



YEARS
— of —
GROWING
INTO LIGHT

Yasodhara Ashram

2023 ANNUAL REVIEW





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President's Message

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF GROWING INTO LIGHT – 1963-2023

“Just as our own personal growth has to be steady and firm with a good foundation of character and quality, so does the growth of an ashram. There is wisdom in slow growth—it is very steady, it is very solid. To inspire others and to bring out the best in them is a most worthwhile purpose.”

- Swami Radha

Swami Radha's words ring true and Yasodhara Ashram is living proof. After 60 years it continues to inspire people to bring out the best in themselves.

It is a privilege to live here and be part of such a spiritually rich environment, to invite others to immerse in the Teachings, to be held so graciously by this bountiful land—the unceded territory of the Ktunaxa and Sinixt peoples. We are thankful.

See our 2023 Video:

[What Does Healing Require?](#)

What was most inspiring to me about the 60th Anniversary Year?
Was it...

- Seeing the influx of participants in courses, retreats and Karma Yoga, confirming that the Ashram is relevant and needed six decades later
- Hearing gratitude expressed by all who were helped, and how their time here encouraged them to open to next steps in their lives
- Feeling the outpouring of love from our worldwide network of teachers and students
- Receiving extraordinary and generous gifts from our donors
- Observing the heartfelt dedication of teachers and residents
- Investing in sustainable projects that contribute to a healthy future
- Connecting with younger generations to imagine that future
- Experiencing the invisible but tangible support of the spiritual lineage
- Holding close those who are stepping forward

I realize it was all of these things and more that inspired wonder in me.





Yasodhara Ashram is Swami Radha's vision. It includes embracing a path that encourages integrity, courage and awareness. Creating community with ideals of harmony, peace and compassion. Aspiring, trusting and being courageous enough to face the challenges as well as the joys of growing into Light.

**Thank you to all who have contributed,
each in your own way.**

Now let's keep the Light alive for the next 60 years!

Swami Lalitananda

SWAMI LALITANANDA



A Glimpse Into Our World





SWAMI RADHA



SWAMI RADHANANDA



SWAMI LALITANANDA

We are humbled to steward and reside on the ancestral lands of the Ktunaxa and Sinixt peoples. Nestled amidst the breathtaking peaks of southeastern British Columbia, our sanctuary welcomes individuals of every age and background to embark on their journey of self-discovery and delve into the transformative power of yoga.

The Ashram was founded by Swami Sivananda Radha who embarked on a pilgrimage to India in the 1950s to meet her guru, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. Her story is one of courage and conviction, as she, an immigrant with meager resources, fearlessly ventured into the unknown to bring the wisdom of the East to the West. Her unwavering dedication to these teachings imbues every facet of our Ashram.

SPIRITUAL LINEAGE

In our spiritual lineage, Swami Radha stands as a beacon of inspiration, paving the way for a succession of female leaders. Her boundless generosity and wisdom continued to resonate long after her physical presence departed, perpetuating through her writings, teachings and exemplary life.

Following in Swami Radha's footsteps, Swami Radhananda presided over the Yasodhara Ashram Society from 1993 to 2014, forging her own path of visionary leadership and transformative instruction.

Today, under the stewardship of Swami Lalitananda, the Ashram continues to uphold this sacred lineage with reverence and innovation.

As Spiritual Director, Swami Lalitananda ensures the continuity of our spiritual legacy, this year by initiating six dedicated teachers, two of whom became sanyasins: Swami Utpalananda and Swami Lakshmananda—committed to Swami Radha's timeless teachings.

In addition to our spiritual mission, we are custodians of Timeless Books that illuminate the path of self-exploration and evolution.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our quarterly Board gatherings facilitate vibrant exchanges among the three residential sanyasin directors and the four professionals residing beyond the Ashram's grounds. Additionally, the Financial Committee remained engaged and forward-thinking, assessing upcoming initiatives and ensuring financial resilience.

Harmony in Development

CONSERVATION, MITIGATION & GENERATION

In 2023, we celebrated the culmination of projects that had long been on hold. Thanks to the generosity of donors and steady financial returns the past two years, we were able to move forward on significant milestones that ensure the Ashram's stability and longevity for years ahead. Through an apprenticeship between one of our long-term karma yogis and Swami Premananda, multiple building projects were made possible. We aim to reuse whatever we can while also recognizing the need to upgrade as time reveals wear-and-tear on our infrastructure. Ensuring energy efficiency,

resiliency

and conservation are paramount priorities in our sustainability efforts.



