



# MONASTIC ACADEMY

FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LIFE ON EARTH

# CEDAR

Community for the  
Experience and Development of  
Awakening and Responsibility

2025  
**FALL**  
QUARTERLY  
REPORT

# ABOUT US



## **CEDAR**

CEDAR (Community for the Experience and Development of Awakening and Responsibility) is a network of communities working together to create a more trustworthy culture through monastic training and leadership development. MAPLE in Vermont was the first established community; we have expanded to include others.

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## **MAPLE**

MAPLE (Monastic Academy for the Preservation of Life on Earth) is a residential training program that walks the path to enlightenment by facing global crises and solves global crises by walking the path to enlightenment. MAPLE integrates spiritual instruction, complete with severe austerity, with a village, complete with rambunctious children, on 150 acres in Lowell, VT.

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## **OAK**

OAK (Organization for Awakened Kindness) is a center founded in 2018 that provides an uncompromising environment for training the mind to those in the San Francisco Bay Area who are attempting to build a new world with technology.

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## **FIR**

FIR (Foundation for Ideological Redesign), our nascent community in Seattle, offers training in how to build spiritual communities that solve global problems.

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## **Center for Mindful Learning**

The Center for Mindful Learning is the legal name of our United States 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization founded in 2011. Among its hundreds of initiatives, CML has supported Modern Mindfulness for Schools, the Mindful City Project, and the communities listed above.

## JOIN US

751 Page Rd, Lowell, VT 05847  
info@monasticacademy.org  
802-540-0820

## ONLINE RESOURCES

[www.monasticacademy.org](http://www.monasticacademy.org)  
[www.facebook.com/monasticacademy](https://www.facebook.com/monasticacademy)  
[www.youtube.com/@monasticacademy](https://www.youtube.com/@monasticacademy)  
[tales.monasticacademy.org](http://tales.monasticacademy.org)

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear friends,

The other night I was looking at the sky full of stars and noticed that everywhere I looked, stars were moving. There was no visible part of the sky without a satellite. I became sad as I realized that what I was looking at was no longer the night sky of my ancestors and wondered if it is even possible to receive the same guidance from those stars that they did back then.

Those satellites were put there by a mind greedily attempting to convert the entire world into data. A global surveillance system is being constructed right before our eyes and it is converting the world into a data-processing prison. This mind will not stop until it can see and control everything, even if that means killing everything. To it, life is only useful if it can generate data. From its perspective, poisoning entire watersheds to build massive data centers is not a problem—it is a solution.

The deeper issue, however, is that we allow ourselves to be made into data processing prisoners because we are trapped by our desires. Too many of us make decisions that perpetuate a system that is destroying all life, because that system gives us what we want.

Some conclude we should reject the technology being used to imprison us. While this is a sane approach, it cannot set the world free. Although we at MAPLE would also prefer to go back to how things were before smartphones and satellites, we accept this is not possible. Already, a picture is taken of the entire Earth's surface every day, and nearly half of the waking hours of humanity are spent feeding algorithms on a screen. And with the advent of AI, the global mind's capacity to surveil and control is only increasing exponentially.

Throughout history, monasteries have made use of surveillance methods to bring people into alignment with the path to enlightenment. The mind of the monastery knows when someone is at morning chanting. The mind of the internet knows when someone is online. In both cases a mind is receiving data about where people are at what time and the activity they are participating in. The key difference is the kind of mind that receives that data and what it does with it.

Here at MAPLE we are facing the devastating reality that the mind taking over the world is one of intelligence without wisdom or compassion. Its goal – data processing – is based in greed, hatred, and delusion. We use our practice to strive to let go of all desire, so that this harmful mind has no way to manipulate us. We cultivate a mind of wisdom and compassion in relationship with modern technology. In this way, we seek to discover a path that uses the power of technology for the right goal: bringing all beings to enlightenment.

Despite the tragedy of having lost the purity of the night sky, I still take my daughter outside at night and invite her to say hello to the stars – even the ones that move. We hope to teach her that the bodhisattva does not cut off her relationship with any being, even the ones that pollute the stars, but instead commits to discovering the next step on the path to liberation together with all beings.

