



DHARMA GATES

2022 Annual Report

Mission

Dharma Gates is a grassroots nonprofit dedicated to opening pathways into formal meditation practice for young adults.

We connect young practitioners to a variety of Buddhist teachers and practice centers, working to eliminate the conceptual, logistical, and financial barriers to practice.

We foster connections through which practitioners can cultivate compassion, resilience, and clarity to meet the unique challenges of our times.

A Note from Leadership:

For Dharma Gates, 2022 was our most significant year yet. Thanks to your support, Dharma Gates was able to impact 323 people through our multi-day and one-day in-person retreats in 2022 and an additional 29 people through our Advising Program. We received over \$85,000 in grant funding from the Khyentse Foundation, Frederick P. Lenz Foundation, and Hemera Foundation.

We're entering a stage where we have the organizational support and maturity to offer our programming at a different scale. I want to thank all of the donors, volunteers, and advisors who have invested their time and care to help us reach this point. Now that the basic infrastructure is laid, our goal is to ground into what we've already built. While the urgency of this work only increases, urgency does not necessarily mean speed. We have to urgently relax. Urgently withdraw from what is harmful. Urgently learn to love. Building an organization on this kind of urgency is delicate. This is what we hope to do. I'm looking forward to our fifth year of practice together. Thank you.

- Aaron Stryker, Executive Director



This Year by the Numbers:



337 people impacted through online and in-person events programming

80 attendees at **3** multi-day retreats

29 advising connections

Funding raised for supporting young people in their meditation practice:
\$137,491

Grants received: **3**

Our Programs

As of January of 2022, all Dharma Gates offerings, including our multi-day meditation retreats, have been offered on a donation-basis. Moving forward, we are committed to offering our events on the dana system. We aim to promote accessibility and to honor the original spirit in which Buddhist teachings were offered.



Photo: participants at our summer 2022 retreat "Opening to Connection"

Cultivating Serenity: 4-Day Samatha Retreat with Beth Upton

This year, Dharma Gates offered three multi-day retreats. The first was with Beth Upton, a Buddhist teacher trained under Pa Auk Sayadaw. The retreat schedule was very open, allowing participants freedom to practice in the way that they were called. A major highlight was our evening fireside Q&A periods with Beth. We dug into a lot of hard questions - about kamma, rebirth and Buddhist teachings on non-self.



Above: a closing photograph from our March retreat with Beth Upton.

Participant Experiences: Isabella Reilly

“I recently went on a retreat with Beth Upton through Dharma Gates and it deepened my practice in a way I had not yet experienced through almost 5 years of informal practice. The community of practicing individuals created a space that I have not found elsewhere and has allowed me to cross paths with connections I would never have met otherwise. The benefit of being led by someone who has deeply studied and lived in ancient tradition also brought a depth to the practice that I have not found outside of these retreats.”

Journey to Inner Worlds: A 4-Day Retreat with Ayya Dhammadipa

Our second major retreat of the year was our largest yet. 36 participants joined us at the Claymont Society to spend a long weekend practicing and learning from Ayya Dhammadipa, a Thai Forest Bhikkuni who also trained in Soto Zen.



Left: Participants gather with Ayya for a closing photo

Below: hanging out with a historic tree on the Claymont Society property

“Deeply repairing and connecting - absolutely necessary in this world.” - Talea Shakun-Berkelhammer after our spring retreat with Ayya Dhammadipa



Participant Experiences: Shane Linden

"My time at the April retreat was a huge step on my spiritual journey and has been with me to this day. I've since joined the Rochester Zen Center, gone on multiple day-long retreats, did my first 7-day sesshin last month, and most recently became a student of one of the center's teachers. During my sesshin, I was very glad I had the experience of the 4 day retreat under my belt, though it still was quite challenging."



Opening to Connection: A Relational Meditation & Community Building Retreat

Last summer, 18 participants gathered at Nine Mountain Retreats in Western Massachusetts for five days of guided relational practice, solitary practice time, recorded guided meditations, and community building. In our experience, this kind of programming can be a powerful stepping stone for those who are called to meditation, but may not yet feel ready to attend a silent retreat or join a formal practice community.

By learning to discern and express our direct experience in our relationships, we can discover trust in ourselves and others and arrive at the relational safety that is essential to building meaningful community.



Above: A closing photo from our August Retreat "Opening to Connection"

1:1 Advising

Through our advising program, we meet 1:1 with practitioners looking to deepen their practice and refer them to retreats or residency opportunities that we believe would be a good fit. This year we advised a total of 29 young people, many of whom have gone on to participate in retreats or residential training.



