



# Washington Mindfulness Community

## 2008 Annual Report

The Board of Directors of the Washington Mindfulness Community is pleased to present this first Annual Report for the calendar year of January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008.

As our community and activities continue to grow, it is our intention to provide an overview of accomplishments and finances that reflect the volunteer efforts sangha members to bring the mindfulness practice to the Washington D.C. region in 2008. This report presents contributions from the WMC Board of Directors, Practice Council and Community Care Committee.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT**

#### ***1) Elections***

John Love and Bill Jenkins were elected as new Board members in March 2008.

#### ***2) Roles and Responsibilities***

The Board created and defined new roles of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Each role was clarified to maximize efficiency for Board performance in fundraising, scholarships, financial management and communications. The President is responsible for Fundraising, the Vice President for scholarships, the Treasurer for accounting and financial reporting; the Secretary for communications, meetings, reporting and organizational duties. The Board further expanded the role of the Vice President to assist in the Treasurer's duties. Now the Vice President also collects the dana, makes the bank deposits, collects mail from the WMC post office box, and informs the treasurer of the deposits.

John Love has served as President, Bill Jenkins as Vice President, Sankar as Treasurer and James Figetakakis as Secretary. Richard Brady served as interim Treasurer from March until July 2008 when Sankar was out of the country on a sabbatical.

This Annual Report also results from the Board's decision to establish a new, annual reporting system with contributions from all Councils and Committees to provide the WMC with an annual overview of accomplishments and finances henceforth.

#### ***3) Fundraising: Dana Donations and PayPal***

The Board launched in February 2008 a series of long term strategies to increase dana donations to the WMC, since there was an operating financial deficit reported at the end of 2007.

The major goal of the Board President in 2008 was to increase dana donations. One goal was to make it easier for sangha members both to contribute and to *remember* to contribute through Sunday night sangha donations, mail-in donations and on-line donations.

**Board Report: Fundraising and Dana (continued)**

Regular announcements were established for the Sunday evening sangha and three new dana boxes were placed at strategic locations. A lock box was purchased and installed in the WMC cabinet at the Vihara to store weekly contributions before depositing them into the bank account.

It was also decided to create a way for members to donate online by establishing a PayPal account. After five months to register and get WMC approved onto the PayPal process, the account was finally activated on July 24th, 2008. WMC’s PayPal took in over \$300 for the year (July 24 - Dec 31, 2008), and the WMC website now has links for accepting:

- 1. Online one-time donations via member's credit card on/or PayPal account;
- 2. Online recurring monthly donations via member's credit card on/or PayPal account.

**4) Scholarships**

The Board received and approved one scholarship application for \$750 to allow the applicant to be part of the Path of Awakening pilgrimage in India with Thay in Oct.-Nov. A photo display including newspaper articles is available at the Vihara.

**5) Finances**

The Board is pleased to report that its efforts to increase dana donations and WMC fundraising reversed the deficit in 2007 and resulted in net income, after expenses, of \$2230 in 2008.

Thanks to the generosity of WMC members, we increased dana donations from \$1623 in 2007 to \$5793 in 2008 ~ a net increase of \$4160 (or nearly 150%) in one year.

This enabled a higher return on assets that generate interest income because we did not draw down principal to offset a deficit.

It also enabled the WMC to increase by 50% its two contributions to the Vihara from approximately \$1000 to \$1500, made twice a year. It has been decided that donations to the Vihara will be made in January and July each year (with fundraising efforts beginning one month before each semi annual donation).

The Board wants to maintain this financial strength moving into 2009 and beyond in order to provide funds for new dharma talks, speakers and opportunities that benefit the WMC as a whole and continue to build our community and expand the practice of mindfulness in the DC region.

A snapshot of WMC 2008 finances is provided below, with a detailed table provided at the end of this 2008 Annual report of all income and expenses, thanks to the work of Treasurer Sankar.

<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Item</b>
307		Paypal Dana
5486		Total 2008 Dana (Sangha checks+cash)
890		Other income
6683		Total income
	3055	Vihara total donations
	750	Retreat Scholarship
	648	Other expenses
	<u>4453</u>	<u>Total expenses</u>
 <b>\$ 2230</b>		 <b>WMC 2008 Total Net Income</b>

## **PRACTICE COUNCIL REPORT**

*Dharma Talks:* The Sunday evening sangha had a number of special talks in 2008 given by Ahn Huong, Mitchell Ratner and Richard Brady. In October, a talk on personal experience with the Five Mindfulness trainings was given by sangha members Susan, Bill, Joann, Jeanine and James.

