"Popping up" describes April's surprises - life-giving, fresh and delightful. Along with daffodils, forsythia and the haze of unnamed blue flowers, we are also seeing a new crop of YDCers, shining from their three months of intensive interior work. The nineteen participants are transitioning into their next phase of Hatha Teacher Certification, Karma Yoga or living the teachings back home. Now they blossom - testing their ideals in the world.

During this month of creative activity ask yourself: What is manifesting in my life? What is breaking through, emerging, surfacing or developing? How do I work with the creative potential within me?
• **10 Days of Yoga**: One of our most popular programs for students of all levels, this course is designed to offer practices that support your personal and spiritual development. Instruction is given in a variety of traditional yogic practices combined with original courses Swami Radha created for personal development. Give yourself ten days to expand your understanding of who you are and who you want to be.

  *May 16 - 26*

• **Calling to the Divine: Music & Consciousness, Sacred Dance & Mantra**: This five-day program taps into the devotional nature of the heart through music, sound and dance. Music & Consciousness is an original workshop developed by Swami Radha to awaken inner knowledge through the power of sound. This series offers a pathway to the Divine through creative expression.

  *May 17 - 22*

• **Who Am I? Self-Image & Identification**: By exploring your self-image and questioning who you really are, you can peel away external layers and come closer to your essence. These two original workshops developed by Swami Radha are often a pivotal point for self-understanding when offered in the Yoga Development Course. In this five-day intensive you are given the opportunity to face yourself and to see yourself in a new way.

  *May 31 - June 5*

• **Personal Retreats and Artist and Professional Retreats** are available year round at the Ashram - take time to renew spiritually and creatively.

  Visit our 2013 program calendar

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**Featured Book**

**The Power of Imagination**  
*Swami Sivananda Radha, Calgary - March 1985*

**The Devi Of Speech:**  
*The Goddess in Kundalini Yoga*  
by Swami Sivananda Radha
Swami Radha talks about the creative power of a cultivated imagination and the destructive power of an uncultivated imagination. The power of choice, she tell us, is ours.

Watch the video

Creativity as Spiritual Practice

"One of the greatest powers we have, although it is often not recognized is the power of choice. So ask yourself: What power am I engaging? What power am I loosening? How do you use the powers you already have? Only you are responsible for your actions." (pages 26-27)

Swami Sivananda Radha
The Devi Of Speech: The Goddess in Kundalini Yoga

Swami Premananda recently completed a charming, whimsical altar using mahogany and maple that he brought with him decades ago, and birch that was logged and milled at the Ashram.
"The entire time I worked on this altar I felt very connected to Swami Radha," said Swami Premananda. "It brought back memories of the various projects we collaborated on - the bird feeders, Krishna's cradle, the Temple doors."

"Shaping the wood, polishing it, considering the design elements were all moments of reflection and refinement. My day-to-day work is more functional and practical. Creating the altar allowed me to express finer feelings through a fixed medium. It was also inspiring to make something pleasing that now holds a precious image. This work was my spiritual practice over the last few months."

Today the altar is at Many Mansions supporting the beautiful Maha-Tara who recently returned from Vancouver.

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**50th Anniversary Dance and Music**

Join us on Saturday, May 11th, for a return of the Mishras to the Temple of Divine Light. Three generations of master musicians from Benares, an ancient spiritual centre of traditional music and Indian culture, will be offering classical North Indian ragas and meditative music in a sitar and tabla concert.

On Saturday, May 25th, Anusha Fernando, a performer, teacher and artistic director of Shakti Dance Society in Vancouver, presents a concert in Bharata Natyam, Indian Classical dance. Anusha understands the depth of her tradition and also its potential for new
creation. She will be performing two solo dances, "Earth" and "Water."

We are delighted to celebrate our Saraswati lineage through music and the arts during our 50th Anniversary year!

Learn more details [here](https://app.e2ma.net/app/view:CampaignPublic/id:35981.13051657927/rid:ca429f506d2bc1e04af451907cacc173).

