



December, 2009

Dear Friend of the Foundation for Active Compassion,

Lama John Makransky's long-time aspiration to bring us profoundly transformative practices of wisdom and compassion, adapted from Tibetan Buddhism, has taken form in the creation of the Foundation for Active Compassion (FAC). In the past year, these powerful meditations, which connect us to our deepest fundamental goodness and that of all others, have been made available to Buddhists and also to people of all faiths and backgrounds. These practices have found their way to settings as diverse as a Texas maximum security prison and to a retreat center in Pollenza, Italy.

Looking back on what we have accomplished in just our first year, we are proud of how far we have come, and we have plans to do much more in 2010. For us to go forward, we are asking that you include the Foundation for Active Compassion in your year-end giving.

Some of this year's accomplishments include:

- ❖ Our website - www.foundationforactivecompassion.org - is up and running. It will be updated regularly with information about the mission, people and events sponsored by the FAC, as well as with supportive materials for our practices.
- ❖ FAC is now a fully functioning 501(c)(3) educational organization with a board of directors and established banking and accounting procedures. Except for set up and legal expenditures, FAC is an all volunteer organization. We are committed to organizational and financial transparency.
- ❖ Twenty-six **Natural Wisdom and Compassion meditation teachers** across the United States and in Italy now join **John Makransky** and his associate teachers, **Julie Forsythe and Leah Weiss Ekstrom**, leading fourteen **FAC Meditation groups** with several more now forming. Semi-annual retreats are in place for FAC teachers to further strengthen their sense of connection with each other and with Lama John.
- ❖ We have established ongoing relationships with a number of organizations in both the Buddhist and broader communities. These include the **Barre Center for Buddhist Studies** where Lama John will conduct one weekend and one week long retreat in 2010; **Natural Dharma Fellowship**, where Lama John, Julie and Leah will join Lama Willa Miller for a week long retreat the first week in January; the **Union Theological Seminary**, where John, assisted by Leah, led a successful two day retreat for 80 peace and social justice activists this October; the **Boston College Schools of Theology and Ministry and Social Work; Contemplative Mind in Society** in Northampton, MA; and the **Symposium for Western Socially Engaged Buddhism** sponsored by the Zen Peacemakers.

- ❖ In addition to leading meditation groups, the teachers trained by Lama John have begun a number of diverse and inspired outreach projects in their communities. For example, **Terry Conrad** has continued his work in the maximum security prison in Beaumont, Texas, where he has been working with a group of inmates for five years. This group developed a workbook on ethics for use by inmates that was recognized by H.H. the Dalai Lama. Read more about Terry's work on the **community page** of the FAC website.
 - **Joel Baehr** is leading a twice monthly sitting group in the Suffolk County Jail.
 - **Kathy McKenna** leads a group at the Haley House soup kitchen.
 - **Julie Forsythe** and **Don Belanger** draw upon the practice in their work with learning disabled students, and some of Julie Forsythe's students have begun to attend the sitting group in Putney.
 - **Ken Bent**'s meditation practice informs the way he runs his business and relates to his employees.
 - **Judith Burwell**'s practice empowers her challenging work in coaching hospital physicians.

- ❖ The Buddha spoke of the challenges of old age, disease and death and a number of the teachers have developed programs in settings which serve the elderly, the ill and the dying. **Julie Forsythe** and **Bob Morrison**, both cancer survivors, have begun to work with patients undergoing treatment for cancer at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center.
 - **Jane Burdick** teaches a movement and meditation group at the Maine Medical Center for those living with chronic pain.
 - **Tamara Daly** uses some of the techniques with hospitalized psychiatric patients.
 - Several of the teachers, including **Mary Herzog**, **Joel Baehr**, **Jai Levy** and **Betty Holmes** are therapists who have adapted the practices to use with clients.
 - **Leah Weiss Ekstrom** and **Nancy Dale** have taught an NWC group at a nursing home.
 - **Lydia Cassatt** has led training for hospice volunteers.

Donations to FAC are fully tax deductible. Your donation will enable the Foundation to expand its outreach through the website and teaching events during the year, to provide scholarships to those who want to attend our teachings but need financial help, and to assist our teachers with expenses related to their FAC work.

To donate through Paypal:

DONATE HERE

To donate by check: Please make your check payable to Foundation for Active Compassion
 Mail to: FAC, 7 Small Meadows Lane, Putney, VT 05346.

The Foundation does not yet have the capacity to accept pledges for monthly donations through Paypal. Donors who might wish to contribute on a monthly basis should use any [Donate Here](#) link on Foundation for Active Compassion website.

Wishing you deep happiness and health in the New Year,

The Board of the Foundation for Active Compassion

Ken Bent	Julie Forsythe
Lydia Cassatt	Mary Herzog
Nancy Dale	Barbara Makransky
James Daniels	John Makransky
Leah Weiss Ekstrom	Ellen Mintzer
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