Highlights:

- Guest Lodge equipped with new heat pumps and windows for enhanced energy efficiency and guest comfort, while windows in the Barn upgraded to prioritize energy efficiency and ensure guest satisfaction.
- Root cellar upgraded to enhance food preservation.
- Equipment shed built in garden.
- New hoop house installed to extend the growing season and increase crop yield.
- New wash house and tent site established.
- Roofs redone on Barn, Siva Hall, Storage Trailer and partial roof over Library windows.
- Roof over Mandala House deck to protect the storage space below.
- Electric car purchased, which included \$7,000 in rebates.
- Accessible washroom renovated in Siva Hall and an overall heating improvement to the building.

We examined human resource succession across various departments including IT, Accounting and the Welcome Centre. Additionally, we assessed pressing concerns regarding the renovation of the pumphouse and filtration system, IT servers, air filters for Mandala House, Barn and Temple, implementation of PhotoVoltaics, optimization of business systems programs and Preserving Kitchen upgrades.





FOOD FLOW

Led by a forward-thinking, youthful and experienced Food Flow team, 2023 marked a significant step towards streamlining the organization of daily food flow activities and addressing the diverse needs of our community.

The previous year's successful storage efforts resulted in preserving root vegetables for 10 weeks,

supporting

our self-sustaining food security goals. With the addition of new fields in the garden, a larger greenhouse, and updates to infrastructure like LED lights and composting methods, we're expanding our growing season and improving crop yield.

Food Flow Highlights

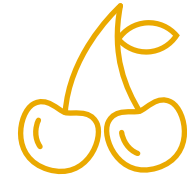


52,000
meals served



\$3,870

worth of tomatoes (570 kg)



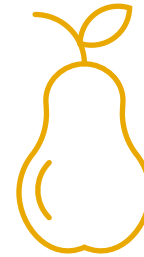
\$6,330

worth of cherries (360 kg)



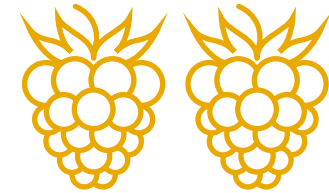
\$16,500

worth of apples (2040 kg)



\$4,350

worth of pears (495 kg)



\$7,610

worth of raspberries (208 kg)



\$2,090

worth of carrots (355 kg)



Growing Into Light

In 2023, we marked the Ashram's 60th year. Our focus remained steadfast on fostering community bonds and extending warm invitations to individuals far and wide, welcoming them to be

nourished

by the Teachings, the illuminating Light and our sacred land.



Under the banner of “Growing Into Light,” we renewed our commitment to personal growth and spiritual liberation, recognizing each individual’s potential to blossom into their fullest expression of self.

With hearts overflowing with gratitude, we looked back on six decades of shared experiences, lessons learned and the only constant—change and adaptation.

We were reminded of the timeless truth that the journey towards Light is not merely a destination but a continuous unfolding, an eternal quest for deeper understanding, greater compassion and connection.

Our invitational video:

[Come Just as You Are—The Worthwhile Spiritual Path](#)

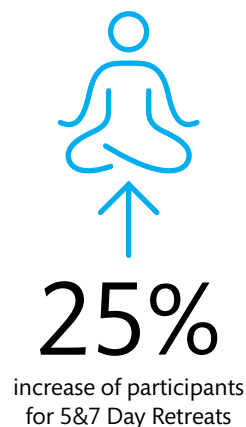


LIBERATION’S OPEN DOOR

We began the year by opening our doors to 14 Yoga Development Course (YDC) participants during the transformational months from winter to spring.

In 2023, our popular 5&7 Day Retreats made a triumphant return, increasing to 106 from 85 participants the year before, many of whom were first-time guests.

Our self-guided Restorative Retreats, now in their third year, continued to captivate visitors, with nearly half of the 65 guests being newcomers to the Ashram. In today’s fast-paced world, the importance of relaxation remains as pertinent as ever and our guests appreciated the tranquility and solace of the Ashram.



Our October Yoga Journey was unfortunately postponed due to a Covid outbreak—our first and only. For our rescheduled retreat, we attracted 9 participants, fewer than our initial retreat. Nevertheless, we were inspired by the unity and care demonstrated by community members as they rallied together to support others during this challenging time. Despite offering two Yoga Journeys compared to the previous year’s three, we still welcomed 17 attendees, slightly fewer than 20 from 2022.

Our Teacher Certification programs saw a total of 27 participants enrolling in Hatha Yoga, Kundalini & Dreams, and Hidden Language Hatha Yoga training or recertification.

Across all our programs, we celebrated 233 total guests and 106 karma yogis—welcoming newcomers while also warmly receiving returning participants.

We also welcomed the presence of at least 13 visiting teachers, with five residing locally and actively contributing to teaching duties, as well as participating in bi-monthly discussions aimed at envisioning the future of the Ashram. Each visiting teacher engages in Karma Yoga, whether it’s in administrative tasks, Guest Services or Hospitality, and also dedicates time to special projects. Their stays provide them with opportunities to immerse themselves in the Ashram’s atmosphere, facilitating personal and spiritual renewal, empowering them to share the Teachings within their respective communities upon their return.

Swami Sukhananda’s European outreach, spanning England, Portugal and Germany, engaged 151 participants, welcoming visitors from France and Sweden. Notably, 52 individuals encountered the Teachings for the first time.





KARMA YOGA

Throughout the years, we've welcomed karma yogis who embrace the concept of selfless service as a transformative journey of self-discovery. This year, we warmly welcomed 36 new KYs and saw 62 return plus 8 making Pathways commitments for 3-month to over 12-month stays.

What does Karma Yoga involve you ask? See our [Day in the Life of a Karma Yogi](#) video.

ONLINE OFFERINGS

We maintained our commitment to spreading teachings globally through online classes, serving to foster connections and build community worldwide. The resulting classes attracted 408 participants, marking an increase from previous year's attendance of 362 with many attending multiple sessions. The 10-month Peace of Mind for Professionals course led by Swami Sukhananda saw 19 participants, with 3 being first-time attendees. Additionally, our free information sessions, attended by 481 participants, remained effective in raising awareness and generating on-site registrations.

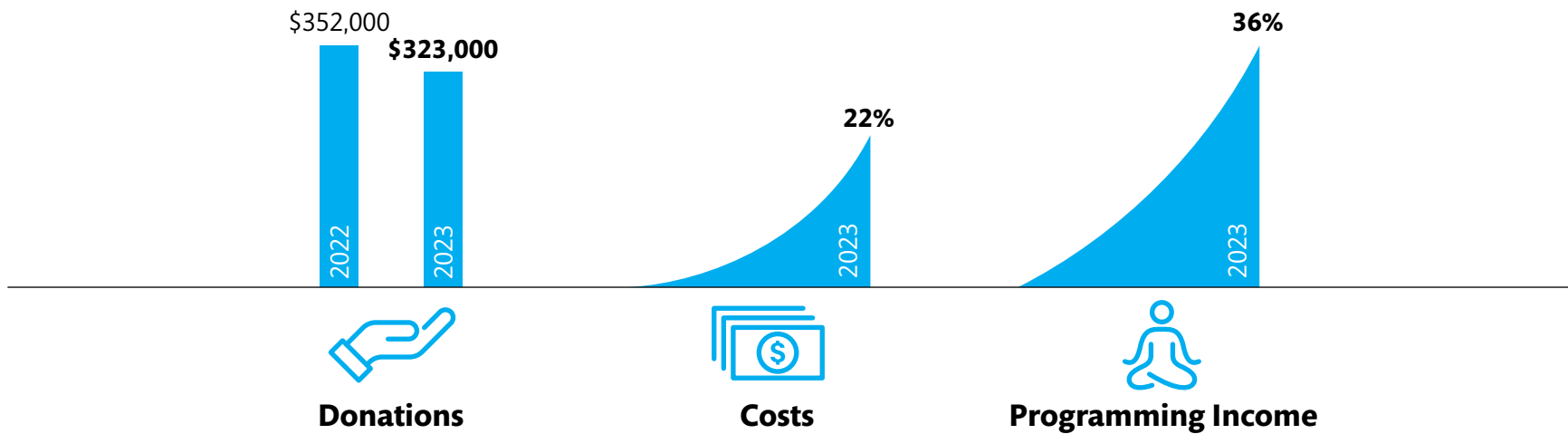


60th Year Highlights & Inspirations: Celebrating Growth and Connection

- **Blog:** Our new [blog](#) provided a platform and voice to diverse writers for sharing insights, stories and reflections.
- **Podcast:** We launched two podcasts: "[My Time with Radha](#)," where Katie Taher dives into conversations with teachers who shared experiences with Swami Radha; and "[Meaningful Lives](#)," hosted by Swami Lalitananda, offering insightful interviews with individuals dedicated to making a difference in the world.
- **Community Café:** Our January online Community Café served as a hub for connection, collaboration and nourishment, fostering a sense of inquiry among all who gathered.
- **Seeds of Succession:** Through initiatives like engaging younger teachers and nurturing youth leadership in areas such as grounds, maintenance and gardening, we continue to sow the seeds of succession to ensure the continuity of our community's stewardship.
- **Hybrid Stays:** People continued to experience the best of both worlds with our hybrid stays, offering a blend of service at the Ashram and working remotely.
- **Live satsang:** We hosted a live online satsang, welcoming participants from across the globe.
- **New Flags:** Our new entrance flags fluttered in the breeze, symbolizing our commitment to growth, transformation and embracing new beginnings.

