

## Beginnings

Issue 1, 2014

Seventeen participants recently embarked on the Yoga Development Course (YDC), scheduled from January 8 - April 8. Not only do the students engage in a journey into themselves but the entire Ashram joins them in three months of growing awareness and insight.

Seventeen days after the darkness of Winter Solstice and one day before the YDC started, the amount of daylight in the Northern Hemisphere began to lengthen at twice the speed of the preceding days. The YDC brings that same sense of rapid expansion of Light - an evolving brilliance of understanding and self-knowledge.

Join us in expanding Light through your own practice of the [Divine Light Invocation](#).

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[Stilling the Mind Retreat](#): What is the mind? How can it be directed? You will learn various practices - including visualization, breathing techniques, concentration and reflection to help you understand different levels of mind.  
*February 7-9*



UPCOMING  
ASHRAM  
COURSES

[Relaxation Retreat \(Spring Equinox\)](#): As winter turns to spring, find balance and renewal within yourself. Focus on going inward, stilling the mind and body, connecting to your inner source of peace, harmony and joy.

*March 21-23*

[Cycle of Light Series](#): Scheduled during the equinoxes and solstices, Cycle of Light Retreats focus on renewal and relaxation through times of change. Honour the seasonal cycles of light by nourishing your own inner Light.

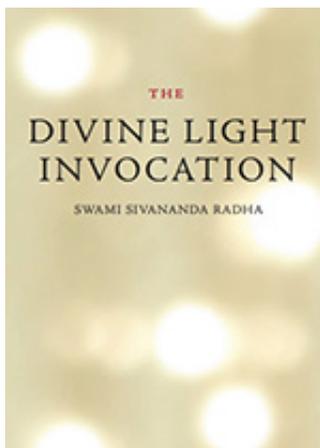
[Hatha Yoga Teacher Certification](#): In this ten-day course you will learn how to teach classical asanas and integrate spiritual practices into the classroom. The approach is experiential - learning through teaching in small groups. Successful completion of the Yoga Development course is a prerequisite.

*April 9 - 19*

[Personal Retreats](#) and [Artist and Professional Renewal Retreats](#) are available year round at the Ashram - take time to renew spiritually and creatively.

Visit our [2014](#) program calendar.

TIMELESS BOOK  
OF THE MONTH



*The Divine Light  
Invocation*

Swami Sivananda Radha

"Cultivate the feeling that you are one with the Light. Be one with the Light." (p 60)

[www.timeless.org](http://www.timeless.org)

**Personal Transformation**  
*Swami Radhananda, 2006*



In this video Swami Radhananda launches the 2006 Yoga Development Course. Her encouraging message is relevant both to the 45th annual YDC and to all sincere seekers, inspiring us to understand the power of a serious commitment to our personal growth.

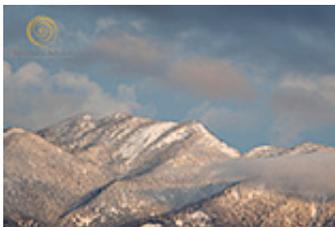
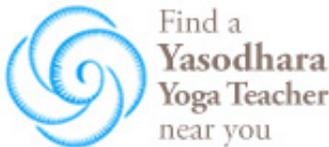
**Holding Virtual Space - Amy Allcock**



Vegetarian Spelt Crust  
Pizza with Pesto



*Amy Allcock participated in the 2013 Yoga Development Course and now resides at the Ashram. Her Karma Yoga includes managing the Yasodhara Teacher's Network (YTN) and helping to launch the Yasodhara Yoga Teachers and Centres (YYTC) branding project, including a new website.*



Make this photo my  
desktop image

Over the holidays, I returned to Ottawa to visit friends. Offering satsang at the Yasodhara Yoga Centre Ottawa, I felt my heart filled with appreciation for the foundation I had gained over the eighteen months I spent there as a student and karma yogi. From this foundation I committed to the YDC and then extended my stay with a two-year Karma Yoga commitment at the Ashram. From the very first time I learned of Yasodhara Yoga through a class offered by Swami Lalitananda at the Toronto Yoga Conference, I can see how my journey has 'connected me' with the technical skills I am now utilizing to create connections for others.

Today Yasodhara Yoga teachers worldwide can maintain connections to other teachers and to the Ashram through the online platform of the Yasodhara Teachers Network. And all students can find teachers and centres through the Yasodhara Yoga Teachers and Centres network.

I am grateful for the privilege of creating connections and holding this sacred virtual space. See you online!

Contact Amy at [amy@yasodhara.org](mailto:amy@yasodhara.org).



**Climbing Mountains - Emilio Sandroval**



*Emilio came to the Young Adult Program at Yasodhara Ashram in December 2013. Originally from Veracruz, Mexico, Emilio's vision for his life has been influenced by his travels, by yoga, and by a longing to live a purposeful life. A desire to be in a like-minded community led him to the Ashram, where he is participating until the spring.*

Being at the Ashram I've come to realize that I create my own experience, that pain is an emotional reaction I can choose to transcend, and that it is up to me to surrender to a greater potential. Swami Radha's story has inspired me. Anything is possible. I know that with effort, by understanding myself, I can choose who I want to be and create purpose in my life.

Last year, while free rock climbing in Mexico, I fell 20 feet and nearly died. It has taken time to heal and to rebuild my strength in order to climb again. My experience at the Ashram feels very much like climbing a mountain - I am scaling my mind, body and spirit to reach a place of harmony, purpose and knowledge. I am grateful to the Young Adult Program and for the bursary that is supporting my experience here.

