



EAST BAY  
MEDITATION  
CENTER

# MARCH 2018 NEWSLETTER

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## DHARMA-THON 2018 LOVE & LIBERATION

Become a Dharma-thoner and join us May 12 for  
an evening of delicious food, songs of freedom and  
meditation in support of East Bay Meditation Center!



Hosted at Settling In, an  
environmentally minded space  
for arts, culture and community.



This event will be wheelchair accessible.



NAIMA  
SHALHOUB

Vocal Artist,  
Educator



MELANIE  
DEMORE

Singer,  
Songwriter



MICHELLE  
"MUSH" LEE

Spoken Word Poet,  
Author & Educator

Meditation Led by EBMC's Patrick Brown

Vegan Filipino dinner by No Worries

## Dharma-thon 2018: Love and Liberation!

May 12th will mark our 8th annual Dharma-thon fundraiser, and again this

year we are mixing it up with an exciting new program for Dharma-thoners! Our theme this year is "Love and Liberation," and the evening gathering will feature performances by musicians Melanie DeMore and Naima Shalhoub, poetry by Michelle "Mush" Lee, and meditation led by our own Patrick Brown. A delicious vegan Filipino dinner will be catered by *No Worries*.

Don't miss this powerful evening of songs and words of freedom, fabulous food, meditation and community on May 12!

To become a Dharma-thoner and support EBMC, all you need to do is:

- \* set up a fundraising page and
- \* raise a minimum of \$250 OR get donations from at least 10 people!

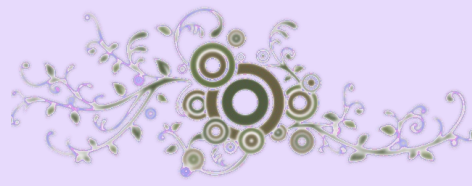
Go to [www.firstgiving.com/ebmc](http://www.firstgiving.com/ebmc) to register as a Dharma-thoner or support someone who is!



## What's the "State of the Center" at EBMC this spring?

What is the new EBMC Exploratory Committee? And how about the "delicious nuggets of provocative Buddhist teachings" that our Program Committee has put together in a new four-month curriculum? For updates from our Leadership Sangha (board of directors) co-chairs, and financial, program and fundraising updates from staff, download our March 2018 "State of the Center Report" by clicking [here](#).

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## People of EBMC: Judy Hatcher

**EBMC:** Judy, you've been meditating and volunteering at EBMC for a long time. What brought you to EBMC, and can you please tell us a little more about yourself?

**Judy:** I've been vaguely interested in Buddhism since taking a class on Theravada Buddhism and reading *What the Buddha Taught* in college, some 40 years ago. Over time I began to realize how much meditation and other practices "clicked" with me, but I wasn't getting very far on my own. Somehow, when I was still living on the East Coast, I heard about a people of color meditation retreat at Vallecitos, in New Mexico, in 2008. It was led by Mushim and Bhante Suhita Dharma, and many of my co-retreatants were affiliated with EBMC, which I hadn't been familiar with. It was my first weeklong silent meditation retreat, so while it was challenging, I loved it! I kept in touch with Mushim, and when I moved to the Bay Area a few years later, I was eager to check out EBMC. I've gotten so much out of the POC sangha, the daylongs, and the PiTA program – encouragement for my meditation practice, a deeper understanding of Buddhism, new friends, and a physical place to return to for spiritual sustenance – what folks I grew up with in Cleveland, Ohio would've called my "church home."



Judy Hatcher wearing an EBMC "Noble Silence" neck tag.

**EBMC:** As a former executive director of Pesticide Action Network, and currently the new executive director of Biodiversity Funders Group, you see a clear link between environmental activism and anti-racism work. Can you tell us more about the social justice dimensions of environmental activism?

**Judy:** We have to care about people and the planet we all share, it's not an either-or proposition. I was inspired many years ago by the environmental justice activists I met from places like Louisiana's Cancer Alley. They were (and are still) surrounded by industries and



waste dumps that poisoned the water, the soil and the air, and they suffered from extraordinarily high rates of cancers and reproductive health problems, but those weren't seen as "environmental" issues. Old-school "green" groups barely gave lip service to environmental health and justice issues until those activists challenged and, to be frank, publicly embarrassed them. Dorceta Taylor's 2002 report, "Race, Class, Gender and American Environmentalism," was a real eye-opener for me. She clearly laid out how the white supremacy that was baked into the movement from its earliest days showed up again and again throughout the 20th century, not only harming Native Americans and other people of color, workers, poor people, etc., but also limiting the effectiveness of crucial environmental campaigns. At this point I believe that it's impossible to tackle huge problems like climate change, or the slow death of the world's oceans, without dealing with systemic issues like racism, corporate greed, and capitalism.

**EBMC:** What's the connection between your everyday life and work, your practice of mindfulness meditation and Dharma, and your Bodhisattva Vows?

