

Margaret Austin Center NEWS

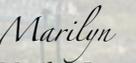
FALL 2016

GIVING THANKS

It's that time of year, when we give thanks for what matters in life, whether it be our family, friends, faith or community. For those of us in the Margaret Austin Center community, we know the unique value of the Center, which provided a refuge for 28 spiritual, meditation, yoga or healing arts groups in 2016. I hope you'll enjoy the article below, by Dan Houston with In-Powered. Your generosity enables us to keep fees low, so that groups such as In-Powered can continue to offer their healing message in today's troubled world. Enclosed you will find information and an envelope on giving, either by check or online.

For the Board and Staff,


Kathie Ferland
President


Marilyn Jones
Treasurer



been a rich container that has allowed our kids to return back to their senses, feel what they feel, and to simply be themselves in the absence of judgment.

Some of the most rewarding experiences for me have been watching the students' and volunteers' faces light up upon arrival. There's a unique and healing characteristic about the Center that I've heard expressed in a number of different ways by our yoga participants, such as "I feel like I can breathe and think clearly here!" or "It's SO nice to be able to slow down and be with people" or "This place feels like home."

I've also especially enjoyed the family and fellowship that has been generated inside the Center's large, open kitchen. Our programs intentionally organize experiences that immerse students and adult volunteers in connecting over conversations about food — many of which students have never observed, smelled, touched, or tasted.

To say I'm tremendously grateful for what the Center has inspired and provided to our students, and my life personally, is an understatement. I consider this space an absolute requirement for my own healing, restoration and reflection. More than anything, I'm grateful for how many lives the Center has touched in our circle of influence, and how many more lives will be lifted in the very near future.

Dan Houston is the co-founder and executive director of In-Powered by One Significant Act | The In-Powered Institute. He and his wife, Cristina, have held many yoga and meditation retreats at MAC for both teenagers and adults.

Photo by Dan Houston

IT'S BEEN A TRUE GIFT...

The Margaret Austin Center (MAC) has made a significant contribution to my work and my life, primarily through my experience with In-Powered, a nonprofit that I co-founded and operate.

In-Powered trains Houston school teachers and educators in yoga and mindfulness. We work to deter at-risk students from entering what is called the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

One of the most rewarding and empowering aspects of this work has been our student-based retreats at the Center. The students we serve already attend yoga and mindfulness classes regularly as part of their school day — they receive school credit for taking on the practice in their life. Our students become empowered to step out of their typical life experience; they shift their ways of thinking, speaking and being.

It has been a true gift to see how the sheer openness and natural beauty of this retreat space has allowed our students to find respite from the most difficult aspects of their lives and reconnect with their own senses. The Center has

DAWN AT A MAC RETREAT

Just before dawn,
My fellow retreatants file sleepily
Into the rustic meditation hall
At the Margaret Austin Center
For the first sit of the day.
I linger on the porch, in the cool air,
To watch the morning unfold.

At mid-heaven, the Morning Star
Sparkles more intensely
Than surrounding constellations,
Fading into invisibility.
Directly overhead,
A half-moon shines brightly.
A pale light emanates from below the horizon,
Highlighting silhouettes of distant scraggly trees.
The rest of the landscape is
Swathed in gloaming.

Infinitesimal increments of light
Illuminate a dark cloud river
Above the uneven line of trees,
Revealing tall bamboo stalks that bow
Around the meditation hall.
A few tentative bird calls anticipate
The break of day.
Gradually I discern
Vast swaths of knee-high, un-mowed grass
In the spacious field before me.

The Morning Star dims a bit,
But its twinkle persists.
The half-moon still glows,
But with diminished power.
Now the cloud river shimmers in amber light.
Noisy clusters of crows fly
Cawing towards the radiant horizon.
Quieter birds gather into V-shaped groups of
Five or seven to wing silently
Over glinting, dew-dropped grass.

The cloud river becomes brilliantly orange.
Tributaries of mango and peach pour into
The main stream of light.
Crowds of crows raucously applaud the show.
Overhead, the dimming Morning Star perseveres,
Migrating to a less central view.
The fading moon maintains its vigil
At a more remote angle.