*Since 1995 over 2,000 [Young Adults](#) have come to the Ashram to learn valuable work skills and to integrate yoga into their lives. Thank you for [donating](#) to this program!*

## **A Room With A View**



*In 1964 Karma Yogis built Sivananda House (later shortened to Siva Hall), which was originally used as an office/garage/living quarters. Today Siva is home to the library, karma yoga accommodations and now three main-floor guest rooms. Swami Sukhananda, who leads Repairs and Building Maintenance comments.*

This small-scale adaptation of Siva Hall allowed us to convert one large room to two bedrooms in a configuration that also provides a self-contained family unit - all for less than the cost of an entry level Apple MacBook Air! We're committed to sustainability, an example of which is the beautiful new picture window in the Mountain room, a window repurposed from supplies originally destined for Yasodhara Heights.

Working with an architect who donates his time, we evaluate our buildings and consider adaptations to meet the growing requests for single rooms, more accessible-friendly guest rooms, increased facility requirements as well as rooms for the increasing numbers of men registering for courses.

We look forward to welcoming you and meeting your needs on your next trip to the Ashram!

## **Yasodhara Outreach Workshops and Conferences**



The Yasodhara Outreach initiative continues this winter with the following offerings:

Swami Matananda will present a *Life Seals* workshop in Spokane on February 15 and 16. On Friday, February 14th, all are invited to a celebration marking the transition from Radha Center Spokane to Yasodhara Yoga Spokane. [Click here](#) for details.

Rebecca Dale will lead a *Body as a Temple* workshop on February 16th in Vancouver and on February 23rd in Victoria. She will teach a *Sacred Dance* workshop on the evening of February 20th in Vancouver and February 25th in Victoria. [Click here](#) for details.

Swami Jyotihananda will offer Yasodhara Yoga at the *Women's Spirituality Conference* in Williams Lake on March 28th and 29th. She is also scheduling a workshop locally on March 30th. Stay tuned for details.

View the schedule [here](#). And thank you for helping us spread the word!

E-mail [Swami Samayananda](#) if you are interested in a workshop in your area or to suggest a conference.

**The 45th Yoga Development Course Has Begun!**



On January 8th, seventeen aspiring students (and one small service dog) committed to three months of self-study, yoga and spiritual development, entering a life-changing course that is now in its 45th year.

How did they find us? Two students, new to the Ashram, were influenced by Swami Durgananda's book, *In Durga's Embrace*. Nine had been to the Ashram previously for the 10 Days of Yoga. Four others are returning for their second YDC. Four have come from the Young Adult Program, including a young woman from the Czech Republic, one from Denmark and another from Switzerland. And Alicia Pace and Dan Seguin are taking time away from Ashram management to delve more deeply into their spiritual development.

The YDC is a very special time at the Ashram with karma yogis, teachers and residents committed to holding space for those on course.

[View](#) the YDC Group Photo and the Introductory Evening Tea Album.

If you like to plan ahead, you can sign up now for [YDC 2015](#), January 8th - April 8th. Or take the [10 Days of Yoga](#), offered each month from May through October.

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## NEWS AT A GLANCE

**Winter Bhajan Blast** - In 2014 Bhajan Blasts will take place quarterly, with the first one scheduled for Sunday, March 16th from 7 - 8:30 pm Mountain Time (note - new length, 1.5 hours). Share the vibration of sacred song and dance wherever you are! View the December Bhajan Blast [recorded broadcast](#) and the [photo album](#).

**Family Week Returns July 9 - 13, 2014** - Families of all ages, shapes and sizes are invited to attend our popular Family Week. If you're considering joining us this summer, please don't delay in [registering](#) - spots are going quickly!

**2014 Program Brochures** - [Help spread the word](#) on Ashram courses and retreats by giving brochures to friends or by dropping them off at your favourite stores and cafes. Brochures are available in batches of twenty. To request copies please contact [Swami Samayananda](#) with your mailing address and quantities. Thank you!

**Festival of Light** - The celebrations from the Winter Solstice to the New Year were tranquil and spacious. It was a precious time of devotion, renewal and gratitude for the gifts of the year. [View](#) the Festival of Light photo album.

## PERSONAL PRACTICE GUIDE



### Take time to review 2013 and celebrate your victories

*The Ashram's 50th Anniversary Year Highlights*

▶ Watch the video

### Swami Radha

*"What do you want to grow in the good soil you have cultivated? What is rooted in your earth?"*

🔊 Listen to the audio

## Beginnings

### Reflection Questions

With the New Year and new classes, what better topic to explore than "Beginnings?" How do we welcome the new? Or is there really anything new under the sun?

1. Take time to clean up and create a clear space around you. Do some practice to clear away mental clutter. Observe the effect. Then stand in Mountain pose and ask, Where am I? Reflect on where you are physically, mentally and spiritually. Can you accept where you are? Are we always building on what we have already created?
2. What are your learning goals for this month or for the next 3 months (following along with the YDC) or for the year? What do you want to learn through your teaching and in your daily life? How will you know you are learning? What type of reflection makes it real for you? Draft up your plans and activate!
3. The Divine Light Invocation is the spiritual practice of the first chakra and flows throughout the Kundalini system. Do the Light and listen. What arises? How do you keep the Light alive and growing?
4. What is your foundation? Review the Muladhara chakra (refer to [Kundalini Yoga for the West](#)). What is the message of the first chakra

for you right now? What is your direction?  
What choices and possibilities are open before  
you? What is your relationship with earth,  
creativity? You may want to create with clay to  
explore...

For more Teaching and Reflection ideas, [click here](#).



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**NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE**