**Celebrations**

This truly feels like a year of celebrations. Three and a half months into 2013 and we have honoured:

- Swami Radha's 57th sanyas initiation anniversary and Swami Radhananda's 20th on February 2nd
- Swami Radha's birthday on March 20th
- Launch of our new website - yasodhara.org (Monday, February 18th)
- Launch of ResortSuite, our new integrated guest registration and point-of-sale system (Monday, March 25th)
- Easter Weekend and the Garden Blessing
- 2013 YDC completion

Each celebration reminds us of our history, our current accomplishments and our blessings for the gift of the Ashram.

**Wishes Do Come True!**

https://app.e2ma.net/app/view:CampaignPublic/id:35981.13051657927/rid:ca429f506d2bc1e04af451907cacc173
With deep gratitude, we thank a generous donor for making our wish for a new harmonium come true! And a big thank-you to Radha Yoga Centre Calgary for committing to raise funds for the portable dance stage. The Calgary group wrote, "Dance is such a beautiful part of our Saraswati lineage, a reminder of the devotion and commitment of Swami Radha and also Swami Radhakrishnananda. We are happy to be able to give back in this way." The harmonium and stage will contribute to music and dance offerings in our 50th Anniversary and far beyond.

Housekeeping Wish List
Maintaining new linens in rotation requires an ongoing investment. Our plan calls for a third of the linens in our three guest buildings - Saraswati, the Barn and the Coop - to be replaced annually over a three-year period. Last year we had funds to replace only a portion of the linens in Saraswati.

To complete this year's rotation will cost $2,200.

If you would like to contribute toward the Housekeeping Wish List, please use this link and select the Wish List Fund. Each offer of support - no matter the size - is deeply appreciated.

Creativity After the YDC, Karen Pheasant

It has been nine years since my departure from the Yoga Development Course. Writing every day in the YDC instilled confidence in me as a First Nations, particularly as a first generation English speaker whose parents are residential school survivors. Since 2004 this confidence helped me complete an English Literature BA and to write my first book about the grandmothers who taught me the dance that I share as a Jingle Dress dancer. The inspiration to write our women's stories came during one of my satsang moments.

Currently I live and work in Edmonton, which has the second highest rate of Aboriginal population in Canada. I work at the school with the highest population of Aboriginal students. When I was hired, the school administrator let me know that regardless of the accolades on my resume, it was the YDC training that captured her
interest in retaining me.

I have been truly blessed to be with over 300 children from K-6, who now know the Mountain pose, Cat pose, Eagle pose and other asanas. My care for these students brought me back to the Ashram for spring rejuvenation-to recall that creativity spirit so I can continue my study with the same devotion.

**Environmental Action as Ahimsa**

Paris Marshall Smith, the Ashram's food flow manager, recently spoke with Suzy Hamilton, host of a weekly radio show called "EcoCentric" on Kootenay Co-op Radio. Focused on environmental issues, "EcoCentric" offers a way of "seeing ourselves as willing parts of the whole earth, appreciating the creative bonds that join us to all organisms."

Paris spoke about the Ashram's achievement of attaining carbon neutrality and everything that was involved in the process. She says, "The goal we achieved fits into our broader practice of sustainable living, where we don't take more than we need. It is based on the principle of *ahimsa*, non-harm, and has led to an integrated way of living at the Ashram."

Listen to the interview [here](https://app.e2ma.net/app/view:CampaignPublic/id:35981.13051657927/rid:ca429f506d2bc1e04af451907cacc173).

**What's Popping Up in the Ashram Garden?**
The glorious Garden Blessing on Easter Sunday officially kicked off the spring season, and already we are seeing lots of growth - with garlic, peas, parsley, kale and Asian greens nicely on their way.

Overwintering vegetables has expanded our growing season, and we are now harvesting beets, turnips, carrots and parsnips that were planted last fall then covered with straw over the winter months. In the hoop house carrots and kale are luxuriating in their spacious new micro-climate.

Not only are vegetables growing, but so are our garden helpers. This week we offered internships to three successful candidates. Congratulations to Bryn Bamber, fresh from the YDC, and to two new individuals who will travel to the Ashram later this spring.

