

East Bay Meditation Center Newsletter **JULY 2017**



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SAVE THE DATES



THE BEST WAY
TO PREDICT THE FUTURE
IS TO CREATE IT.

Saturday, September 23, 2017

EBMC All-Sangha Community Meeting
to get YOUR input for our Strategic Plan!
between 9 am and 1 pm, exact details to come

Saturday, November 18, 2017

Please save the **evening of Nov. 18** on your calendars for
a very special EBMC fundraising event. We're celebrating
a decade of EBMC!



State of the Center Report July 14, 2017

*From Leadership Sangha (board
of directors) Co-chair, Melissa
Green*

Leadership Sangha News

Our deepest gratitude to Shenaaz Janmohamed
and Ramon Honea, who both completed
Leadership Sangha (EBMC board of directors)
service in the spring of 2017. Thank you for
your service, Shenaaz and Ramon.

EBMC Strategic Planning & Upcoming Community

Meeting:

We want your input!

2017 marks the celebration of EBMC's tenth anniversary -- an incredible milestone for a gift economics-based meditation center committed to diversity and inclusion, based in downtown Oakland. As we look ahead to the next ten years, we face questions about how to skillfully respond to the forces of gentrification, creating a financially sustainable organization that is responsive to the needs of a diverse community. EBMC has engaged Strategic Planning Consultants Laura Moran and Jonathan Garcia to work with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, the Leadership Sangha, the staff and the wider EBMC Sangha to develop a vision for our beloved community.

There will be multiple opportunities for the EBMC Sangha to participate in this visioning process, including an upcoming EBMC Community Meeting. Please save the date on your calendar for Saturday, September 23, 2017 -- between 9 am and 1 pm, exact beginning and ending times to be announced.

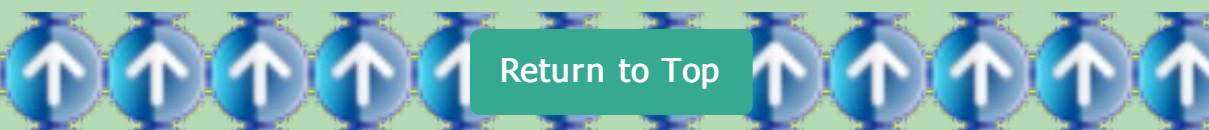
[Click here](#) for more information about your opportunity to participate... and a financial report about the Center's successes and challenges.

Announcement

**Aug 6 is deadline for PiTA5
yearlong program applications!**

**Now in its fifth year, this award-winning yearlong
program of secular mindfulness training for social
justice activists and agents of social transformation,
is accepting applications.**

**Deadline: Aug 6, 2017.
For more information, click [here](#).**



Who Are We in 2017?

