



*The Principle of Sufficiency: True abundance flows from enough; never from more.
When you make a difference with what you have—it expands.
Lynne Twist, The Soul of Money*

Give me a place to stand....and I will move the world. Archimedes

Be the change you wish to see for the world. Mahatma Gandhi

**Dear Friends:
February 2009**

Living in times of uncertain change can bring fear or a wise re-evaluation of our priorities. When a wise new leader south of our border calls out for “responsibility for our actions,” we can all take stock of our portfolios in a renewed and hopeful way. How do we serve and be the change?, as Gandhi says. To make the change we must take a stand about what is important to us. One way is serve others: spend time with someone dying or ill, help or support to a friend in need, write a letter to advocate in a environmental campaign, take up a new green practice in your home, or offer your heart in silent meditation for all beings. Lynne Twists writes how our gifts and abilities are other forms of currency, beyond our finances, and she calls this, “**a currency of love,**” that is guided by our intention to make a difference.

Today, we reach out with **gratitude and happiness to** all of you who have donated and who have pledge support through our membership program. The stand that we have taken at Gitche M’Qua, that **healing is always possible** in our living and our dying, is very alive, and that through **education** we open ourselves to medicines that come from many spiritual sources. In the past year through our classes, courses, programs and outreach to the families facing death, we have touched over 750 people directly; and indirectly the ripple reaches out in unseen ways. **We would be so happy if today you renewed your membership, gave a donation, or committed to a monthly contribution to the Centre.** Whatever your gift, including your kind thoughts, we are grateful for your connection with us. There is an invisible thread of connection that comes from just knowing you, and from knowing that we cannot do anything alone. We literally depend on each other for everything.

In the next year we are expanding our **Being With Our Dying educational courses** and reaching out to the local Hospices. Last year we initiated a scholarship fund so we could offer volunteers, who work with the dying, access to our programs. Please consider **making a special donation to our “scholarship fund,”** that supports their training and supports many others who are unable to afford the suggested fees. As for other programs, we are excited to offer our first **day-long meditation** program, where we can enter the silence and explore the inner landscape of mindfulness. In collaboration with 4 local organizations we are holding an April weekend of traditional Mohawk teachings with **Diane Longboat**. Then in early May, **Roshi Joan Halifax** returns to give a special program on Compassion, Neuroscience, and Selflessness, as well as a book signing of her latest book, Being With Dying. And in June, and then again in October, Angie and I will be welcoming folks to our land, **Sarana Springs**, for a summer solstice weekend of getting back to our roots and working with the land.

Finally, Snow Lion Bookstore is holding a fundraiser **Heal into Story** to support our work on May 22nd. **If you have a contribution for a silent auction, please contact us directly.** Thanks in advance for any support you can offer us at this time. One huge support is to pass this notice on, so others can hear about our courses.

With Gratitude & Open Hearts,

Angie & Andrew

Stand with us today: Donations & Membership Renewal www.gitchemqua.org/membership.htm

Some inspiring videos sent to us recently: (enjoy)

http://www.4marks.com/videos/details.html?video_id=723 Overcoming suffering

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rooyt3ptNco&feature=email> What a wonderful world, Louis A.

2009 PROGRAMS:

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2009 TIME:

10AM-4PM

FEE: \$80.00



Talking to Kids about Death: Confronting Our Fears and Theirs

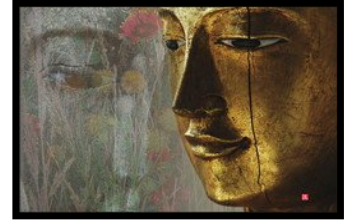
Supporting children through the dying and death of a loved one is incredibly challenging for parents and health care providers alike. When facing a death in the family, adults often struggle with questions regarding what to tell children, when to tell children, and how to support children. While the research on children and grief advises a policy of honesty and inclusion when supporting children living with dying and death, many adults are unaware of how much children need this openness. In addition, many health care professionals are uncomfortable with giving advice on how to support children through the impending death of a loved one due to a lack of formal training.