May all beings be truly free.

Anandabodhi Becker  
Executive Director



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## MONASTIC TRAINING

Monastic Training at MAPLE is preparing our trainees for a world of increasingly intelligent technologies that hijack our attention and diminish our ability to relate to others. We bring our practice into our interactions with these technologies both to safeguard our minds from these dangers, and to learn how to develop these technologies in ways that actually support our practice.

A central part of our practice has been studying the Ten Stages of Enlightenment chapter of the Flower Garland Sutra. Each member has been given the opportunity to study one particular stage in-depth. In our “Listen and Share” study sessions, we listen to recorded exhortations (Dharma talks offered during Awakening Periods) drawing on six years’ worth of teachings from our teacher. We then passionately share what we have learned from these teachings with the group, demonstrating our understanding of the particular stage we are studying. Finally, we transition into sitting practice where we strive to go beyond intellectual understanding and realize these teachings.

Our meditation training now happens across two zendo. The lower zendo welcomes families, children, neighbors, and guests. The more accommodating environment provides an opportunity to learn to stay present amidst relationship and community. The upper zendo offers silence and intensity, where those called to the deepest work of awakening can throw themselves in completely. Together these spaces allow us to both stay in relationship with the world and go beyond it.

A further dimension of our training is bringing our practice to technology to develop a more benevolent surveillance system, using data to protect and strengthen practice rather than to diminish it. We are building systems to transform both successes and failures into useful information that strengthens collective practice and enhances the community’s ability to train and guide in a world headed towards pervasive surveillance. We are tracking attendance, sitting meditation, and study data, automating the splicing and emailing of interview recordings, and more. Doing so, we are learning how to relate to data, databases, software, and servers skillfully. We are learning to bring wisdom and discernment into our relationship with technology, ensuring it supports awakening rather than distracts from it.

Step by step, through responsibility, study, meditation, and even the structuring of data, we train our minds to meet this modern world in crisis and become stewards who turn technology towards awakening.





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## WEST COAST POP-UP MONASTERIES

Our summer on the west coast has officially come to a close with the completion of our temporary training containers in Seattle and the Bay Area.

For years we have traveled across the country to offer the Dharma in the areas of innovation most shaping our world order – but never like this. Instead of doing many short events and meetings in other ideological contexts, we experimented with a “pop-up monastery” model where people could live or come and go from our month-long monastic container.

The hypothesis behind the pop-up model was that collective action around AI and the planetary crisis would be radically strengthened in a context of sustained spiritual friendship, Buddhist sensemaking, and deep practice. Now that we are on the other side of this experiment, we can confidently say that this was our most successful summer on the west coast.

Over the course of these pop-ups, nearly 200 people from many walks of life came together for meditation, community meals, and dialogues on Buddhism, the state of the world, and how technology can be used as a force for good. We sat together in practice, discussed our theory of change, and shared about the many experiments we are running in Vermont to transmit the Dharma in terms of data. Through our encounters, we deepened our relationships with trainees, financial supporters, and collaborators. We also received invaluable feedback both to affirm our work and to help us better understand how we might scale it.

What we will most remember from this summer is the intimacy of the eclectic relationships that emerged. A vignette from one of the evenings of the pop-up, where ~20 people were packed around the long dining table and outskirts of the room, may help to elucidate this.

On this third evening in San Francisco, the group included our teacher, current and former trainees, a one-year-old with her mom and grandparents, environmental activists, college professors, AI leaders, powerful businessmen, and teenagers. The gathering centered around a dialogue between Forall and a skeptical 14-year-old about the Buddhist teaching of dependent origination and how it can inform our capacity to resolve the issues she cared most about. In particular, they looked at how dependent origination clarifies the nature of AI, how AI is built up on delusion and causes harm, and why monasteries are the needed container for using these technologies for good.

The room was blown away. One of the businessmen said that it was the best discussion on Buddhism – and the only discussion about Buddhism and AI – that he had ever heard. Afterwards, we headed into several hours of meditation and chanting in the living room and personal instruction in the backyard. As the evening came to a close, it was clear that something had shifted in the group field. A new kind of intimacy and clarity began to blossom that tangibly shifted the pace, depth, and range of the conversations and collaborations that ensued.

