



BRAIDED WISDOM[®]

ORIGINAL MEDICINE Earth-Based Intensive Retreat May 11 - May 17, 2024



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Welcome!

We are delighted and very excited to gather with you at Ben Lomond Quaker Center, Santa Cruz Mountains, CA for our Original Medicine Earth-Based Intensive Retreat.

We intend to co-create ease and safety for all. We appreciate your openness and flexibility as we all grow, adjust, and thrive as a community during our gathering.

We invite you to contemplate on your intentions as we prepare to connect with ourselves, nature and spirit. Let us celebrate and create ever-widening circles of love, respect, compassion, and joy. We look forward to being on the land with you and deepening our spiritual friendship.

For further discussion please contact Aubrey Gates through email:
aubreyg@braidedwisdom.org



General Information

- Check-in is between 3:00 to 5:00 pm on Saturday, May 11, 2024. Please arrive with plenty of time to settle-in to your space, before dinner at 5:30 pm.
- Check out will be at 12:00 pm on Friday, May 17, 2024.
- Carpooling is highly encouraged. There will be a carpool sign-up sheet sent out so you can connect with other participants in giving or receiving a ride.
- The integrity of the retreat energy is critical, so we request all participants remain present for the entire retreat. No one will be leaving the site once the retreat has started until the completion on Friday, unless there is an emergency or someone becomes sick. It is important that we stay together to keep the safety of the container.
- There are shared rooms in two lodges, accommodating 2 people. If you would like to share a room with someone, please indicate that on the Information Form. We will do our best to accommodate everyone's needs and requests.
- All participants will be expected to contribute to ensure a smooth flow during our gathering. Everyone will need to clean their rooms and the common areas before we leave Quaker Center on Friday. Leaving it better than when we arrived.

General Information

(continue)

- There are hiking trails around the property through the redwood forest. The trails are rugged with mug, rooks, and divots. Good mobility and hiking boots are required.
- We are co-creating an intentional community and we ask that everyone do their share to keep the energy respectful, caring, and focused on the gathering.
- We would like the retreat to be fragrance-free. We ask that you not wear heavy colognes or perfumes during your stay due to allergy sensitivities. Please see the FAQ section for more information.

This event is Sacred

For community care, we ask you to practice wisdom & ethics (Sila).

- Abstain from causing harm or taking life.
- Abstain from taking what is not given.
- Abstain from acting out my sexual energy.
- Abstain from false speech.
- Abstain from intoxicants that cloud the mind.



Guidelines

Quaker Center Guidelines

- The Ben Lomond Quaker Center offers simple, modest accommodations. Staying here is a unique experience, as Quaker Center is not a hotel, resort or a typical retreat center. It is a not-for-profit, 'self-service' facility oriented towards spiritual growth, peace and social justice, and environmental stewardship. Our guests do their own cleaning while here and before they leave.
- Quaker Center guests bring their own towels and linens. We provide pillows and blankets; guests bring sheets, pillowcases and towels. Sets of towels and linens are available at \$15 per set. There are no guest laundry facilities at Quaker Center.
- Quaker Center's guests do their own cleaning. Our 'pay it forward' cleaning policy is unique, and requires some organization and work—about one full hour—on the last day. Before leaving, Quaker Center's groups clean both their individual rooms and the common spaces they use, like the kitchen and lodges. This is because the people who come here are a part of this place, and it allows Quaker Center to keep its prices low to remain accessible to as many as possible. Groups can both receive and give the gift of a clean Quaker Center. A Quaker Center staff member will also help groups make sure they have all they need to do a complete and thorough job. We ask our guests to leave Quaker Center the same or better than they found it.
- A few rules and guidelines help us keep Quaker Center calm, quiet and safe. All guests must honor a spirit of mutual respect and nonviolence. Quiet hours are from 10:00 pm until 7:00 am. After 10:00 pm, conversations should be indoors, as noise travels very well on our hillside. After midnight, it is expected that there will be no noise inside or outside. No amplified music is permitted outdoors at any time. We are unable to receive pets for this retreat.
- Fire risk is very high in this area, and candles, incense, and campfires are not permitted at Quaker Center. Smoking is not permitted in any of the buildings or on any of the trails, but only inside your car or in the loading and unloading areas outside of the Redwood Lodge and Orchard Lodge.
- There are wheelchair accessible bathrooms at the Redwood Lodge, Casa de Luz, Haven and Orchard bunkhouse. There are accessible bedrooms in the Haven and Orchard bunkhouse.