The cloud river morphs into golden currents.
Birds giddily serenade the dawn as
The sun bursts above the line of trees.
The river dissolves into wispy eddies,
In progressively subdued tones.
Now visible are the rock-lined paths of a labyrinth and
Yogis' tents of various shapes, sizes and hues.
A resonant bell signals the
End of the meditation sit.
I gaze at the farewell blinks of the Morning Star,
Until it is absorbed in wisps of cloud.

By the time my Dharma buddies
Emerge from the meditation hall,
There is no trace of the splendid sunrise
That nourishes all my senses
For the rest of the day.

Ginger Clarkson
October 4, 2015



CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS AND WRITERS

This issue of the Center newsletter features poetry and photos from Center retreat attendees, leaders and volunteers. We'd like to invite you to share your photos or poetry that were inspired by your time at the Center. Submit your photos and articles to Giselle at giselle@macenter.org if you would like to be included on the website or in annual greetings, such as this newsletter.

RETREAT SCHEDULE AT MARGARET AUSTIN CENTER

TO REGISTER FOR THESE PUBLIC RETREATS,
PLEASE USE THE CONTACT INFORMATION LISTED BELOW.

Yoga & Meditation with Charles MacInerney

Dec. 2 - 4, 2016

Join one of Austin's most respected yoga teachers for a weekend of Hatha yoga, meditation, and philosophy. Workshops will cover pranayama and the science of breath, the mind/body connection, biofeedback, creativity, and mind-mapping. All levels are welcome to attend, and participation in all activities is optional. For more information or to register, visit yogateacher.com.

Mariposa Sangha New Year's Retreat with Shaila Catherine

Dec. 27, 2016 - Jan. 1, 2017

This silent Insight Meditation retreat is structured with alternating periods of sitting and walking meditation, dharma talks, question-and-answer sessions, and teacher consultations. All levels are welcome, from beginners to advanced practitioners. Shaila Catherine is the founder of Insight Meditation South Bay, a Buddhist Meditation Center in Silicon Valley, and has taught internationally since 1996. Shaila's gentle and clear teaching style blends respect for traditional Buddhist training with diverse influences from her varied teachers and experiences, including study with Advaita masters and Tibetan lamas, intensive metta practice, and sutta study. For more information, visit mariposasangha.org.

Dakini Meditative:

Quiet Mind, Open Heart Retreat

Jan. 13 - 16, 2017

Dakini Meditative is an Austin-based community of people dedicated to the practice of meditation and living a mindful, compassionate life. Meditation is a simple practice that can help us to connect with our inherent wisdom. This retreat is an opportunity to deepen our practice of meditation in a relaxed natural environment, with nourishing food and daily practice, alongside a supportive and joyful community of open-hearted individuals. For more information or to register, contact Kelly at info@dakinimeditative.com.

Yoga & Meditation with Charles MacInerney

Feb. 17 - 19, 2017

Spring is the perfect time of year to savor the beautiful Chappell Hill countryside, with a relaxing yoga retreat led by Charles MacInerney. This retreat explores yoga as a lifestyle rather than just an exercise routine. Although Charles is best known as a Hatha Yoga instructor, his favorite yoga and his path of choice is Raja Yoga. "Raja" means "king." Raja Yoga is called the Royal Path. It consists of eight separate areas of practice that penetrate and encompass all aspects of life. Charles has been leading yoga retreats in Texas since 1992. For more information or to register, visit yogateacher.com.

Insight Meditation with Howie Cohn

Apr. 27 - 30, 2017

To be consistently happy in this life you must be wise. To be wise you must be compassionate with yourself and with others. This retreat will follow the Buddha's practical, clear and inspiring map of awakening wisdom and compassion in our hearts and minds. Practicing Insight Meditation and Loving kindness we will gradually expand from ill will to kindness, from confusion to clarity, and from tension to relaxation. For more information or to register, visit: imhouston.wordpress.com.

