



News from the Board, 9/30/21

As we enter a new season and the sangha continues to grow into new forms, we wanted to send out some news and updates from the Board.

Equity, Social Justice, Community Engagement

Circle of Care

Over 200 Afghani refugees will be settling in Western Massachusetts, assisted by Jewish Family Service and Catholic Charities. IWM would like to create a Circle of Care for one of the families arriving soon from Afghanistan to support them in acclimating to their new community. If you are interested in getting involved, or just learning more, please fill out the form [here](#), in order to help us gauge interest. We will then gather interested sangha members to learn about what is involved and hopefully organize a Circle.

Disability Justice

Members of the staff and board will be taking an Ableism 101 Training in October as part of our effort to identify a training program that we can bring back to our sangha - beginning with people at all levels of sangha leadership and moving to the sangha at large.

White Leaders Caucus

Members of the Board, the Teachers Council, the Practice Leaders group, the Programming Committee, and others in leadership roles in the sangha who identify as white are gathering each month in an affinity group to learn together about race, racism, and white supremacy culture - how these forces have shaped the dynamics of our sangha and how we can intervene in and shift the dynamics to create an antiracist, radically inclusive community.

White & Awakening in the Dharma (WAD)

We continue to offer seasonal half-day retreats for the first WAD cohort, in order to deepen our learning together. From this cohort, Kalyana Mitta (spiritual friendship & study) groups are forming, one of which will be open to the sangha at large. Please look for an opportunity to apply to join soon.

Reopening

As many of you know, we had hoped to re-open the Center in September. Given the spread of the Delta variant, this turned out not to be feasible for us. We recently met with the Teachers Council and the Programming Committee to explore the possibilities for reopening, and some of us recently met at the Center to try out a setup for hybrid offerings. For now, we have determined that we are not quite ready to offer in-person programming and will continue to be fully online. However, we hope that health and safety considerations will allow us to offer some of our programs in person starting in November. We will continue to keep the sangha informed as our decision-making process unfolds.

As always, please feel free to contact us at leadership@insightpv.org with any responses, questions, or ideas.

August Town Hall

At our August Town Hall, our working group to explore alternative sangha structures, led by Ruth Folchman (Practice Leader & Kalyana Mitta facilitator) and Lore Detenber (WAD facilitator, Kalyana Mitta facilitator & Beloved Community Builder), shared some of what they have been learning from a diverse group of sanghas whose members and leaders they've been interviewing about governance structures. The purpose of Ruth & Lore's research is to provide enough information for sangha members to begin to imagine new possibilities. In the spirit of co-creating our sangha, the intention for the Town Hall was to inspire us all and to provide a forum for conversation and building a shared vision.

In the research process, Ruth & Lore asked representatives of other sanghas about many aspects of sangha governance. In particular at our Town Hall, they focused on the following questions about building community:

- What have you found to be your most effective initiatives to build & sustain community?
- Are there processes that have supported people's sense of belonging/shared ownership of the Sangha?

Ruth and Lore shared some of the rich responses they received to these questions. They then offered to the 35+ sangha members in attendance the following questions for reflection, which we invite you to consider as well:

- What brings you to our Sangha?
- What do you hope for?

One sangha member wrote to us with their response to these questions, and we wanted to share some of what they wrote: *"The presentation about the interviews was illuminating and I agree with others who would like to hear/see more about them. As a relative newcomer, most of my experience has been on Zoom. Looking back, interpersonal connections and personal growth are major motivators that help me feel connected to and want to support the sangha -- interpersonal connections*

such as the check-ins/reflections in Aging Mindfully and the small group and dharma buddy time in the WAD group. When I feel personal growth from the sangha offerings (that are led by inspirational, insightful teachers who suggest amazing reference materials), I am grateful and want to be supportive of the sangha. I'm especially interested in connecting with other sangha members in the future around social justice action."

We invite all sangha members to write to us at leadership@insightpv.org with your own response to this question about what brings you to the sangha and what you most hope for. Later this fall, at an upcoming Town Hall (date TBA), Ruth & Lore will present some of what they've learned about how other sanghas organize and hold the role of teachers in their communities.

Matching Grant

We are grateful that two donors came together to offer IWM a generous matching grant of \$15,000. Sangha members are rising to the challenge; 34 contributors have given from \$10 to \$5000 for a total of \$12,870. With the match, IWM will receive \$25,740. These beautiful offerings in this time of transition and growth not only support the sangha materially, but buoy and inspire and remind us all that we are in this together.

If you would like to contribute and see your dana doubled, you may do so by clicking [here](#) or sending a check to InsightPV, 116 Pleasant Street, Suite 242, Easthampton, MA 01027.

Zoom Hosts

As always, we have so much gratitude to our Zoom hosts. We literally would not have had a sangha or any offerings through the pandemic if it weren't for you. May the merit of your wholesome efforts benefit all beings! In August and September, the following sangha members stewarded our sangha in this way: Catalina Arrubla, Suzanne Artemieff, Lucy B., Freda Brackley, Hal Fales, Lauren Isherwood, Nick Isherwood, and Cathy Repetti.

And, we very much need more people to volunteer as Zoom hosts. Being a Zoom host for a dharma talk, class, or retreat is a huge gift to our teachers and our center. If you are comfortable using Zoom, we can easily train you in hosting, and we can pair you with an experienced host to get started. Email general@insightpv.org to find out more or volunteer.

With much care and metta,
trellis, Lucy, Hal, and Bernadine