Contemplative Practices

OUR APPROACH TO MEDITATION & CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

Braided Wisdom intentionally structures mindfulness meditation and contemplative practice into every program. As a cross-cultural mindfulness organization, it's part of our foundation to create a culture of practice where the Buddha-Dharma, mindfulness meditation and contemplative tools are integrated into how we hold space and engage our community members. We share alternative practices and meditation postures to ensure accessibility for those with limited ability or mobility and facilitate practice in a way where no expertise is needed that includes all levels of experience.

Mindful Movement

PRACTICING T'AI CHI CHIH TOGETHER A MINDFUL MOVING MEDITATION

T'ai Chi Chih is a moving meditation that gathers the chi/the life force energy from the earth and circulates the chi in our bodies. Practiced together, we create a profound synergy and ever deepening experience of interconnectedness. The easy-to-learn accessible movements, practiced standing or seated, invite softness and continuity and can release tension, negativity, and stress. This leads to a sense of healing and wholeness for ourselves and for the land on which we practice. We can embody qualities such as gratitude, equanimity and compassion with various moves as we align our bodies, hearts and minds. Generating and balancing the chi, we bring stillness and calm in the midst of movement and activity.

What to Bring:

- A flashlight or headlamp (preferably better than your cellphone light) & batteries
- Good walking/hiking shoes
- Pillowcase and Bedding (sleeping bag OR single twin sheets and pillowcase). Quaker Center provides one pillow and two blankets per bed.
- Towel, washcloth
- Toiletries, including soap. Quaker Center provides toilet paper, hand soap and hand towels.
- Prescribed medication
- Water bottle
- Sunblock, natural insect repellent & miscellaneous items for comfort
- Comfortable clothing
- Layers for cold nights and mornings
- Sweatshirt/sweater (even in summer)
- Rain gear (October-May)
- Sun hat, insect repellent (April-September) and sunscreen (always)
- If you are camping: Basic gear (tent, rain fly, tarp, sleeping bag, mat, & pillow)

YOU MAY ALSO WANT TO BRING:

- Slippers and a throw
- Cloth napkin and your own (marked) coffee cup
- Earplugs (you may have a roommate)
- Shower shoes

PLEASE DO NOT BRING:

- Pets, except certified service animals
- Highly scented toiletries and perfumes
- Candles, incense, or anything else involving open flames
- Computers
- Drones

Please do not bring valuable items.

Frequently Asked Questions

1.) What is the weather like?

Unbelievably gorgeous, hot days and cool nights. It usually does not rain in May, however, you can bring a rain jacket just in case. It's recommended to always wear layers as mornings and nights can get cold in the mountains any time of year.

2.) What if we would like animal protein?

We will be eating healthy, organic, vegetarian food, and understand if you need to consume animal protein. Please bring dry food such as jerky or bone broth powder, and store it in your room or vehicle.

3.) Can I bring my pet?

We are unable to receive pets for this retreat.

4.) What are the COVID-19 Protocols?

- We ask that anyone experiencing the following symptoms to please stay home and rest:
 - Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea
- All participants, teachers, and staff must arrive with proof (picture or actual test) of a same-day negative antigen test that they have taken prior to arrival.
- If possible, please practice a self-retreat the week before the gathering by reducing your exposure to groups of people.
- If a participant, teacher, or staff experiences symptoms, we will ask them to take an antigen self-test onsite, and if they test positive for COVID-19, there are protocols to consider, which may include returning home.

