

# The Earth Leadership Cohort & the Work That Reconnects

The [Work That Reconnects](#) is known worldwide for empowering activists in social and ecological justice. Developed by Joanna Macy and her colleagues, this dynamic, interactive body of work has inspired many thousands of people to engage wholeheartedly in the Great Turning to a life-sustaining society. Described in the book, *Coming Back to Life*, it brings a new way of seeing the world, as our larger living body, freeing us from the assumptions and attitudes that now threaten all life on Earth.

The Earth Leadership Cohort program (ELC) is designed to introduce young adults to the theory and practice of the Work That Reconnects (WTR) through an experiential immersion and then to offer opportunities to practice facilitating the work in the context of a supportive learning community. A first Earth Leadership Cohort of young adults convened in the fall of 2014 and a second Earth Leadership Cohort convened in the spring of 2015. We are delighted to now be gathering a third Earth Leadership Cohort for the spring of 2016.

The first meeting of the cohort will include a five-day workshop April 22 – 27 at Friendly Crossways in Harvard, MA with a larger group of activists, educators, and artists. This intergenerational community of participants will be guided through the four phases of the Work That Reconnects, opening to the planetary realities of great suffering and rapid destruction as well as to the magnificence of the web of life. The work is personal as well as interactive, inviting fresh insight into our role in the Great Turning and new possibilities for collaboration.

The second meeting is a retreat June 2 – 5 just for the Cohort at Starseed Healing Sanctuary in Savoy, MA. There, the group has the opportunity to reflect on the rich experiences of the previous workshop, to facilitate the WTR group practices, and to begin to integrate new perspectives into their personal and professional dreams. The retreat is also a time for gathering resources, ideas, and support for “going forth” into the world as change agents, healers, compassionate listeners, and empowered citizens. As a community, the members decide how they would like to keep in touch and support one another in realizing their short-term goals and long-term visions. Alumni from the first two cohorts organized several reunions and co-facilitated a number of Work That Reconnects workshops for the public. They have also formed an “Earth Leadership Community” and welcome future ELC alumni to join.



Photo by Elaine Boucher

Earth Leadership Cohort Fall 2015

# Becoming a Member of the Earth Leadership Cohort



Young adults, ages 18 to 30, who are interested in participating in this two-part training are encouraged to send in a completed application by February 15, 2016. The application can be downloaded from the Work That Reconnects website at:

<http://workthatreconnects.org/events/earth-leadership-cohort-3/>

The learning community grows stronger and more effective over the course of the two months. For this reason, participants are asked to commit to attending both of the entire April 22<sup>nd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> and June 2<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> meetings. If there is an interest in further peer support, the cohort may choose to continue meeting after the formal program has ended as well as join the alumni network of the Earth Leadership Community.

A central goal of the program is to provide sufficient scholarships to make the opportunity accessible to anyone whose application is accepted. Applicants who would like to apply for a scholarship may complete the Scholarship Application found at the end of the program application. The total cost for tuition, room, and board for both gatherings is \$1200.

Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to the retreat centers where the trainings are held. (Ride sharing may be possible for some.) The locations for the two dates are listed below. Arrival time on April 22<sup>nd</sup> is 12 noon, and departure time on April 27<sup>th</sup> is 4 p.m. Arrival time on June 2<sup>th</sup> is 5 p.m. and departure time on June 5<sup>th</sup> is 4 p.m.

April 22<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>  
Friendly Crossways, Harvard, MA  
[www.friendlycrossways.com](http://www.friendlycrossways.com)

June 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>  
Starseed Sanctuary, Savoy, MA  
[www.starseedsanctuary.org](http://www.starseedsanctuary.org)

Accommodations are shared dorm rooms. Vegetarian meals are provided and an effort is made to accommodate special dietary needs.

For more information about the Earth Leadership Cohort, contact Aravinda Ananda at:  
[aravinda.ananda@gmail.com](mailto:aravinda.ananda@gmail.com)

## About the Facilitation Team

This team formed in 2014 to co-facilitate the first Earth Leadership Cohort at a Joanna Macy workshop and has led several Work That Reconnects programs since then. Each member brings a rich background of related experience and abundant ideas for keeping the work fresh for each unique group. The harmony of their styles is energizing.



Aravinda Ananda is a social ecologist with a master's degree in environmental management from Yale. She is finishing a forthcoming book called *Living rEvolution*, which articulates and invites a united movement for whole-scale transformation in humanity's relationship with Life on Earth to be mutually enhancing. For the past 5 years she has been facilitating the *Work That Reconnects* and other modes of experiential learning that help integrate our intelligences and ignite our love and passion for healing the human-earth relationship. She is a member of the Interhelp Council and has been a part of many *Work That Reconnects* co-facilitation teams. Each day she feels honored to increasingly live the rEvolution and support others to do the same.

Markie Babbott is a clinical psychologist in Northampton, MA where she lives with her partner and two teenagers. Following her interests in mindfulness, creativity, Buddhism, and nature-based ritual, she pursued a master's degree in Ecopsychology from Naropa University through the Transpersonal Psychology Department (2011). She has been fortunate to study with Joanna Macy many times since 2007 and is grateful to have been a part of the ELC I and II. A published poet, she volunteers with the Connecticut Watershed branch of River of Words, a place-based educational approach that integrates poetry and visual art for k-12 students.



Kirstin Edelglass is a wilderness guide, ecological educator, psychosynthesis counselor, and trainer of council facilitators. She began studying with Joanna Macy fifteen years ago and facilitates the Work That Reconnects in a variety of settings, including as Joanna's assistant. Before developing the Earth Leadership Cohort for young adults, she founded a wilderness rite of passage program for adolescent girls in northern Maine and co-led a traveling semester for graduate students in Alaska. Writing, weaving, gardening, and singing provide other soul nourishment. She lives in Marlboro, Vermont with her husband and twin daughters.

Joseph Rotella is a musician, small business owner, activist, and lover of life. As a small business owner he has used this position in society to advocate for a better world. He has been vocal on various social justice and environmental issues and has had letters to the editor published, spoken on the radio, and testified at the MA statehouse. He has studied with Joanna Macy numerous times, is a member of the Interhelp Council and has been facilitating the Work that Reconnects for several years. With his wife, he enjoys spending his spare time making kombucha, pickling, keeping bees and growing vegetables.