**Judy:** One of the things I appreciate most about EBMC is how everyone seems to be active in work for justice, education, or healing. But that work can be frustrating and exhausting. It's easy enough, when I'm sitting with the sangha or feeling inspired by a dharma talk, to leave with the intention of bringing my best self to everything I do or say. But of course that's not where most of my life is happening. Sitting and walking meditation reminds me, over and over again, to come back to what's most important to me in the big scheme of things, and especially when I'm feeling frazzled and angry. A while back it dawned on me that it would really help me stay centered if I had something that I was familiar with from the faith tradition I grew up in – a public statement or commitment to the Path. Participating in EBMC's "Path of the Bodhisattva" classes, and then taking the Bodhisattva vows in December 2017, doesn't mean that I am now or will ever be perfect. But I feel much better equipped to navigate the "ten thousand joys and ten thousand sorrows" that Larry Yang refers to so often. My "daily" meditation practice really is daily now (well, almost!), and most of the time I feel that I'm more patient and less judgmental towards myself and others. Taking a few moments to be aware of my breathing, and saying to myself, "May the pain of every living creature be completely cleared away" brings me a sense of peace when the day-to-day world feels too harsh.

**EBMC:** Thank you, Judy.

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# What Is Shared Leadership at EBMC?

Shared Leadership at EBMC is both a collaborative governance system based on mutual accountability and a culture of respect and inclusion rooted in Dharmic society values. Our shared leadership approach stewards the mission and vision of the organization through role clarity, transparency, compassionate confrontation and timely attention to areas of tension.



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## Introducing Our New Event Associates

Event Associates are independent contractors hired to help manage classes and retreats at East Bay Meditation Center. We're pleased to introduce our two new Event Associates, who work closely with EBMC staff member Candi Martinez Carthen, Event Coordinator, in order to ensure that all of our programs requiring registration run smoothly.

**Rachel Lee** (pronouns they/them and she/her) is a recent Bay area transplant hailing from the midwest. Having spent some years studying herbal medicine, birth work, and organic farming, she found deep resonance in the practice of Ashtanga yoga. Oftentimes finding herself the only Black student among a sea of white faces, she found that the lineage (based on Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which outlines the 8 fold path of Ashtanga) did not offer much in the way of understanding how colonization, white supremacy, or patriarchy lived in the body, shaped the mind, or impacted the spirit. For her, the answers to these questions were implicit in the journey towards healing, liberation and transformation, not divorced from it.



In more recent years, coming to understand that reclaiming ancestral practices of healing combined with further exploration of Buddhism and Ashtanga, can actually come together and help give voice to hope; Supporting her in keeping her heart open amidst the suffering, learning to find inspiration in the disappointment, and loving while living in a world so enamored with hate. She is deeply grateful, honored and excited to serve with East Bay Meditation Center in the role of Event Associate.

**Shah Noor Hussein** is a writer, educator, and unapologetic queer black feminist with an M.A. in Anthropology and previous work in gender studies, urban environments, and teaching pedagogies. They have been practicing and instructing yoga and meditation in the community for over 10 years and joined

the EBMC Sangha in 2014.



Shah currently works as a guest lecturer and freelance writer as well as one of EBMC's new Event Associates! Their future work aims to (re)center marginalized voices in dialogues on alternative epistemologies and cultural reproduction through education, art, and activism.

## Become a Friend of EBMC

Friends of EBMC monthly donors sustain our center by offering ongoing generosity each month. Join the Friends of EBMC to support programming that is accessible for all, including (but not limited to):



**\$10/MONTH**

- Maintains our building as a clean, safe, and beautiful space of refuge
- Runs our website to get the word out about EBMC & support program registration

**MUDITA**



**\$25/MONTH**

- Provides food and supplies during meetings for volunteers who help run EBMC's programs
- Supplies art and office materials for Family Sangha

**KARUNA**



**\$50/MONTH**

- Ensures that daylong classes are staffed and run smoothly
- Supports one young person to attend Teen Sangha each week

**METTA**



**\$100/MONTH**

- Keeps the lights on and the doors open every day
- Supports two practitioners to attend POC or Alphabet Sangha each week

**UPEKKHA**



**\$250/MONTH**

- Ensures that EBMC can pay our monthly rent (\$4,300)
- Supports the training of social justice activists in our year-long Practice in Transformative Action program

**SANGHA**

Sign up as a Friend of EBMC online ([eastbaymeditation.org](http://eastbaymeditation.org)) or fill out a form on the dana table



Become a Friend  
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## "The Greening" of an Urban Meditation Center: EBMC and Prefigurative Activism

In prefigurative activism, we try to embody a future picture of justice and sustainability on a larger scale by creating it on a smaller scale, sometimes even for a short period of time. EBMC has used environmentally-friendly "green" practices from our beginnings in 2007. Today, in 2018, here's a partial list of some of the ways we both learn from and hope to inspire our Sangha members:

- We urge everyone to "think before throwing away": separating and minimizing landfill trash by carefully using compost and recycling containers in the EBMC kitchen.
- Using approved e-waste channels for discarded office equipment.
- Using biodegradable, non-toxic cleaning solutions homemade from ingredients such as vinegar, washing soda, and Dr. Bronner's fragrance free liquid soap to clean EBMC.
- Purchasing compostable disposable plates, hot and cold beverage cups, and eating utensils as much as possible for EBMC potlucks, and encouraging people to use the Center's ceramic cups and plates, and "permanent" eating utensils and to wash them with our fragrance-free, biodegradable dish detergent after use. (Note: We do not have a way to sterilize dishes, and we understand that people with immune system issues may need to avoid using our ceramic dishes and flatware.)
- The carpet is professionally cleaned around once a year, using steam only.
- The meditation mats and cushions are professionally cleaned every few years, using a "green" dry cleaner service and a fragrance-free process.
- Our supplies purchaser avoids boycotted brands of paper products, and purchases recycled paper products as much as possible.

[Photo by Wayne Robinson on Unsplash]

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See what's happening on our social sites:



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#### 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.