5.) Is there Wifi available?

Yes, there is Wifi, however, during our gathering, we recommend you leave your phone turned off and refrain from using any form of communication or technology.

6.) Is there cell phone service available?

There is limited cell phone coverage at the Quaker Center, however, there is Wifi for calls and communication.

7.) Is there a number where I can be reached in case of emergency during the gathering?

Yes. If you need to be reached in an emergency during the gathering, the Quaker Center staff's number is (831) 212-2631. Please tell your loved ones to leave a message and know that it will take some time to get a message to you (the participant). Please let people know this number should only be used only in case of emergencies.

Frequently Asked Questions

(Continued)

8.) What does “fragrance-free” mean?

Since many people have allergies, asthma or other chemical sensitivities to common chemicals and fragrances, we ask that all participants please refrain from wearing scented products. Many have difficult breathing, suffer from headaches and migraines, or experience flu-like symptoms. In order to make our a gathering accessible to all, we ask people to:

- Avoid cologne, aftershave and perfume
- Avoid hairspray, hair gel and other strong-smelling hair products
- Wear clothes laundered in fragrance-free laundry detergent
- Avoid laundry softeners
- Use fragrance-free soap, lotion, shampoo and conditioner
- Avoid use of essential oils
- Test each product - many products are mistakenly marked “unscented” or “fragrance free” but contain masking scents that can be very harmful

9.) How will I get my things to my room?

There is a wagon available for transporting your things to and from your lodging.

Nourishment

We will be eating healthy, organic vegetarian food. Our meals are included in the registration fee and will be prepared by our Chef and kitchen manager, Tod Nysether, and his staff. If you have any severe dietary restrictions that you didn't share when you filled out the Information Form, please email Aubrey (aubreyg@braidedwisdom.org). We will do our best to meet everyone's needs. You are welcome to bring any additional dry food snacks to keep in your room or your vehicle. Access to the kitchen will be strictly limited to Chef Tod and his staff during meal preparation and clean-up times.



Please visit Tod Nysether's website for more information.
<https://www.simplepleasuresfoodcraft.com/>

Sacred Reciprocity

As we build towards a restorative economy, one important way to ensure continued growth and engagement with our communities is through the practice of sacred reciprocity. Sacred reciprocity is a loving and joyful practice that invites you to consider your relationships with the community around you including the earth. This intentional practice invites you to make a contribution that's aligned with your ability and capacity, exploring your unique needs and meeting yourself exactly where you are, with the least amount of harm. Please consider contributing according to your ability and to the greatest extent that feels personally meaningful for your circumstances, with the benefit of others in mind.

In this practice, we also ask you to consider supporting the participation of current and future participants who may not have the same capacity. We recognize most mainstream events and programs like ours are priced at levels far out of reach for many in our community. As a result, we have made our events and programs accessible to all by inviting participants to practice sacred reciprocity to share support with others on the path.

There is a \$60 non-refundable deposit for retreat registration. For this Original Medicine Earth-Based Intensive Retreat in May 2024, we welcome the following tiers of contribution to consider:

Benefactor Tier: \$2,100

Benefactor tier supports full contribution for you and a fellow community member.

Spiritual Friend Tier: \$1,575

Spiritual Friend tier supports full contribution for you and partial for a fellow community member.

Supporter Tier: \$1,050

Supporter tier supports you and most of the gathering costs.

Community Builder Tier: \$525

Community Builder tier supports the basic costs.

Sacred Reciprocity

Please note, the increase in requested contributions for each tier thoughtfully accounts for the rising inflation costs of goods, services, and food, which have gone up considerably in the past 12 months. Additionally, there is no grant funding to support the expenses of the gathering. We are actively seeking long-term funding to support this retreat moving forward. With that said, we believe these tiers remain accessible and honor the needs of our community's diverse needs and circumstances. However, if you need other support or arrangements, please don't hesitate to reach out to info@braidedwisdom.org. No one is turned away for lack of funds.

