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March 9, 2019

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SHAMBHALA

Dear Shambhala Sangha,

We have turned our focus on recent events, including the Sakyong's communication that he will step back from teaching and administration for the foreseeable future. The Interim Board continues to hold the intention to sustain Shambhala. We hope that the community can understand that we need time to work on the best courses of action. Our priority is to keep in close communication with the community as we do so. If you have missed any of our recent communications, you can find links to all of the Interim Board [letters on our website](#).

The report below is our regular update to the community, informing you about our decisions and ongoing projects.

### **March Update to the Community**

The Interim Board has continued managing the Shambhala organization's finances and structure as well as relating to issues of care and conduct. We have now completed four months of our tenure and have a clearer picture of some of these issues. We are in the process of generating proposals to the community about next steps. The Interim Board has also begun meeting with the Process Team Steering Committee and we look forward to ongoing collaboration with them.

We meet regularly as a Board once a week and with all of our working

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Shambhala Global Services staff, as well as participating directly in calls to Center Directors and Group Leaders. We also continue to receive many questions about various topics, including the Wickwire Holm report, finances, and more. We have posted responses to these questions as a Frequently Asked Questions section of the Interim Board website. [You can access those FAQs here.](#)

## **DECISIONS**

The Interim Board has made the following decisions since January 1, 2019:

- To propose to the community the selling of an asset in order to meet debt and operating obligations.
- To release to the community all three of the Wickwire Holm investigative reports and a summary of reports that did not fall within the investigative scope.
- To release 2018 financials and a 2019 budget to the community. We plan to release these reports in the next few weeks.
- To share the findings of An Olive Branch with the community. Please read on for further details.

## **CARE AND CONDUCT**

### Wickwire Holm Report

The Wickwire Holm report release was delayed while we waited on the final report from Ms. Selina Bath, the Wickwire Holm investigative attorney. On February 3, 2019, one day after receiving the final reports, we sent a cover letter, summary report and all of the investigative reports we received to the community. [You can access all of those communications here.](#)

### An Olive Branch Report

An Olive Branch completed its Listening Post services to the community on December 31, 2018. The Interim Board had hoped to send An Olive

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An Olive Branch needed more time to complete their final report, so we decided to release the Wickwire Holm report on its own. We received the first of two promised An Olive Branch reports at the end of January and met with An Olive Branch on February 21, two days after receiving their final report. After that meeting, we requested An Olive Branch to seek explicit consent from those whose anonymous stories may appear in the form of direct quotes. An Olive Branch is currently engaged in this process of seeking such consent, and we expect that they will complete their work soon.

### Care and Conduct Policy

As a reminder, the Interim Board released an updated Care and Conduct policy on December 23, 2018. You can [access that communication here](#). This remains the one formal way Shambhala has to investigate reports of harm. We recognize that as a community we need to review these policies and have involved the Process Team in this process. We will also be releasing along with An Olive Branch's findings, their proposed Code of Ethics in the coming weeks for community review.

### New Care and Conduct Appeals Process

The Interim Board has also worked on establishing procedures for a Care and Conduct appeal process. In the past, one person in an international leadership position was in charge of appeals. We have now changed the structure so that a committee of international community members will hear appeals.

### Application for New Members to the International Care and Conduct Panel

We are still seeking new members to the International Care and Conduct Panel, and in particular seek to add members from outside North America. If you are inspired to be part of this critical process during an important time for our community, please review the December 23 [communication with a link to the application](#) page.

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### Moving Forward with Care and Conduct Issues

The Interim Board members wish to publicly state our support for survivors of harm in the Shambhala mandala. We intend to work hand in hand with the Process Team to explore how to care for those who have been harmed and how to prevent future misconduct.

There is a lot to process as practitioners and as a community, and we expect that this may take us all some time to determine our a new ground and perspective. In anticipation of how strongly this could affect the community and the wide range of reactions we will all have, we asked a small group from the Process Team to develop some guidelines and ideas for community gatherings. These were forwarded to Shambhala leaders.