This workshop will identify common barriers for both family and health care providers regarding talking to children and adolescents about an impending death. It will include stories and important messages from children and their families that illustrate “best practice” guidelines for supporting children through the death of a loved one. In addition, the workshop will offer practical suggestions regarding how to move from a model of 'protecting' children from death to a model of 'preparing' children for a death. This workshop is appropriate for health care providers, volunteers, caregivers, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles - any adult who comes into contact with a grieving child.

Andrea Warnick is a Registered Nurse with a Masters of Arts degree in Thanatology. She has extensive experience domestically and internationally with ill, dying, and bereaved children and adults. Andrea's passion lies in both working directly with the dying and their families, and in teaching others how to optimize their care of the dying, particularly when children are involved. Andrea travels internationally teaching about children and grief, and works with children and families as a grief counsellor in Toronto.

To Register: www.gitchemqua.org/courses.htm

DATE: Saturday, March 21
TIME: 9:00am–4:00pm
FEE: \$25, plus dana
LOCATION: Gitche M'Qua Centre



Sitting, Walking & Listening: A Day of Mindfulness Practices

In the meditation tradition day-long retreats offer us refuge and space for resting into non doing and silence. However, this is not a time for doing nothing, this is a rich time of being, where we become intimate with ourselves. The challenge in “just sitting” is to trust it. Enlightenment cannot occur without practice, is what many masters remind us, and without practice there is no Enlightenment. So in silence, sitting, walking, and eating, as well as in mindful listening and council, we enter the stillness of being; being just as we are without adding or avoiding anything. Here, we are not separate, but rather we explore our buddhanature, which includes everything in the universe.

A light vegetarian lunch prepared by Lola Good Eats is included in this day. The fee covers expenses for the event and then dana is offered to the teachers. Dana means generosity, and it reflects a tradition within Buddhism of supporting the buddhadharma, the teachers and the teachings. It also reflects a quality of heart, where the gift is freely given according to your means.

Andrew Blake is cofounder and program director at Gitche M'Qua Centre. In addition to his work as a psychotherapist, he is training as a Buddhist Chaplain with Joan Halifax Roshi with Soto Zen lineage. Andrew has studied Buddhism for 30 years now and has taught for more than half that time. Andrew volunteers his time working with individuals and families facing death, and teaches in the community in End-of-Life, meditation, and, lately, Mindful Listening. He can be reached at: info@gitchemqua.org

Angela Di Iorio Blake is cofounder and executive director at the Centre. In addition to her training as a Buddhist Chaplain with Roshi Halifax, Angie works as a movement therapist, where focuses on natural movement for our “aging” bodies through pilates, yoga and fluid movement. As a practitioner of various Buddhist traditions for the past 10 years, Angie is currently focussing on environmental mindfulness and how to be in relationship with all beings. She can be reached at: info@gitchemqua.org

To register: www.gitchemqua.org/events.htm

DATE: Saturday, April 4th
TIME: 1:30pm–4:30pm
FEE: \$50.00
LOCATION: Gitche M'Qua



Drumming & Mindfulness: Practices in Being Present

This workshop provides you with an opportunity to explore drumming, sound and meditation as tools for well being, balance, presence, enhancement of spirituality and community connection. Drumming and mindfulness practices also help us to develop deep listening and self-expression as ways of caring for ourselves. With self-care comes an enhanced awareness and thus a renewed ability in how we care for others.

In this workshop you will:

- Explore drumming and meditation as tools for health, wellness and self-care.
- A supportive space to acknowledge stress as well as rejuvenate.
- An open-hearted, fun and dynamic time of community support and play.