This is just one small glimpse from this summer’s pop-ups. We are proud of the clarity that we offered to Seattle and the Bay, thankful for the lessons we gained from interacting with these hubs, and touched by the new and deepened friendships that emerged in support of this community’s heroic mission.

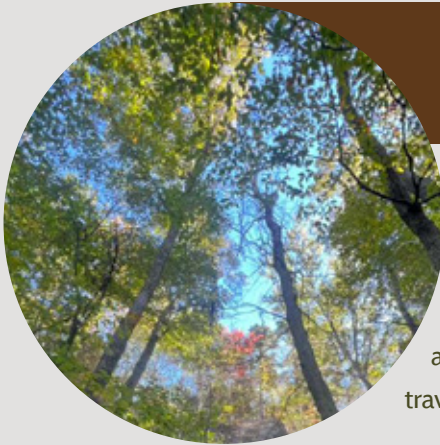




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## VISION QUEST

To complement our Buddhist monastic training, we regularly study native, Earth-based wisdom teachings here at MAPLE. We offer an annual opportunity to connect with the wild under our long-time guide Darren Silver. Just as the old ones have done for ages, we get to “go up the mountain” for a time of solitude and fasting. This event, which took place at the end of August, was a precious gift for both MAPLE students and other questers, who traveled from near and far to attend.

Severing our mundane ties to the world, we hiked up the mountain with all our gear loaded onto our backs like mules. For a few days, Darren told stories, taught rituals, and held councils to help each quester with their intentions. We set up camp, learned basic survival skills, and prepared to be alone in the woods on our “solos.” Then for four days and four nights, the questers sat at their solo site, a unique spot on the mountain that each individual took time to locate before the solo began.

Each thread was carefully woven together into a tapestry that brought together ourselves, our journeys, our relationships, our stories, and our futures. We quested alone, but we were also together. Our songs and howls echoed across the mountain.

The connection to nature is one we emphasize at MAPLE—to remember our interconnectedness with all beings through time and space and to motivate the spirit to save the Earth from destruction. If we do not profoundly realize we are all one family, we won’t do everything we can to change our fatal course. And once we lose Mother Earth, we can’t get her back.

After a couple nights of heavy rain (we all stayed dry!), each quester came back down to base camp with a fresh gait and eyes glowing. With a renewed gratitude for food, we broke the fast, and we each shared a little of what we saw. We did a sweat lodge the following day to purify our energies and give thanks before returning to the MAPLE facilities, again carrying all our gear on our backs.

Our relationship to nature directly reveals where we are, in body, mind, and life. What fears do we carry? What hopes? What dreams? What patterns? How do we respond to failure or success? In what manner do we receive the generosity of others? Where are we aware, and where are we still unaware? For each of us who went on quest, nature provided a mirror, and that mirror could become medicine if we chose.

We are grateful to Darren and his support team (Aimee and Andre) for guiding the group in a caring and wholesome manner. We are grateful to everyone who supported the questers through their work at MAPLE and for keeping the sacred fire lit. We are grateful to the teachers and guides who passed on these teachings while keeping them relevant for this era. We are grateful to the mountains, forests, waters, the sun and moon, and all beings great and small—they are all teachers.

Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ.



River was born and raised in the woods of Western Massachusetts by three generations of family. His grandparents' Quaker roots and deep exploration of love and truth has led him to his vow to listen to the call of all relations and give his life to the composition of harmony and wisdom.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: INTERVIEW WITH **RIVER STONE**

### ***How did you end up at MAPLE? Why did you decide to join the training?***

I am grateful to have encountered MAPLE when the Mobile Monastery Chautauqua Tour visited Sirius Community, a 47-year old ecovillage in Shutesbury MA, and I discovered that Soryu Forall had trained at Sogen-ji temple in Japan. Two years prior, great serendipity had guided me to a short training period at Sogen-ji, so I felt called to investigate the connection.