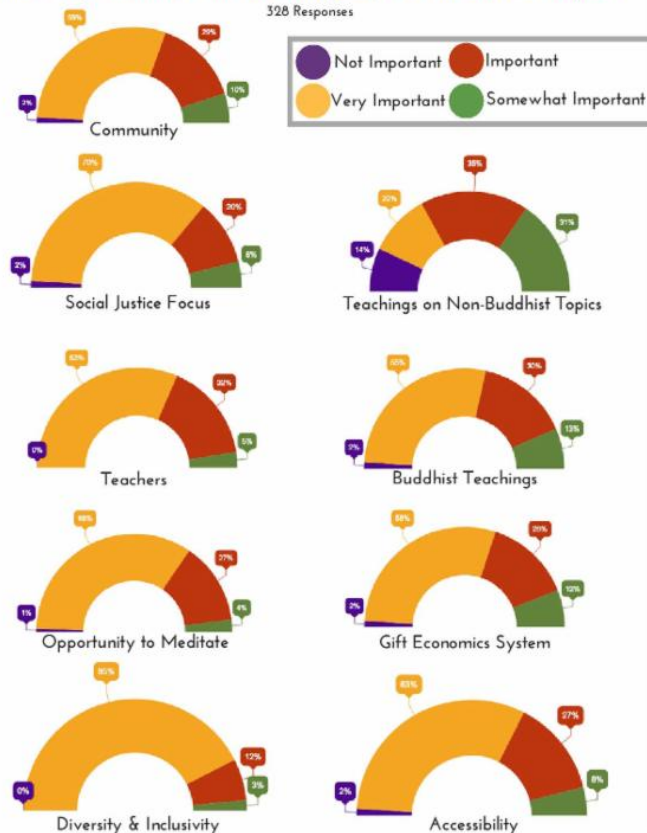
Community survey results are in

Over 300 EBMC community members responded to the questions in our Spring 2017 Community Survey, in order to give us an up-to-date portrait of who we are. We've prepared a report-back of the survey results via a series of 13 fun and informative infographics, which we'll be featuring through our social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) as a "baker's dozen" of yummy sets of data about

our diverse and vital multi-generational community.

How important are the following aspects of EBMC to you?

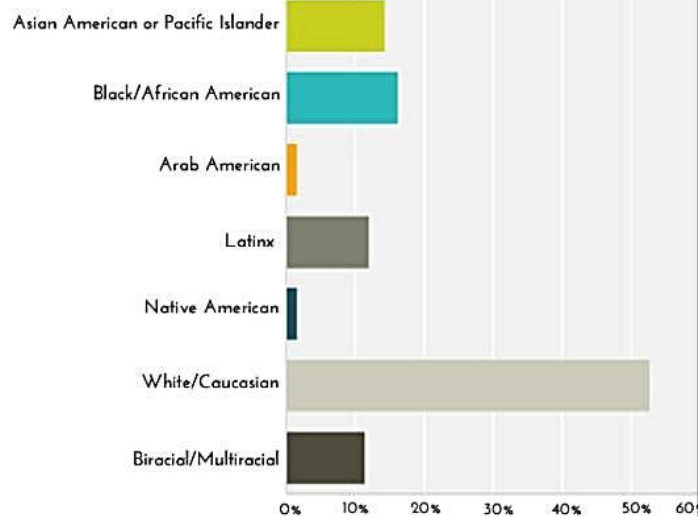
328 Responses



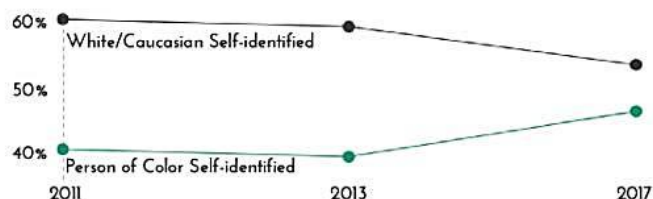
Featured in this newsletter are two of the 13 infographics, and you can access the complete survey results by clicking [here](#).

What is your primary racial/ethnic identity?

348 Responses



Trends in Attendance at EBMC Events



People of EBMC

Matt Nelson, Director of the U.S.'s Largest Online Latinx Organizing Group

EBMC: Matt, you're one of EBMC's longtime People of Color Sangha members. What brought you to EBMC, and can you please tell us a little more about yourself?

Matt: Peace and blessings, Sangha family. Thank you so much for the invitation and opportunity. I moved to Oakland in 2009 in the wake of two cultural and political earthquakes--the killing of Oscar Grant by a member of the BART Police Department and the Inauguration of President Barack Obama. Shortly after arriving, I heard about this amazing new love and justice centered space for People of Color from a close friend and comrade who had started her meditation practice at EBMC in a more dedicated way.

We would often talk about her experiences and she encouraged me to check it out. I remember saying something like, "Well, I like to sit, be quiet, and drink tea." I started attending the POC meditation practice group, usually arriving late and staying late to help clean up. I quickly became a volunteer and got to help make tea for people and not just drink it! This also helped me to practice every week and even arrive on time!

