting creation of The Expansion Fund. Many generous donors, both new and existing, pledged a total of \$400,000 to support the expansion of our mission to spread a deep practice of mindfulness to large numbers of people in the modern world!

CML's income for this quarter was \$154,456 and expenses were \$131,689. About 20% of the income received was from guest payments for our celebration events and the Anti-Fragile Heart Retreat. Our largest expense was \$17,768 spent on food—a 30% increase due to the events.

Regarding liabilities, CML continues to regularly pay down its debt, which currently stands at \$1,042,501. This includes our original mortgage for the Lowell property, which currently has a remainder of \$260,000 and our SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan with a remainder of \$782,501.

We continue to appreciate the support of our generous community that allows us to confidently adapt the Dharma for the modern world.

CML 2023 YEAR-TO-DATE

| GUEST INCOME | DONATIONS & GRANTS | TOTAL INCOME* | TOTAL EXPENSES |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| \$47,794 | \$171,909 | \$234,706 | \$245,952 |

*This includes more income than the three types listed and includes only the portion of the \$400,000 in pledges to the Expansion Fund that has been received to date.

Figures listed are the combined financials of CEDAR, MAPLE, and Oak and do not include Willow, our Canadian location.

INVESTMENTS AND DEBT

| TOTAL DEBT** | YEAR-TO-DATE CAPEX*** |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| \$1,042,501 | \$14,816 |

**Due to our accounting rhythms, the EIDL debt reported previously did not include accrued interest making the reported figure lower than in actuality. This figure includes accrued interest.

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



POETRY & PHOTOS

Here are some of our favorite poems from the community, which hold the insights that have arisen from the clarity of retreat.

Ohh Thou Data

My lover holds me,
My data captures me,
My lover sees me,
My data graphs me,
My lover leaves me,
My data lives beyond me,

My friend hears me,
My data transcribes me,
My friend guides me,
My data simulates me,

My life is sacred,
My data is potential,
May my life benefit this lifeworld,
May my data not harm her.

- Jampa

Walking toward a mirror in an empty cathedral
The air is fresh
And the Holy Water pure
With each footstep the floor is forgotten
And the echoes are consumed by the silence

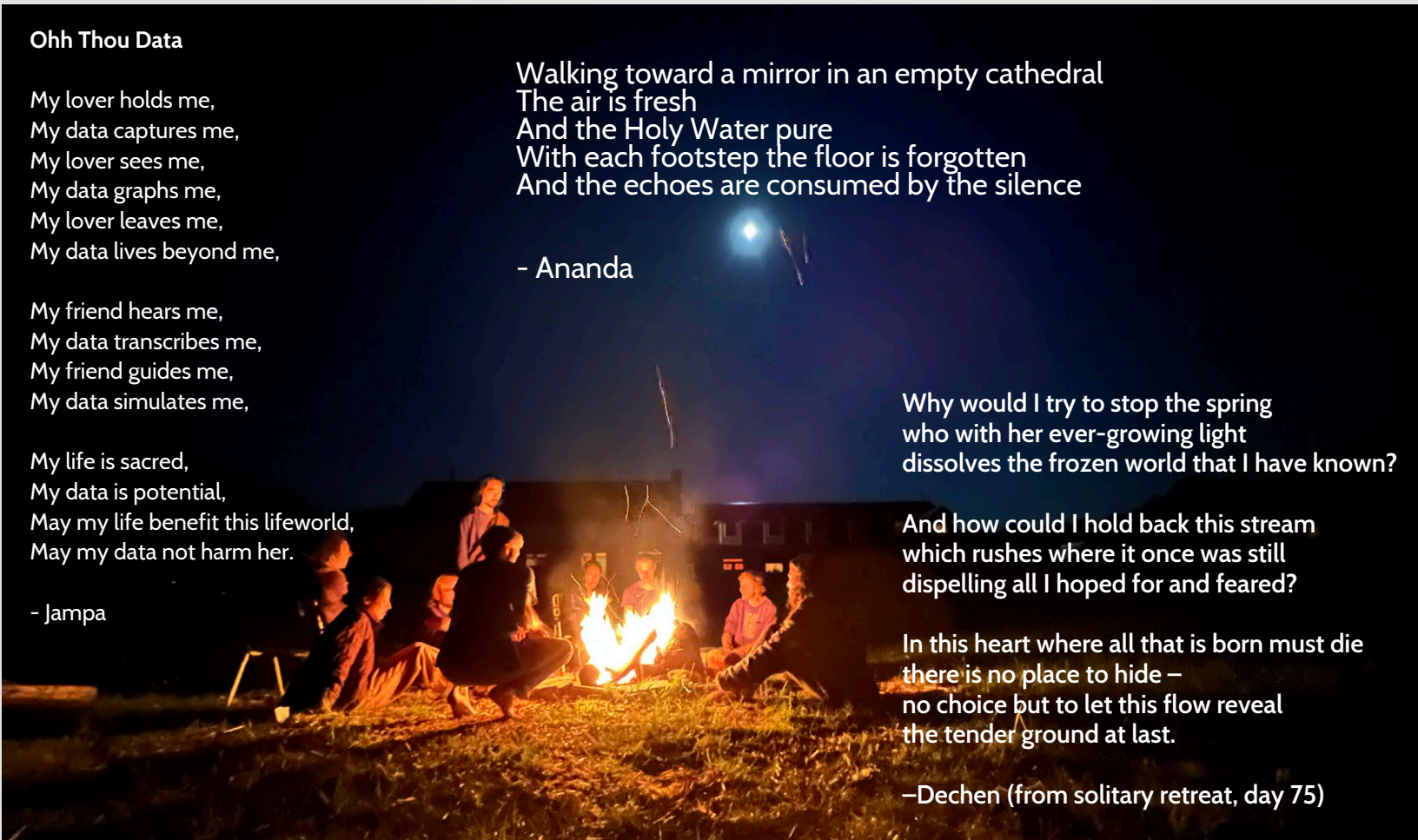
- Ananda

Why would I try to stop the spring
who with her ever-growing light
dissolves the frozen world that I have known?

And how could I hold back this stream
which rushes where it once was still
dispelling all I hoped for and feared?

In this heart where all that is born must die
there is no place to hide –
no choice but to let this flow reveal
the tender ground at last.

–Dechen (from solitary retreat, day 75)



FUTURE EVENTS

September 2 - 10

Vision Quest with Darren Silver

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:

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