We believe liberation is a collective path that thrives on meaningful relationships and mutual sustainability and sacred reciprocity. We appreciate your collaboration to expand these offerings to more beautiful beings in our community! Thank you for your consideration and continued support.

Braided Wisdom Cancellation Policy

There will be a no-refund policy in effect by Saturday, April 27th, 2-weeks before the first day of the retreat. As you know, there needs to be advance notice to make all the necessary arrangements for someone to take your place. This would greatly impact our community. We create these reciprocity contribution tiers to make this retreat accessible to everyone in our community.

****For people who cancel early on, please consider practicing sacred reciprocity by donating your contribution. Braided Wisdom is an IRS approved tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. Our EIN is 85-0813884.****

Directions

Ben Lomond Quaker Center
1000 Hubbard Gulch Road
Ben Lomond, CA 95005

From San Jose or the Bay Area:

Take Highway 101, I-280 and Highway 85, or I-880 south to Highway 17 toward Santa Cruz. Go over the summit and down the mountain to the second Scotts Valley exit (Mt. Hermon Rd., Felton, Big Basin). Go right at end of ramp onto Mount Hermon Road.*

Important GPS Note:

If you use Googlemaps or a GPS it may give you a route from the Bay Area that takes you over mountain roads such as Bear Creek Road, Highway 9, and Highway 35; they are scenic but slow moving and can be confusing, especially at night. We recommend the directions above.

From Points South:

Take Highway 101 North to Salinas, then Highway 183 to Highway 1 North to Highway 17 at Santa Cruz. Take Highway 17 North to the first Scotts Valley exit (Mt. Hermon Rd., Felton, Big Basin). Follow exit which crosses over Highway 17 and becomes Mt. Hermon Rd.*

*From Scotts Valley, CA (Mt. Hermon Rd.):

Take Mt. Hermon Rd. west through Scotts Valley, and continue about 4 miles where it ends in Felton at a "T" intersection with a traffic light. Turn right on Graham Hill Rd. and go to the "other traffic light" in Felton. Turn right again and go North on Highway 9 for 3 miles to Ben Lomond.**

From Ben Lomond, CA:

Take Highway 9 North from the light at the center of town. Continue one quarter mile to the Quality Inn (on left). About 150 yards past motel, move into the center turning lane as soon as it starts and immediately turn left onto Hubbard Gulch Rd. There is a sign for Quaker Center at this intersection. If you reach Alba Rd. or the Orthodox Church of Sts Peter and Paul, you have gone too far! There are signs for Quaker Center all the way up Hubbard Gulch Rd. One mile up, watch for specific signs for your group.

Location: Approx. Distance: Approx. Travel Time:

San Francisco (Golden Gate Bridge) (via Hwy 1) 90 miles 2 hours, 15 minutes SFO -- San Francisco Int'l Airport (via I-280) 80 miles 1 hour, 45 minutes Oakland (via I-880) 80 miles 2 hours SJC -- San Jose Int'l Airport 35 miles 50 minutes Santa Cruz 12 miles 30 minutes

For public transit directions, see website: www.quakercenter.org.

About The Teachers



Carol Cano, M.A.

Lead Teacher

Carol Cano, M.A., began her practice over 35 years ago at Wat Kow Tahm in Thailand and has actively engaged in building communities and teaching Dharma internationally. She is a teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center. She is a core teacher and a former board member of East Bay Meditation Center. Carol co-founded Philippine Insight Meditation Community in the Philippines.