It's often been difficult for me to talk about myself. However, I've recently found out the precise – or as precise as could be – location where I was born in Medellín, Colombia. Now just a few short blocks from Plaza Botero, honoring the works of famed and infamous



Matt Nelson: Oakland resident, EBMC POC Sangha member since 2010

sculptor, Fernando Botero and the Museo de Antioquia – Paisa Country. Born, or rather found, on the street in the City's Center, in the middle of the state of Antioquia, Central Colombia. The stars said Libra, but no known human has yet verified my exact time, date, or location of birth. "Scarcely four hours old..." stated the police report, which would serve as my founding document.

EBMC: You're the executive director of Presente.org, the nation's largest online Latinx organizing group. What would you like the EBMC Sangha to know about Presente's current initiatives? How can we support the work you're doing?

Matt: At Presente, we value leadership, self-determination, community control, and building people power through dynamic digital and offline organizing. And, we believe in the

power of social movements and engaging our more than 350,000 members and allies in winning campaigns that celebrate dignity and democracy in local communities across the country.

After a brutal election season, anti-immigrant rhetoric, racism, misogyny, and xenophobia are reaching a fever pitch in the United States. This is not just a battle of ideas, it's a matter of what culture we'll live and breathe, how we'll identify as Americans, and what kind of conditions and legacies we'll leave for our children.

Leveraging the moral authority of diverse Latinx communities, we are creating a better world that affirms civil and human rights and is free from poverty, racism, ecological destruction and violence, and to demand accountability from political and corporate decision-makers.

Every day, Presentistas are creating winning campaigns on our Somos.Presente.org platform that amplify Latinx voices; expanding the political imagination and traditional boundaries; and fostering inspiration for freedom, equity, and justice. Together, let's Build Power, Change Culture and Stay Presente! Start a campaign on Somos or text Presente at 225 568 to get started.

EBMC: What's the connection between your Latinx organizing work and your practice of mindfulness meditation and Dharma?

Matt: It's definitely in the name, Presente! And at the core of my practice is to be present and invite compassion, love, and wholeness into the present moment -- or to stay Presente! There is both tremendous power and peace within being present. Especially in our current hyper-reactive and reactionary political climate, mindfulness and Dharma teachings can help us deepen our consciousness practice and allow us to clearly, thoughtfully and presently participate in improving our democracy. We live in incredible, movement-building times and I feel that the practice of mindfulness -- rooted in the undoing of oppression and the practice of co-liberation -- can reach and help us further understand how to manifest our best selves. And it is our best selves that are needed in order for us to thrive and to win.

EBMC: Is there anything else you'd like the EBMC Sangha to know about you?

Matt: I believe that to build a powerful, lasting, and growing movement, we cannot just be fighting against something. We also need to be moving toward values-based organizing, leading people to say "Yes!" to a better world. We need to celebrate dignity and democracy in local communities, while elevating the stories of people who are otherwise forgotten in order to inspire more of us to participate in making the world a beloved community. And I like to write, bike, and drink coffee...often simultaneously!

Donate Now

Secure donations through
Network for Good

*So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all living beings;
Radiating kindness over the entire world:
Spreading upwards to the skies,
And downwards to the depths;
Outwards and unbounded,
Freed from hatred and ill-will*

*-- from the Karaniya Metta Sutta: The Buddha's Words on Loving Kindness, trans.
from the Pali by the Amaravati Sangha*

Quick Links

[Calendar](#)