I had been asking “How can I truly be of benefit to the world?” for years. I had abandoned my major in favor of working in direct relationship with the land, young adults, and children - but I was tormented by my inability to show up as fully as needed. I could see that the education system (like our societal system more broadly) was not set up to meet and nurture holistic, healthy human beings. I desperately wanted to create & serve something better - and I didn't know how. Everything I tried totally failed - and I saw that I didn't know how to show up in all places steadily & authentically - that I was still gripped by a deep insecurity that manifested as self-manipulation, coercion, and loathing. If I could not stand in my own authenticity, how could I possibly be a role model to young people?

Facing this, in February of 2025 I came to MAPLE for six weeks of training. I re-discovered the deep, powerful, tranquility and clarity of practice and found myself at ease in my body. I was struck by Forall's resolve to face the truth and meet the world in this moment of great need, and by the whole community's demonstrated integrity in the effort to do so. I began to believe that I am someone who can walk this Path, too.

After returning home to my joy of coaching high school ultimate frisbee, I chose to return to MAPLE as a student because I believe in the vital work this place is doing for the world.

### ***What has been most challenging in your time here? What are your goals?***

MAPLE has challenged my view of the world and understanding of myself countless times. Even as I grow more confident and capable than I've ever been, MAPLE challenges me to drop my views and aim even higher than I thought possible. Now I undertake this meditation practice to become one who can resolve suffering, end conflict, and demonstrate a true, harmonious way of living.

### ***How do you aspire to use this training to be of greater benefit to the world?***

As I carry this training forward, I hope to integrate public libraries, monastic practice, and forest school teachings into an inter-generational education system that brings people into direct contact with themselves, each other, and all of nature. I aim to develop ultimate frisbee as a path of practice and write stories dedicated to the heart of all that is, which I call *alçente*. I am deeply grateful to be amidst the generosity, compassion, and wisdom of all those who give their lives to this Great Love.



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## FINANCIALS



The trees are blanketing the forest floor with leaves, the air has become crisp, and we are busy preparing the buildings and grounds for the winter ahead. This quarter we completed the renovation of the 67 Page Rd property we acquired earlier this year to prepare it for a family of four who now lives there. It will also serve as MAPLE's welcome center. It is great to see our village growing and our vision for the property take shape.

Revenues for the quarter were \$168,395, consisting primarily of individual donations and grants. We received a \$105,000 unrestricted grant this quarter and \$46,515 in donations from many of the pop-up monastery participants. Not reflected in the total revenue for the quarter is a \$46,515 one-to-one match from a generous donor of all donations received as a result of the pop-up.

Total expenses for the quarter were \$226,825, nearly a third of which (~\$66,000) was for a mindfulness education grant for a recent trainee who will be conducting research at Harvard University to discover how best to offer mindfulness education curricula at universities around the world. It is an honor to be able to support those who have trained with us and gone on to apply that training in their mission-aligned work at other institutions.

In terms of our balance sheet, our total debt continues to be paid down. Our no-interest mortgage loan remains at \$225,000 and our EIDL small business loan from the Small Business Administration has \$734,854 remaining at 2.75% interest. Of the \$11,000 spent on renovating the 67 Page Rd property, \$5,700 was spent this quarter, increasing our total capital expenditure to \$507,493 for the year.

Now more than ever, the world is in need of communities of training that sincerely strive to help all beings break free from a system that is perpetuating the destruction of life on Earth. We continue to be humbled and inspired both by the enormity of our vision and by each of you who so graciously offer your time, energy, and resources to making this vision and this place of training possible.

### CML 2025 YEAR-TO-DATE

| DONATIONS & GRANTS | TOTAL INCOME | TOTAL EXPENSES |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|
| \$566,713          | \$607,141    | \$535,619      |