Her unique teachings are deeply grounded in Basque, Native American and Buddhist influences that braid the Dharma along with Indigenous wisdom and earth-based practices. Her psychology background gives her a unique view into the human condition, which helps her hold community in a compassionate and confident manner. Carol reminds us to keep grounded in our hearts as we uphold spiritual ideals and encourages us to remain balanced within the demands of modern life. To find out more about Carol, please visit www.carolcano.com.



Imee Contreras

Co-Teacher

Imee Contreras, CMT-P, is the founder of Mindfulness Asia. She is co-founder of the Philippine Insight Meditation Community and Nibbana Forest Refuge. She is a mentor for Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach's Mindfulness Teacher Training Certification Program, where she co-facilitates the Third Space in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility Program. She is the Mindfulness Teacher of Braided Wisdom's Leadership Training Program and a Co-Teacher for the Original Medicine Yearlong Program.

She develops and facilitates innovative mindfulness programs for international companies, schools, and events. She volunteers to teach incarcerated women serving life imprisonment and supports sexually abused women and children.

She spent a large part of her younger years growing up in the United States and is now based in her motherland, the Philippines. She is mixed-race, adopted, and raised by hard-working, lower-middle-class, immigrant Filipinos. She is a mother, an organic gardener, a health and wellness advocate, and a yoga therapist.

About The Teachers



Janet E. Roos

Co-Teacher

Janet E. Roos, PMP, CMT-P, has been recognized as an innovator in Business Technology for over 30 years. She has worked coast-to-coast as a highly respected “In-House” and “Consultant” leader for world renown companies. Janet completed the UCLA Mindfulness Certified Training Program and is a certified member of the International Mindfulness Teacher’s Association. She is a co-teacher for Braided Wisdom’s Original Medicine Yearlong Program. Janet is a four time “Hall Of Famer” recognized elite athlete who understands the inherent value of employing Mindfulness Practices for competition, sports preparedness, and training. She has sustained a personal meditation practice for over a decade and has attended numerous training and silent retreats. Janet has volunteered with Non-Profit Organizations and currently serves on two non-profit boards.



Jenn Biehn

Mindful Movement Teacher

Jenn Biehn enjoys being a queer elder mentor and movement meditation teacher for the Braided Wisdom Leadership Training Program. She co-facilitates the Braided Wisdom white awakening & healing pod. She co-facilitates Honoring Eldership - Walking the Path Together at East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC). Through Neighbors for Racial Justice, a community based organization in Oakland, she co-facilitates workshops in Transforming White Privilege on the Path to Racial Equity. Jenn’s spiritual practice includes engaging with nature through cross country skiing and backpacking in the High Sierra, where she also takes younger spiritual seekers on side-by-side solo retreats to overcome their fears of the wild. She delights in sharing Tai Chi Chih - Joy through Movement as a circle practice under the redwoods at Oakland’s Dimond Park and continues to embody awareness and healing movement in her life-long journey of building community.

Jenn was an instructor and administrator at City College of San Francisco from 1977-2011, where she mentored, taught, and actively engaged in collaborative and inclusive leadership skills. As a peer-led sangha builder and movement teacher at EBMC for the past 12 years, she co-founded Restorative Practices for Dharma Practitioners Sangha, Midday Sangha, and Dharma in Motion. She also served on the Board of Directors/Leadership Sangha from 2016-2019 and helped to develop EBMC’s strategic plan.

About The Teachers



Ramón Honea **Teacher's Assistant**

Ramón Honea is a gay, second generation Oakland Latinx native. He served for 20 years as a teacher/administrator in the Oakland Unified School District. Through therapy, Ramon found meditation and the East Bay Meditation Center's "POC sangha" where he sat on the board, led several groups, and participated on the center's coordinating committee. Leading meditation since 2009, Ramon obtained a mindfulness teaching credential through the Mindfulness Training Institute in 2018. He is an Assistant Teacher for the Original Medicine Yearlong Program.



Carmen Alvarez **Teacher's Assistant**

Carmen is from the Purepecha lands in Michoacan Mexico. Carmen has a master's degree in Leadership which she has braided beautifully with her Toltec, Purepecha, and her Mindfulness Training Practices providing holistic approaches to healing and personal development. She received her Certification as a Mindfulness Teacher from the Braided Wisdom Leadership Training Program in 2022. She also has completed two Indigenous Master programs, Nahualismo and Curanderismo. Carmen is a practitioner of Mexican Indigenous practices and she is also part of a Lakota centered community. Coaching and training are her passions as she thrives when working with others. Her belief is that we must heal ourselves and by doing so we heal our family, our ancestors, and our communities. Carmen practices and guides mindfulness meditations, leadership coaching, ancestral healing, trauma-based healing, limpiezas, manifestations, planting dreams, among many other healing techniques. Her intention is for everyone to find their passion and live their best life.

About The Teachers



Mario Castillo

Teacher's Assistant

Mario Castillo (he/him) resides on the ancestral and unceded land of the Bay Miwok-speaking Saclan people (Orinda, CA). He identifies as a queer, cis man of color on a spiritual path and has been a dedicated Buddhist practitioner in the Theravāda and Vipassanā traditions for nearly 15 years. Mario began attending the East Bay Meditation Center's Alphabet and People of Color Sanghas in 2009. He later co-founded two peer-led Deep Refuge Groups in 2010: Alphabet Brothers of All Colors and Alphabet Brothers of Color. Mario is a graduate of EBMC's Commit to Dharma Program with Larry Yang (2012) and EBMC's inaugural Spiritual Teacher and Leadership Training with Noliwe Alexander, Carol Cano, JD Doyle, and Amana Brembry Johnson (2023). Mario practiced as a Buddhist monk in Thailand with Venerable Acharn Tippakorn Sukhito before returning to the Bay Area to complete his graduate training. Mario received his Ph.D. in sociology from UC Berkeley in 2023. His research focuses on organizational diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.



Kimber Simpkins-Nuccio

Teacher's Assistant

Kimber Simpkins-Nuccio (she/they) is a white, cis, queer mom and writer who taught yoga and mindfulness in the San Francisco Bay area for more than twenty years, bringing a body love and social justice perspective to her teaching and learning. She has completed the Dedicated Practitioner's Program at Spirit Rock, teacher training at the Mindfulness Training Institute, racial justice facilitation training with Holistic Resistance, the Spiritual Teacher and Leadership Program at EBMC, Mindfulness Mentor Training with Banyan and is a visiting teacher at Spirit Rock, EBMC, New York Insight, and more recently, Insight Santa Cruz. She is currently learning the Kwan Yin dharmas in the 2 year Dharmapala training and is a member of the 2024 cohort of Braided Wisdom's Original Medicine program. As a practitioner, Kimber values the intersection of social justice, self-knowledge, and decreased reactivity within Buddhist practice and appreciates how these skills help us increase our ability to connect deeply. Undermining white supremacy internally and externally is a core component of her work. She has witnessed first hand how the practice of mindfulness has brought more compassion and joy to her relationships and life.

About The Teachers



Jonathan Relucio **Teacher's Assistant**

For a decade, Jonathan Relucio was a Senior Trainer for Niroga Institute, teacher trauma-informed yoga, meditation, and mindfulness in urban schools, mental health clinics and juvenile detention centers. Currently, he teaches at Spirit Rock Meditation Center and East Bay Meditation Center. Jonathan also facilitates transformation in social justice movements as a Trainer for Rockwood Leadership Institute; integrates mindfulness with restorative circles for healing and racial equity as co-founder of AllThriveEd.org; and serves on the Healing Advisory council for Filipino Advocates for Justice.

With over 20 years of experience in social services, community organizing, training, and leadership development, Jonathan values yoga, dharma, meditation, Indigenous medicine, martial arts, dance, and DJing as practices for liberation that heal us from the impact of oppressive systems.