AVAILABLE DATES FOR RETREAT BOOKING

Dec. 9 - 11, 2016

Mar. 3 - 5, 2017

Dec. 16 - 18, 2016

Mar. 17 - 19, 2017

Jan. 6 - 8, 2017

Mar. 24 - 26, 2017

Jan. 20 - 22, 2017

Apr. 7 - 9, 2017

Jan. 27 - 29, 2017

Apr. 14 - 16, 2017

Feb. 3 - 5, 2017

Apr. 21 - 23, 2017

Feb. 10 - 12, 2017

GRATITUDE

The beautiful sanctuary that the Margaret Austin Center provides would not be possible without the support of our many generous donors. Thank you!
(Aug. 2015 - Sept. 2016)

In memory of Margaret Austin
Linda Amelang
Martha Edgar

In memory of John Sieber
Judith Armogida
Todd & Diana Fredricks

In honor of Kathey Ferland &
Rick Pearson
Amy Hastings & Larry Yarbrough

In honor of Kathey Ferland
Rick Pearson

Amazon

Anonymous

Austin Yoga Mamas

Lynn Beckett

Ashley Brorby

Julian Brown & Daryl Koehn

Rebecca Carpenter

Ginger Clarkson & Mark Ryan

David Collins

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Eric Denner

Dorn Companies

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John & Annette Eldridge

Kathey Ferland & Rick Person

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Chris Grigassy

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Ann Kelly

Jeanne Kyser

John Krajicek

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Cindy & Stan Merrill

Nonie Moore

Kristin Neff

Kay Oliver

Cherie Ray

Jim & Naomi Rosborough

Phyllis Sabo

Safeway

Paul Schlaud

Melanie Schlossberg & friends

Gretchen Seidl

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THE SOUNDS OF MAC

The wind

The chimes

The songs of birds

Nuts falling onto the tin roof

A red bird bumping against the glass window trying to fly through because she has no knowledge of a barrier called glass

The whispers in the silence saying welcome back

SELF-COMPASSION NOURISHES US ALL



Kristin Neff, PhD, presented the workshop “Self-Compassion and Emotional Resilience,” as a benefit for the Margaret Austin Center on May 21, 2016. More than 70 people gathered at Still Waters Retreat Center near Austin to learn about and practice the art of self-compassion.

Kristen is a pioneer in the field of self-compassion research, conducting the first empirical studies on self-compassion over a decade ago. In addition to writing numerous academic articles on the topic, she is author of the book *Self-Compassion*, published by William Morrow in 2011. Kristin’s work has received extensive media coverage, including the *New York Times*, MSNBC, National Public Radio, *Reader’s Digest*, and *Psychology Today*. Kristin is also a long-time meditator and has sat many Insight Meditation retreats at the Center. Her generous offer of her time and wisdom benefited both the Center and the wider Austin community, while raising more than \$11,000 for the Center. Funds will be used to continue repair of the beloved facilities.

With much gratitude,

Kathey Ferland, Margaret Austin Center Board

Photos by Rick Pearson



COLORS OF MAC

Yellow flowers

Yellow butterflies

I gaze at the labyrinth and the beautiful yellow daffodils with their long green stems, framing the circular paths together with rocks and trees

I see a bench where one can stop and reflect while mindfully walking in silence

As the wind kicked up, two beautiful yellow butterflies came into view

They were the same color as the daffodils

They flew over the tops of the flowers and kiss them gently as they drew nectar for nourishment

They flew in concert and different directions

They met and danced to the music of the wind and the melody within only they could hear

I watched them and wondered did they know they were the same color as the flowers?

Is that what drew them to this very special place?
Was color a factor at all?

I suspect not, for you see here at MAC, the only colors that matter are the ones from the spectrum of the rainbow which lend their beauty to this very special place

Poetry by Laura Ward Holliday, Volunteer

Photo by Jim Tiebout

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REMINDER: Send us an email at info@macenter.org to let us know if your address or email has changed or if you want to be removed from the mailing list.