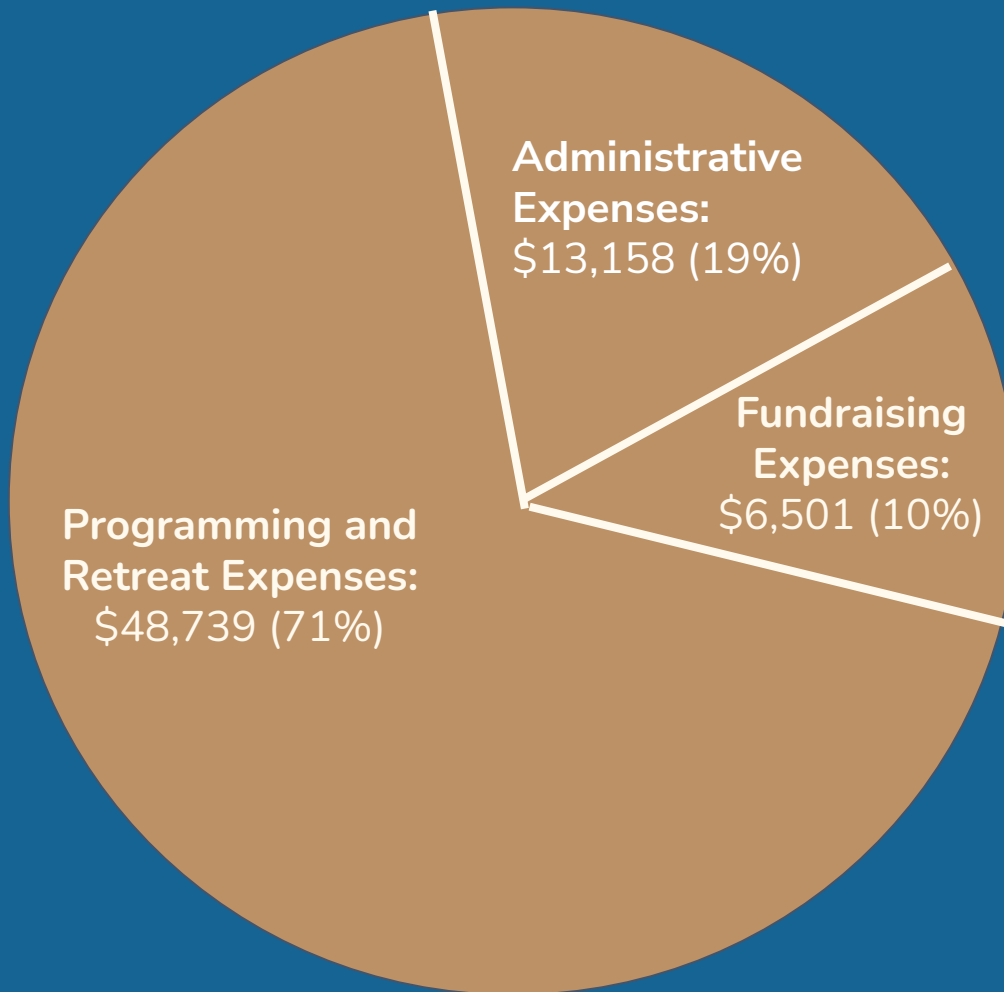
Photo: Vera Lummis and Madeleine Bee during informal time after our April Retreat

Leadership & Financials



Photo: Participants meditating at Opening to Connection, August 2022

2022 Total Expenses: \$68,399
(January 1 - December 1)



Thank you to our major donors

Hemera Foundation

Khyentse Foundation

Frederick P. Lenz Foundation

Benjamin Pence

Jon & Elizabeth Hochman

Haris Siddiqui

Nadine Slavitt

Alexander Julie



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Buddha's Wisdom for Everyone

Here are some examples of how your support counts:

\$30,000

2023 salary for our executive director

\$12,000

5-day retreat for up to 30 participants

\$8,000

3-day retreat for up to 30 participants

\$5,000

Offer a 5-part series of meditation programming on a college campus

\$4,000

One year of legal, accounting, and website hosting fees

\$950

On-campus retreat for up to 30 participants

\$350

Room & board at a 5-day retreat for one participant

\$75

Pay for one day of retreat for one-participant

Support the next generation's practice in 2023...

For monetary gifts, please donate:

Online:

dharma-gates.org/donate

Or by mail to:

500 State Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217

Or contact team@dharma-gates.org