Bottom Line





2023 marked another profitable year, continuing the trend that started two years prior. An operating excess of \$181,000 before capital asset write-offs will be invested into continuing our much-needed program of facility and infrastructure upgrades. The profit was less than the previous two years' profits particularly due to decreased Yoga Development Course participation and increased operating expenses.

This was the first year of our concerted program of facility and infrastructure upgrades, using the revenue excess allocated from previous years. Significant improvements were aimed at enhancing environmental and food sustainability and meeting the needs of our guests through such initiatives as new windows, heat and cooling pumps and improved root cellars.

Overall income from programming totalled \$713,000 with increased guest attendance for on-site retreats and courses offered May to October and stable online class attendance. Increased Karma Yoga and residency contributions, and increased investment and property income, also buoyed the income side of the ledger.

Donations to the Ashram for 2023 totalled \$323,000. At a time with a continued downturn in the economy, we are deeply grateful for donors' continued support.

Increased operating expenses of 22% over last year largely occurred in such areas as Human Resources as we expanded to meet the service needs of our guests, food supplies and Repair & Maintenance. Expense increases in general related to inflation, supply chain issues, unplanned repairs and the increased number of guests.

The Ashram's Indigenous Reconciliation Fund generated \$11,000 in this its second year through \$25 collected from each guest and karma yogi, as well as contributions from Ashram residents. We donated the funds to three Indigenous charities in gratitude for being on this unceded land.

We are deeply grateful to all those who contributed to a positive financial year.

[2023 Financial Statements](#)



MOVING FORWARD

What will the next 60 years be like?

—— Swami Lalitananda ——

It's wonderful to imagine the Ashram—this legacy of sacred space, life-changing teachings and collaborative community—evolving far into the future.... →



Now is a dynamic time of generating potential while staying grounded, of asking for support while trusting the Light, of doing all we can while surrendering to Divine Mother's invisible plan.

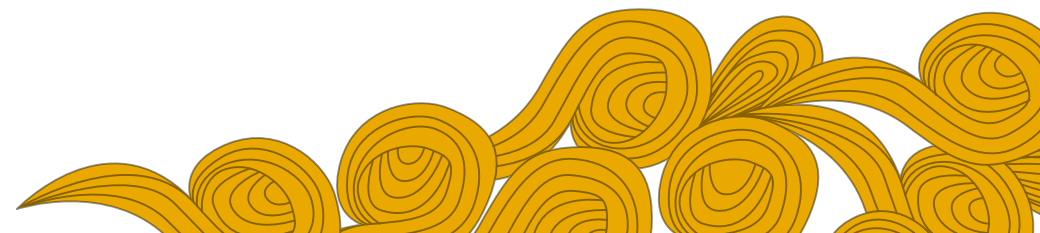
Board members have begun collaborating with younger generation friends and karma yogis in bi-monthly in-person gatherings to implement ideas and strategies for the Ashram's future. How do we navigate the transition from elders—who continue to contribute wholeheartedly—to next generations? We are working alongside each other and opening dialogue to understand and integrate as intergenerational learners and leaders. Communication is key as we mix things up!

“Co-stewardship” has become an important concept as the core resident group invites younger teachers from around the world to return to the Ashram and co-teach with more seasoned teachers over the next few years. They are responding! Young people are also holding strong management positions in areas like Food Flow.

Underlying this dynamic is movement toward greater efficiency in management and governance, streamlining financial and planning processes and completing energy efficiency and infrastructure projects that will help withstand the effects of climate change.

2024 emerges with delight as the Ashram fully opens again, free from pandemic restrictions. We are breathing easy and welcoming you back. Our programs offer what we feel reflects the need in today's world for hope, relaxation and reflection—all held within the generous warmth of nature's abundance and a caring community.

In the Light,
SWAMI LALITANANDA





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SINCE 1963

We are a Canadian charity
and active learning centre.