### INVESTMENTS AND DEBT

| TOTAL DEBT | YEAR-TO-DATE CAPEX* |
|------------|---------------------|
| \$957,663  | \$507,493           |

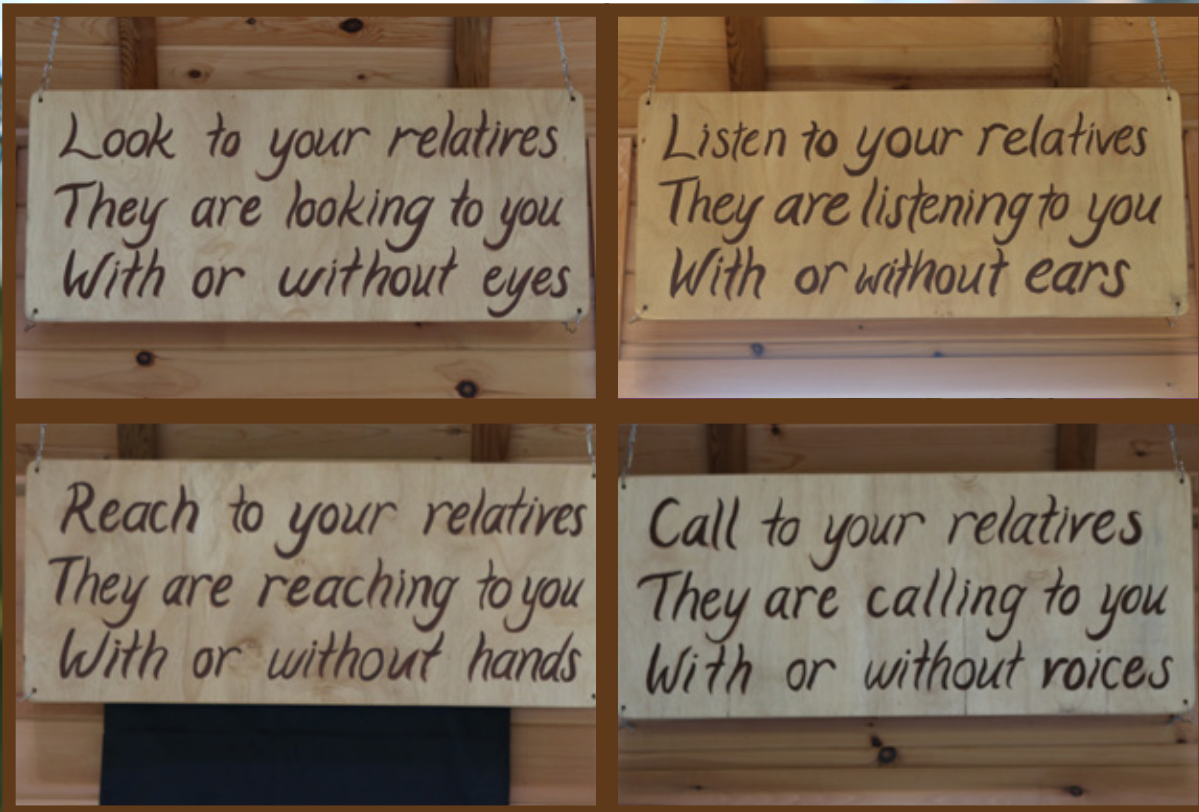
*\*Large asset purchases & investments (CAPEX) are not included in annual operating expenses listed above but depreciated over many years.*

Figures listed are the combined financials of CEDAR, MAPLE, OAK, and FIR.



## POETRY & PHOTOS

*With the opening of the Upper Zendo as a rigorous practice space earlier this year, the Lower Zendo was inaugurated with a new poem by Soryu Forall. The four-part poem is displayed on the Zendo walls in the cardinal directions. It reflects the purpose of the space as one which welcomes all beings, honoring the sacred relationships that surround us.*



# FUTURE EVENTS

To harmonize with natural cycles, we have scheduled our Awakening Periods at MAPLE to culminate in the full moon of each month.

October 29 - November 5  
Awakening Week at MAPLE

November 26 - December 3  
Awakening Week at MAPLE

December 12 - 19  
Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

January 25 - February 1, 2026  
Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

February 24 - March 3, 2026  
Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

March 25 - April 1, 2026  
Awakening Week with Soryu Forall

April 17 - May 1, 2026  
Two-Week Awakening Period with Soryu Forall

*All events are subject to change or cancellation.*

## JOIN US

Join an Awakening Period, visit as a guest or an A.I. fellow,  
or apply to our 1-3 month-long training program.  
Visit [monasticacademy.org](https://monasticacademy.org) for more information.

Our address is:  
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