*The WMC Library:* continued in zen fashion as encouragement for enlightenment of members through its resources of books and materials by Thich Nhat Hanh and on the subject of Mindfulness.

## **COMMUNITY CARE REPORT**

*Thematic Evenings:* The Community Care Committee sponsored several evening gatherings in 2008. Carolyn Bluemle and John Love offered one thematic evening on religion. Lisa Fleige offered one on art. Members report that they were delightfully inspiring in our sangha style.

*Book Groups:* Susan Hadler hosted a book group of six participants this past spring on Dainin Katagiri's book, "*Each Moment Is the Universe.*"

### ***Minutes from October 15<sup>th</sup> Community Care Gathering at Teatism***

Present were: Bill Jenkins, Carolyn Bluemle, Carrie Rose, James Figetakis, Jeanine Cogan, Joann Malone, Joseph Byrne, Mary Hildebrand, Kevin Buckley, Phyllis, Steve Sidley, Soye and Sankar

#### ***1. Committee Reports***

*Second Body Practice:* The Community Care Committee ("CCC") reported that there are six members involved in second body practice this Fall. Although there are no book groups currently running, there most likely will be at least one starting in February 2009, hosted by Susan Hadler.

*Dharma classes:* They have been suspended since the summer due to scheduling conflicts with the Vihara. There was interest within the community to continue these classes. Mary Hildebrand offered to check in with the Vihara to see if the meditation hall is available at 5:15 every third Sunday. It was also suggested that we could hold dharma classes at a different time and location if necessary and perhaps have them only four times a year to see if that increases the attendance.

*WMC Sangha History Book:* The CCC is also assembling a scrapbook of photos, mementos and memories that document the history of our sangha. Carolyn Bluemle and Susan Hadler decided to collect items that community members would like to share toward this effort.

*Deep Listening Practice and Celebrating Milestones:* The CCC reaffirmed its commitment to offer deep listening to individual sangha members as well as celebrating milestones within the community with special ceremonies if people wish to do so.

Susan Hadler hosted a going away "Mindfulness Party" for Richard Brady and Elisabeth Dearborn, at her home in Alexandria, VA in June. Richard has been one of the founding members and a key leader of the WMC for more than 15 years. He and Elizabeth moved to Vermont in July 2008. The event included 20 WMC members honoring Richard and Elizabeth with a poetry, prose, music and personal sharings. Richard is creating a new sangha in his Vermont community.

**Community Care: Reports from Community Gathering Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (continued):**

*Communications (Web-based)* : The Communications Committee reported difficulty with the topica listserv. Specifically they are unable to add new people and current members are sometimes dropped off the list for no apparent reason.

They are experimenting with a new Yahoo group that can replace our current topica service and is easier to maintain and add new members. The new Yahoo group can be up and running in the next week or so and in time perhaps a blog format and chat groups can be added. Joseph also offered to look at the website to see if it could use a facelift.

The *Sangha Reflections* newsletter is undergoing change. A new committee needs to be created to compile and publish it so that Mary Hillebrand is no longer solely responsible for this large task. Once a new committee is formed, the newsletter will be published twice a year. It will exist in a downloadable form with only a few copies printed and placed downstairs on the information table and in the WMC archives.

*The Board and WMC Finances*: Board members reported \$7,122.43 as of October 2008 in the main account and \$6,355.40 in a CD. There is also \$2,400 in the mindfulness in education account established by the Board for funds generated by ~ and used for ~ Richard Brady's work with educators. WMC gave a \$1500 donation to the Vihara in August as well as one \$750 scholarship. The Board wants to ensure that sangha members are aware that these scholarships are available for those who need it, given the low number of applications in 2008.

Dana announcements should be made on Sunday nights both at the transition and during announcements and the three green boxes we use need to be clearly visible - particularly in the foyer where one should be placed on a chair or table and easily distinguished from Vihara items. The boxes have been clearly marked with "make checks payable to WMC" to avoid confusion.

The WMC now has a lock box so that donations can be stored securely. Bellmasters have received a "Dana Announcement" message sheet and directions to place any cash or checks collected in this lock box when closing the cabinet at the end of each Sunday evening.

*Elections*: WMC Annual Elections were held in March 2008 and managed by Carolyn Bluemle. New members elected to the Board were John Love and Bill Jenkins, and to the Practice Council were Mary Hillebrand and Susan Hadler.

***2. WMC Sunday Night Schedule Change to 6:30pm Start Time***

In response to a community gathering request, the Committee initiated a trial period this past summer that experimented changing the Sunday sangha time from 7pm - 9:30 to a new time of 6:30pm to 9pm.