### Reporting and Investigating Harm in Shambhala

Both Wickwire Holm and An Olive Branch provided only anonymous reports to us. Aside from mentions of the Sakyong, the Interim Board did not receive names of reporters nor of perpetrators from either organization. When we pressed them for more information to support our responsibility to work directly with harm caused and prevent more harm, both organizations were adamant that they were bound by their promise of confidentiality to their reporters and could not divulge any names to us. If you wish to report an issue of harm, please refer to the [Care and Conduct Policy for current procedures which can be accessed here](#).

## **FINANCE**

### Potential Marpa House Sale

To meet growing deficits and debt encumbrance, the Interim Board is seriously considering selling Marpa House as laid out in our [February 1 communication](#) to the community. We do not take this decision lightly. We are open to alternative proposals from the community and we feel we can wait until mid-March before determining our course of action. Please continue sending us your ideas and questions to

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As also stated in our February 1 communication about Marpa House, the Interim Board has no intention of trying to sell local city centers or land centers as we view this as against the best interests of the community.

### Center and Group Transfers

Center and group transfers dropped significantly in 2018, from approximately USD \$44,000 month to USD \$16,000 a month. This substantial loss in revenue has directly impacted the need to sell an asset. It is critical for the sustainability of the mandala to increase this revenue source. To work with centers and groups on this issue, the Interim Board and Shambhala Global Services staff has been in dialogue with leaders of our 200 centers and groups and was effective in raising transfers from USD \$16,000 to USD \$22,000 per month. We have paused these discussions at this time given all that the community is experiencing.

### Tax Receipts

The Interim Board assisted the Shambhala Global Services Finance Department in the implementation of a new donor base software system. The system was implemented in December, and all donor tax receipts were released to US sangha members on time by the end of January. We were also on target for Canadian tax receipts to be sent out by their official due date of February 28th. If you have any questions about your tax receipt, please contact [finance@shambhala.org](mailto:finance@shambhala.org).

### Shambhala Day Fundraising

We were very happy that the Shambhala Day broadcast was well-received this year and that 81 groups and 115 individuals viewed the event. The online connection through Zoom worked well and allowed for a seamless broadcast of cultural and practice events that switched between Halifax and Dechen Chöling. You can [click here to view](#) the Shambhala Day broadcast through Shambhala Online.

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The Shambhala New Year fundraising campaign raised a total of USD \$375,000 in pledges from the global community to support Shambhala Global Services. We very much appreciate this support. We are still waiting for some centers and groups to report in with their local fundraiser pledges. Our goal is to raise \$450,000 USD worldwide with this campaign. If you have not yet had a chance to make your Shambhala New Year donation, you can [click here](#) to do so.

Part of these fundraising efforts has been the *100 Days, 100 More Jewels* campaign. We have \$100,000 in matching gifts that has so far brought in 58 new Jewel Patrons pledging to give \$1,000 per year. To learn more about becoming a Jewel Patron, please contact Development Director Faradee Rudy directly at [faradee.rudy@shambhala.org](mailto:faradee.rudy@shambhala.org).

## COMMUNICATIONS

We continue to read all of the many emails that we receive from community members. We received hundreds after the recent letters so although we continue to read all of them, we cannot respond individually at this time. With many community members raising important concerns, we have added many of these to our list of Frequently Asked Questions on the Interim Board website. [You can access those FAQs here.](#)

We are anticipating the following upcoming communications to the community:

- Finance Report
- Decision on next steps on the possible Marpa House sale
- An Olive Branch reports
- A webinar for leaders to be released to the whole community after the release of An Olive Branch reporting.

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and will continue to communicate and share regularly with the community. You can continue to reach us at [board@shambhala.org](mailto:board@shambhala.org) or on our website at [board.shambhala.org](http://board.shambhala.org).

We would very much like to acknowledge all of the hard work and dedication of the employees of Shambhala USA and Shambhala Canada who continue to offer their strength and exertion during these taxing and uncertain times.

Sincerely,

**The Shambhala Interim Board**

Veronika Bauer

Martina Bouey

Mark Blumenfeld

John Cobb

Jennifer Crow

Sara Lewis

Susan Ryan

Paulina Varas

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