

July 1, 2019

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SHAMBHALA

To the Shambhala Community -

On Friday, former Shambhala [member Michael Smith was arrested](#) pending allegations of child sexual abuse, making him the second former member arrested this year. We are writing to provide you with further information about this incident, and encourage any current or former members with information about criminal activity to report it to local authorities.

Neither the Shambhala Interim Board nor the International Care and Conduct Panel were aware of any incidents involving Michael Smith prior to his arrest on June 28, 2019.

Immediately after learning about the arrest, the Interim Board began a process of information discovery related to these allegations. During this process, questions arose related to the handling of this case internally by Shambhala leaders in the 1990s. The Interim Board has decided to formally investigate this case by hiring a third-party investigator. We will provide the Shambhala community with further details about this process once an investigator is hired and a scope of work is confirmed. As of yesterday, June 30, we have suspended a leader from all teaching and leadership authorizations who was involved in handling this incident pending the third-party investigation.

As we announced in our June update, the Interim Board has prioritized hiring a full-time Care and Conduct Officer in Shambhala. As this case further reveals, building on what we have learned from the number of reports that have been released, Shambhala officials, teachers, and office

holders, as well as general members, need significantly more training on proper reporting of misconduct. As well, Shambhala should never attempt to handle crimes such as sexual assault and child abuse internally. These incidents should be reported appropriately to the police. Specifically, the organization commits to seeking out specialized training in mandated reporting procedures.

We remain committed to creating safe environments for families and children and stand firmly against child abuse. Shambhala leadership has and will continue to cooperate and assist authorities in investigating reports of sexual assault of any kind.

We encourage anyone with information about criminal activity to report it to local authorities in the jurisdiction where it occurred. For cases in Boulder, please contact Detective Ross Richert of the Boulder Police Department at 303-441-1833.

Sincerely,

**The Interim Board**

Veronika Bauer

Mark Blumenfeld

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