Yoga Development Course 2013 Wrap!
The YDC participants brought their program to a close with a soirée in which they creatively presented reflections based on the "Song of the 18 - Ities" by Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. Each person drew an "ity" from a hat--"charity, sincerity, generosity, magnanimity,..." - and portrayed through song, word or dance how it applied to them.

Then they presented the Ashram with a donation to fund the new lavender field, which will be planted to honour the 50th Anniversary - a beautiful giving back! Om Namah Sivaya

News at a Glance

- **Yasodhara Ashram Society Annual General Meeting:** We invite all members of Yasodhara Ashram Society, the Friends of Radha Foundation, and the Association for the Development of Human Potential to our AGM, May 2nd, 10 am - 4 pm. This year's AGM will be a one-day essential business meeting of the Societies. Our interactive learning sessions will be included in the 50th Anniversary celebrations, August 7-11th.

- **108 Sun Salutations:** Our annual Young Adult Program fundraiser is scheduled to take place in October this year. Stay tuned for more details!

- **Yasodhara Ashram Merchandise:** Tote bags, mugs, water bottles, stickers, journals, and bumper stickers - all with our beautiful new logo are making their way to the Ashram Bookstore. Stop by and check these out on your next visit.

- **Bhajan Blast:** Mark Sunday, April 21st, 7-8 pm Pacific time in your calendar for our April Bhajan Blast. It’s our pleasure to invite you to this live-streaming event. Help us generate positive vibrations by joining us in lively song and devotional dance!
• **Alternative Heat and Power Systems For Smaller Communities - An Evening of Learning and Discussion:** As part of our outreach to the surrounding Kootenay community and to support our own learning about renewable energy, the Ashram is hosting a discussion of the exploration of new green technologies available to small communities for alternate methods of energy generation. Monday, April 15th, 7-9 pm. All are welcome!

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**CELEBRATING 50 YEARS**

**April's theme is Creativity.**

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**Historical Moment: The Evolution of the Yoga Development Course**

This year marked the forty-fourth year of the YDC - a program that Swami Radha started in 1969. When she discovered that some of her students had taken a three-week "yoga teacher training course" in California from a couple who had only taken a few classes from her, she knew she had to take action and offer a substantive alternative.

The course she started in 1969 was the Yoga Teachers Course (YTC), which later became the Yoga Development Course. In the first few years Swami Radha did most of the teaching herself. She also created innovative programming that blended traditional yoga practices such as Hatha, Mantra and Karma Yoga with her original self-development courses that challenged students to understand themselves through questioning, reflection, art, music and symbolism.

How did she do it? "It was my dedication to the Divine. I had to wait, be receptive, surrender. Then it worked; the guidance came from the inside."

Her original workshops, such as Life Seals®, Straight Walk®, and Music & Consciousness, are being offered as "50th Anniversary Signature Courses" throughout the year. And the YDC, built on a firm foundation, continues to evolve and transform lives.
This month's teaching theme is Creativity

We are celebrating April with the theme of "Creativity." Whether you are at the Ashram or in our extended community, we invite you to explore your creative potential - through the arts, creative problem solving, expansive visualizing and self-exploration.

"Creativity" is the theme for this month.

Click here for ideas on how to tap into your innate creativity and direct it! View Swami Radhananda's video in which she encourages us to bring forward the feminine to make ourselves and the world whole. Listen to an archival audio of Swami Radha encouraging us to think about our inner gardens - the quality of our soil, the seeds we have planted and the concepts and ideas that are rooted in the mind. Take time to explore your creativity through this month's teaching reflections.

April Art Project: A Different Approach to Drawing

Where does the power to create come from? What is the role of the senses? What happens when you don't depend on the critical judgment of the mind?

Last fall, Swami Matananda, who has a degree in Fine Arts, picked up a book that sparked her interest in taking a different approach to drawing. It all began with a fine-tipped pen, a mug and a willingness to trust. She allowed her sight and hand to draw the mug by putting pen to paper, eyes slowly following the lines of the object without looking at or assessing the drawing that was emerging.

Read more about Swami Matananda's experience and directions for this different approach to drawing.
MAKE A DONATION

Box 9 527 Walker's Landing Road | Kootenay Bay, BC V0B 1X0 CA

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