No previous experience with drumming or meditation is required

Dr. Shari Geller is a Clinical Psychologist in private practice, a health and wellness facilitator and on the teaching faculty of York University. She has a passion for drumming and meditation as tools for presence and increasing connection, health, and vitality. Her research focus is on therapeutic presence, the importance and experience of being fully in the moment. She facilitates groups privately and for various health care agencies for health care practitioners as well as people with as cancer, depression, anxiety, stress, grief, as well as those facing death and dying.

To register: www.gitchemqua.org/courses.htm

DATE: Sat-Sun, April 18-19
TIME: 10-5pm
FEE: \$180 weekend, \$100/day
LOCATION: Gitche M'Qua



Living Spirit: Walking as a Spiritual Warrior
A Weekend with Mohawk Elder, Diane Longboat

As part of collaborative event with Dare Community of Toronto, Transformational Learning Centre at OISE, ITM and Soul of the Mother, Diane will be offering a lecture, several healing ceremonies, and teachings from April 14-25. In a 2 day workshop here at Gitche M'Qua, she will offer traditional Mohawk teachings and ceremony that explore the path of the Spiritual Warrior, as well as sharing practices to deepen our connection with the Natural World.

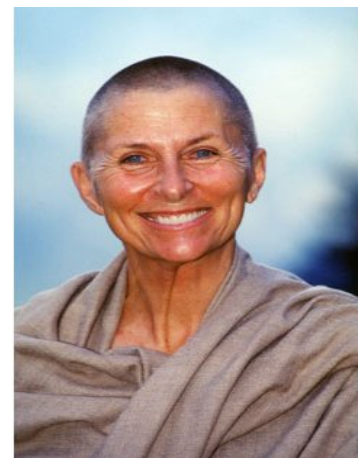
During Saturday, Diane will focus on the “Fire” within the spiritual warrior, who understands the necessary stages of surrender, sacrifice, suffering, silence, seeing the Sacred, and service. Through the revelation of the creation story, we discover the roots of our “original relationship” as Human Beings, which is a basic pattern revealed within all faiths. Embracing the Living Spirit can be experienced in every moment and can be brought to bear on all of life's challenges; thus a warrior can return to our ancient and Original Instructions for living in peace and harmony.

On Sunday, Diane will offer a Pipe Ceremony for healing and balance in the ravine nearby the Centre. In this day you will learn to find your Sacred Place by developing a relationship with the Nature World. By listening, praying, and asking important questions, the nature world of plants, animals, rocks, elementals, and tiny critters become our relatives and our guides to follow our next steps as Spiritual Warriors.

Diane Longboat, Kahontakwas, is a Mohawk & Turtle Clan traditional teacher from the Six Nations near Brantford. As a ceremonial leader, educator, teacher of Indigenous spiritual ways and healer, Diane's voice speaks to the heart of spiritual renewal and peace, through the ways of Living Spirit. With a graduate degree in Education, Diane is also called to speak at universities, conferences, and spiritual gatherings, nationally and internationally, to bring her message to follow the path of our Original Instructions and to support the children who bring us their messages of this new time.

For full details of her April visit and registration: www.gitchemqua.org/events.htm

DATE: Saturday, May 9
TIME: 1:30–5:30pm
FEE: \$100
LOCATION: Multi-Faith Centre, U of T



An Afternoon with Roshi Joan Halifax

Mindful Caring: Compassion, Neuroscience and Selflessness

Important new studies in neuroscience have explored the connection between the brain and compassion, empathy, altruism and other unselfish mental qualities. These studies have given scientific credence to the fact that compassion and other positive mental states can be intentionally cultivated, and as well these wholesome states of mind seem to effect physical and mental well being. Scientists are also studying the ways in which people can train and change their brains through meditation practices.

In our afternoon we will explore:

- what happens in the minds of those who have a great capacity for compassion.
- recent neuroscience research on compassion and empathy.
- how compassion effects our mental and physical health.
- how compassion and attention can be trained and strengthened.
- the role of relationship-based contemplative interventions in mental well-being and resilience.
- the application of meditation in care of the dying, work in prisons, and in addressing burnout and secondary trauma.
- fundamental practices that cultivate empathy and compassion.