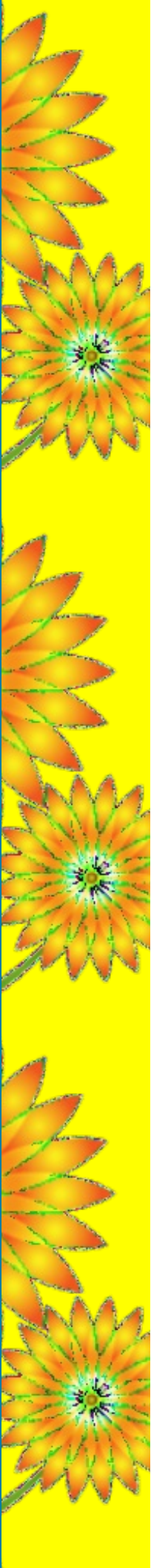

[More About EBMC](#)


They Said It Couldn't Be Done: Ten Years of Gift Economics at EBMC

**by Cassandra Shaylor, Development Director and
Lyla Denburg, Development & Facilities Coordinator**

Ten years ago, sustaining an organization based on generous giving seemed like a radical experiment that might be impossible to achieve. How could a meditation center offering classes, programs, and daylongs without charging fees keep its doors open? The answer is Gift Economics: a participatory model that relies on everyone giving to the extent that they are able, at the highest level they can. Today East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) is leading the way for a gift economics model that promotes accessibility, radical inclusivity, sustainability, proportionality, and transparency. If you've ever been to EBMC -- or connected from afar -- you are a part of making this possible, and we need you if we are going to continue to thrive.

Why is this the model we chose, which is now looked to by others as a shining example of what is possible?



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- **Accessibility:** There are no fees for any of the programs we offer. EBMC welcomes everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status.
- **Inclusivity:** Everyone is invited to give. We see the practice of gift economics as an opportunity to support the inherent gratitude and generosity in one another toward the goal of individual and collective liberation.
- **Sustainability:** The community collectively meets the Center's needs, rather than the Center relying on outside sources of financial support. We seek to collectively give to meet the needs of EBMC and our teachers. When the community meets EBMC's needs, we are not reliant on outside support like grants from foundations.
- **Proportionality:** Everyone gives to the level of their ability. We invite those with greater capacity to "pay it forward" and give a higher percentage of their income to balance the giving of others who can give less.
- **Transparency:** We provide information about what we need, what level of giving would meet those needs, and when those needs are met.

A large, stylized butterfly with a green and purple floral pattern on its wings, set against a light blue background. The butterfly's wings are spread wide, showing a vibrant design of purple flowers and green leaves. The body is a simple black outline. The background is a solid light blue.

For more about Gift Economics at EBMC, click [here](#).



Behind the Scenes: EBMC's Social Media Team

We hope you agree that #EBMC is social media savvy!

We Facebook, Instagram, and Tweet frequently. And we'd like to introduce you to the awesome, invisible social media team who help to make all this happen. Their cheerful, quick responses and willingness to pitch in and make our social media postings accurate and timely make them a joy to work with.

Our gratitude to Melissa Watt (not pictured), who has never been to EBMC and who volunteers all the way from the East Coast. She's been with us for three years.

Gratitude, also, to Beck Cowles, who has been a volunteer since 2013. She writes the Alphabet Sangha newsletter, maintains the contact list and posts notices on the Alphabet Sangha Facebook page.



**Cruisin' through
Motorcycle Town,
Beck Cowles,
Hollister, CA**



Tracy Anderson

Tracy Anderson practiced at EBMC while she was living in the Bay Area. Now in New York, she's grateful for the chance to stay connected with the sangha as a volunteer.

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See what's happening on our social sites:



EBMC's Mission Statement

Founded to provide a welcoming environment for people of color, members of the LGBTQI community, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented communities, the East Bay Meditation Center welcomes everyone seeking to end suffering and cultivate happiness. Our mission is to foster liberation, personal and interpersonal healing, social action, and inclusive community building. We offer mindfulness practices and teachings on wisdom and compassion from Buddhist and other spiritual traditions. Rooted in our commitment to diversity, we operate with transparent democratic governance, generosity-based economics, and environmental sustainability.

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Network for Good

See what's happening on our social sites:

