Welcome to Yasodhara Ashram's 50th Anniversary Newsletter!

The 50th Anniversary Celebrations, from August 7-11, honoured fifty years of growing into Light, building community and discovering the promise of yoga. Filled with music, dance, chanting, reflection, devotion, selfless service and wonderful meals, the celebration days were full of wonder, joy and gratitude. We hope you enjoy these highlights along with a few upcoming news items!

Opening Satsang - Wednesday, August 7
Over a hundred people - many travelling from afar - attended the opening satsang. The theme was that "the world is feminine" and that everything is Divine Mother's manifestation. The process of listening to what the Ashram needs, then taking action has supported the Ashram's continuous and dynamic process of change. Like the river, Saraswati, the Ashram's lineage will flow into the future as we initiate what is needed for the next fifty years.

The Puja and Swami Radhananda's Welcome
On Thursday afternoon, August 8th, we gathered in the Temple for a puja to honour the Ashram's lineage. Swami Radhananda spoke about her first step onto the Ashram ground and how at that moment she knew that the "something more" she had been looking for was here. Seeing people living and working together in community she knew she had found a safe and sacred place to open up and look at herself.

"We all come to the Ashram to learn what we have to learn," she said. "It's the way to Liberation. And now we celebrate 50 years of this gift!"

**Daily Karma Yoga, Community Class and Activities**
Each morning began with Hidden Language Hatha Yoga followed by Karma Yoga. Mid-morning our large group reconvened in the Radha Room for a Community Class with an opportunity to learn from each other. We shared our reflections in small groups and then the highlights as a larger group. It was a wonderful experience of expanding connections within our community.

Each afternoon a variety of activities were offered to choose from:

- classes taught by visiting teachers
- tours of the environmental initiatives and Parvati renovation
- art and spiritual practice
- recording a video message in honour of the Ashram’s 50th Anniversary
- bidding in the Silent Auction
- instruction in how-to offer a Skype class
- tutorials in the Yasodhara Teacher Network
- swimming, walking, relaxing and enjoying the beauty of the Ashram

Celebration Food!
The Ashram's culinary team, led by Chef Steve Kruse, created wonderfully festive food, with Friday evening being a memorable highlight. We first gathered in the Radha Room for delicate appetizers and a choice of organic sparkling wine (generously donated by Summerhill Winery in Kelowna) or Ashram cherry juice, and offered a grand toast in honour of the Ashram's 50 years. Mandala House dining room offered an elegant setting for a delicious special dinner (featuring fresh wild salmon or stuffed Portobello mushrooms) served by charming karma yogis.

Saturday's lunch of chilled cherry-basil soup, hand-ground oat muffins and farm fresh eggs was served in a relaxed picnic style in the orchard. Guests could also participate in the Country Fair set up by the Food Flow team with coin tosses, guess the number of cherries in this jar (answer = 146!), and amazing facts about the garden's production.

The 50th Anniversary Gala Evening
Despite severe thunderstorm warnings, the Gala took place on Saturday evening on the new stage (funded by the Calgary Yasodhara Yoga Centre) under the chestnut tree below Siva. It was a magical time of honouring the Ashram's Saraswati lineage through sacred dance and song. Midway through the evening, we gathered at Mandala House to enjoy the beautifully decorated, layered cake with chocolate raspberry ganache and a white chocolate topping. View the recorded broadcast of the 50th Anniversary Gala and visit the Ashram's Facebook page for an extensive photo album of the evening.

Remembering Swami Durgananda
On Sunday morning, August 11, friends from the Ashram’s extended community and the surrounding local areas gathered in the Temple to celebrate the life of Swami Durgananda, an inspiring disciple and a warm, humorous and wonderful woman. Swami Jyotihananda opened the celebration, and Swami Yasodananda, Satya, Janet Brown and Bailee Nebeker recalled memories of Swami Durgananda. After the service, we all gathered on the Mandala House deck to hear heart-warming personal experiences we had with Swami Durgananda. May she blessed in the Light!

The 50th Anniversary Celebration Closing
The final celebrations ended with dinner and satsang on the beach. Departing teachers spoke about their experience with the teachings, summarized by a quote from Swami Radhananda, "Teaching is gratitude in action."

Micheal Wou, designer of the Ashram's refreshed new look, cut the 50th Anniversary Cake that he had helped decorate with the new logo (and was served as Prasad!). And the Siva moon disappeared over the mountain.