A poll was taken at the gathering and the majority was in favor of maintaining the new 6:30 start time permanently, ending at 8:30pm. Everyone agreed that to be mindful that the program really ends at 8:30 to avoid making the evening longer than before. Newcomer's evenings will now also be held downstairs at 6:30 on the last Sunday of the month.

## **Community Meeting October 15, 2008 (Continued)**

### ***3. “Family and Children Night” Theme Revisited***

For the past several years, there has been a desire within the community to more fully include children into the practice of our sangha. The Practice Council proposed creating a special Sunday evening program once a month that is geared toward integrating both adult and children practitioners and includes guided meditation, singing, mindful movements, creative mindful activities and time downstairs for play and connection.

The main issue is how to create this opportunity and still balance the needs of the community for quiet practice, structure and stability of schedule. It was suggested that we ask for input from the community in creating this new program and try it out a couple of times to see how it works and who takes part in it.

Other suggestions included: holding Family Night every other month instead of monthly; having it replace extended meditation evenings; starting with a quiet adult sit at 6:30 then having families and children enter the meditation hall at 7pm; and sending out information to parents in advance to help them prepare their children for mindfulness practice.

The Practice Council planned to consider these ideas as well as others from the larger sangha and to create a program together with the community that will allow the WMC achieve a shared goal of making our sangha a welcoming place for practitioners of all ages.

### ***4. Retreats and Days of Mindfulness***

Joann Malone reported that the retreat committee has disbanded and that retreats are no longer being scheduled due to lack of attendance and sangha involvement. Joanne and Bill organized a Day of Mindfulness at Blueberry Gardens last month that was attended by 17 people and well received by those who attended. There was interest at the gathering in continuing this format once or twice a year (the next one being perhaps in Spring 2009). Joanne offered to continue being involved in organizing as long as there was continued interest within the community and she is getting help from Bill Jenkins and/or other sangha members in creating these events. The WMC should also continue to let our members know about the many retreats and events both inside and outside of our area that serve to deepen our practice.

## **WMC PEOPLE IN 2008:**

*Richard Brady and his wife Elisabeth Dearborn...* moved from Takoma Park, MD to Vermont in July. As long-time leaders of the WMC, and Richard being one of the original founders of the WMC in the 1980s, the WMC will miss them. However, their spiritual leadership and inspiration continue. Richard returned to give dharma sharings this past fall during Sunday night sanghas at the Vihara. Richard continues to build a new sangha in his Vermont community.

*Mary Hildebrand and her partner, Angie...* welcomed into the world their daughter Catherine Lucille “Lucy” Hillebrand, who was born on December 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:22am and weighed 6.65 lbs. Janine Cogan was also in the delivery room using her many coaching skills to help with the birth.

## WMC 2008 Finances Report

(Note: For a full report of all assets, please contact the WMC Board)

	\$Incoming	\$ Outgoing	Item	\$ Amount
<b>WMC SUNTRUST CHECKING ACCOUNT</b>				
2/1/2008			Beginning balance	5982
4/21/2008	475		Charter hall deposit refund	6457
3/5/2008	100		Refund: Mindfulness in Education	6557
4/21/2008	15		Library fees	6572
	3825		Dana	10397
2/13/2008		1555	Vihara contribution	8842
2/29/2008		100	IFC dues	8742
2/29/2008		100	MPCF ceremony	8642
2/29/2008		70	Dana boxes	8572
3/5/2008		34	Library items	8538
10/1/2008		57	Dana Lockbox and supplies	8529
8/31/2008		1500	Vihara contribution	7029
10/1/2008		750	2008 Retreat scholarship	6279
10/5/2008		55	WMC DOM retreat fee	6224
10/5/2008		132	Takoma Park mailbox fee	6092
	300		WMC DOM contribution	6392
12/16/08	1500		Dana	7892
12/16/08		100	IFC dues	7792
	161		Dana (see sheet 2)	7953
	6376	4453	Total Incoming and Outgoing items	
<b>PAYPAL ACCOUNT</b>				
12/31/08	307		Paypal Dana total October-December	
<b>SUMMARY</b>				
	307		Paypal Dana	
	5486		Total 2008 Dana (Sangha checks+cash)	
	890		Other income (i.e. interest on assets)	
	6683		Total income	
		3055	Vihara total donations	
		750	Retreat Scholarship	
		648	Other expenses	
		4453	Total expenses	
		<b>\$2230</b>	<b>WMC 2008 Total Net Income in 2008</b>	