Roshi Joan Halifax, who works closely with the Mind and Life Institute, brings her years of experience with the application of meditation in end-of-life care; work in the prison system, and in medical settings. She is Head Teacher at Upaya Zen Center and Director of the Upaya Institute. Her latest book, "Being with Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death," has been critically acclaimed.

A book signing will follow her program with copies available for sale.

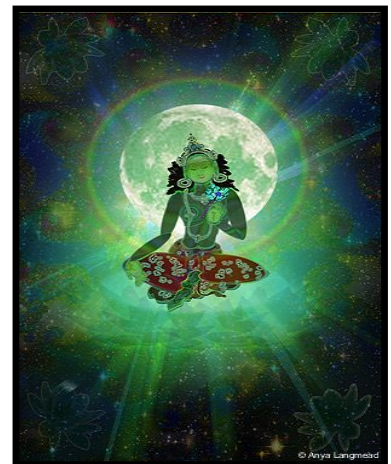
To register: www.gitchemqua.org/events.htm

DATE: Friday, May 22

TIME: 8–10pm

WHERE: Jivamukti Yoga Studio

FEE: By donation.



Snow Lion Benefit: Story into Healing

A benefit evening of healing with music, stories, and movement as well as a silent auction in support of Gitche M'Qua Centre for Healing and Dying and Gaden Choling Mahayana Buddhist Meditation Centre .

Special Guest Debbie Danbrook, master of Shakuhachi, Japanese flute, and other guests TBA.

For more info: www.snowlioncanada.com www.jivamuktivyoga.ca

DATE: June 19–21, summer solstice

TIME: Arrival 7pm Friday, and ending 4pm Sunday

FEE: TBA—a fee for supplies, dana to the teachers & the land



Sarana Springs: Listening, Walking & Working on the Earth

Sarana means refuge and sanctuary in ancient Pali, the language of the Buddha. So Sarana Springs is a place where we can return home to ourselves and to find our place within the sacredness of nature. The original vision of Gitche M'Qua was that the land itself was healing, and that we needed to reclaim that connection. So we are stewards of 171 acres of rolling meadows, forests, 9 fresh water springs, wetlands, the source of the Bighead river that flows through the land, a small lake, two small ponds and a vibrant community of non human beings.

With excitement, we invite you to join us for a work weekend on the land. Life here is one of the upmost simplicity. We live in community in tents or stay in nearby B&B's, and we eat simply without the use of electricity or running water. We learn how to become comfortable with the elements and trust them. A variety of work projects are planned, including the development of trails. Together, we will move between sitting and walking, clearing trails and exploring them, creating sacred spaces and contemplating, gathering wood and building a sacred fire, and certainly some joyous laughter and some serious, new moon stargazing. Whether we are working, drumming, chanting, silent or dreaming, our time on the land is one of being listened and being healed.

All ages and capacities are invited to come, and we especially welcome some strong-armed guys. Further details of this program will be posted at a later date. A registration form will be ready shortly. So, in the meantime, confirm your plan to join us in this exciting weekend retreat.

To register: www.gitchemqua.org/events.htm

UPCOMING FALL PROGRAMS

September 18–20: Theodore Tsaousidis: Mindfulness into the Shamanic Journey at Sarana Springs

October 2–4: Sarana Springs: Listening & Working with the Earth/A weekend on the land with Friends of Gitche M'Qua

October 17: Lysa Toye: Creative Encounters with Death: Expressive Arts in working with dying

A few last notes: Please be patient with us as we update our website. Some programs have registration open now and others do not. For any program reserve your space via email and for program volunteering, work exchange, and scholarships contact Andrew directly:

info@gitchemqua.org or www.gitchemqua.org or call 416-651-1846

In service and peace, Andrew
Program Director at Gitche M'Qua