The 50th Anniversary Celebrations were a blessed time. We are especially grateful for Swami Radha's teachings, which can guide us to the luminous, compassionate wisdom within.

As we launch into the next 50 years, we also recognize the contributions of everyone who has come before and to all who will follow.

Hari Om

Messages from the Extended Ashram Community

During the celebrations we invited people here and at home to create a video message describing a special moment at the Ashram or to simply send a greeting. Over fifty people responded. Here is the result - enjoy!
The Facebook Daily Photo Albums

Visit the Ashram's Facebook page to view the daily photo albums from the 50th Anniversary Celebrations.

Day 1 - [The 50th Anniversary Celebrations Have Begun!](#)
Day 2 - [The 50th Anniversary Celebrations](#)
Day 2 - [A 50th Anniversary Activity - Creating with Clay](#)
Day 2 - [The Dress Up Dinner](#)
Day 3 - [The Orchard Lunch](#)
Day 3 - [The Ashram’s 50th Anniversary Gala Evening](#)
Day 4 - [The Closing Day](#)

Desktop Photo

AND [download a desktop image](#) from the 50th Anniversary Celebration as a reminder of this time of celebration and 50 years of growing into the Light!

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**UPCOMING ASHRAM COURSES**

- **Life Seals®** In Life Seals® you create personal symbols in a process that allows the unconscious to come forward, revealing patterns, life lessons and the potential for change. Life Seals® can open doors of awareness and help you gain a new perspective on yourself and your direction in life.
  *September 13 - 15*

- **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.
  *September 19 - 29*

- **Straight Walk®** Swami Radha based this course upon an ancient Buddhist practice of self-awareness. The Straight Walk® includes several walking meditations practiced with observation and concentration. Steps are taken, literally and symbolically, to understand your perception and gain a new perspective of your issues and choices.
  *September 27 - 29*

- **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](#)
News at a Glance

- **Indian Classical Music Concert & Workshops** - Join us on Saturday, August 24th at 7 pm for a flute and tablas concert with Raj and Utpal, talented musicians who have performed together for 30 years all over the world. Concert tickets are $15. For info about workshops scheduled for August 24th, please contact the Ashram.

- **Taste of the Ashram** - The last Taste of the Ashram for the year is scheduled for Saturday, September 7th, 11 am - 2:30 pm. This drop-in program is open to local visitors and neighbours interested in learning more about the Ashram.

- **Bhajan Blast** - Tune in on Sunday, September 15th, 7 - 8 pm Pacific for our next Bhajan Blast. Join us live in generating positive vibrations through sacred song and dance.

- **Buddhist Retreat** - On September 27 - 29th, the Ashram will be the venue for a Buddhist Retreat with Venerable Losang Samten. He will be offering an initiation into the healing practice of Medicine Buddha. For more information visit www.losangsamten.com or info@dharmac.com

- **Yasodhara Outreach** - Eastern Schedule - Swami Samayananda and Alicia Pace are travelling east to offer workshops. Some dates have changed since the July announcement, so please check this new schedule for updates.

- **"50 Reasons" Fundraising Campaign** - Thank you for your generous response to our call for donations. The "50 Reasons" Fundraising Campaign raised $29,715.62. Your donations help us sustain the Ashram into the future!

- **Join us for the Fall Harvest Program** - Help us bring in the harvest and process it! If you are 30 and under, please click here. If you are over 30, please follow this link.

- **"Peace and Perspective"** - Enjoy this article (PDF - 25 Mb) written by journalist and friend of the Ashram, Katherine Sage. Recently published in Grand magazine in Ontario, the article features Yasodhara Ashram as a destination for peace and perspective.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

August's theme is Celebration.

**Historical Moment - Karma Yoga Over the Years**

For five decades karma yogis have had the opportunity to transform themselves through the yoga of action, reflection and awareness. This video captures the early days and celebrates the
hard work that went into building the foundation for the Ashram we have today.

Teaching Guide - Celebration

"Celebration" is the theme for August 2013.

If you were unable to be at the Ashram, why not create your own celebrations at home? In this month's teaching theme, we have included some seed ideas. You can also be inspired by the video of Swami Radhananda, who invites us to feel the vibration of spiritual practice and to reflect on our path. And by Swami Radha's talk from a 1991 celebration. She asks, Where are all the Radhas? and assures us that when we approach the Divine, we incorporate all that is human in ourselves.