

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 a transition, a Great Turning as Joanna calls it, 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. The first Earth Leadership Cohort of young adults convened in 2014, and a second and third cohort followed in 2015, and 2016. We are delighted to now be gathering a fourth Earth Leadership Cohort for the spring of 2017.

The first meeting of the cohort will include a five-day workshop June 2-7 at Hallelujah Farm in Chesterfield, NH with a larger group of activists, educators, and artists. This intergenerational community of participants will be guided through the spiral 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 22 – 25 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 three cohorts have 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.



The first Earth Leadership Cohort, Fall 2014

What some alumni are saying about the program:

"Earth Leadership Cohort gave me a spiritual, communal, and practical foundation for weaving profound transformation into my organizing work. There is great empowerment in naming and claiming the full range of emotions we feel around the state of the world. Start here."

– Adin, Hampshire College Student - ELC III

"After 6 years of work as an environmental educator, the Work That Reconnects gave me a transformative and deeply needed shift. It helped me understand myself not as a single individual fighting a win/lose battle, but as an aspect of Life's natural inclination to heal itself. The ELC facilitators are wise, skillful, loving, and humble. The fellow participants are inspirational. What happens when we connect with others over our shared love of life on this planet is nothing short of magical. We've created a space where we can breathe, dance, cry, give thanks, rage, sing, and gaze in wonder. The community we formed in ELC is still going strong, and growing, long after the program itself ended. We are in this for the long haul, and the Work That Reconnects is a key piece of what can sustain us along the way."

– Daniel, Environmental Educator - ELC II

"The Earth Leadership Cohort was a totally transformational experience for me. On the first weekend, I arrived burnt out from climate change organizing, barely able to hold myself together emotionally. After the first weekend, I already felt a little bit lighter, a little bit more able to deal with the deep pain I had been feeling for myself and the state of the world. By the end of the third weekend, I was fully recovered and newly excited and refreshed to not only continue my work, but to incorporate the Work that Reconnects into the future of whatever I do. If you are an activist, organizer, or anyone who feels pain for being in the world that we live in, I cannot recommend this program enough. You will leave not only feeling more able to emotionally and practically step into a place of peace while creating change, but you will also have an incredible new community of fellow change makers."

– Sophie, Film Director - ELC I

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 March 15, 2017. The application can be downloaded from the Interhelp Network website at: <http://interhelpnetwork.org/elcivapplication-doc/>

The learning community grows stronger and more effective over the course of the month. For this reason, participants are asked to commit to attending both of the entire June 2nd-7th and June 22th-25th 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 \$950.

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 June 2nd is 12 noon, and departure time on June 7th is 4 p.m. Arrival time on June 22nd is 5 p.m. and departure time on June 25th is 4 p.m.

June 2nd – 7th
Hallelujah Farm, Chesterfield, NH
www.hallelujahfarm.com

June 22nd – 25th
Starseed Sanctuary, Savoy, MA
www.starseedsanctuary.org

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

Please write to Aravinda Ananda with any questions at: earthleadershipcohort@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 five 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, II and III. 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 sixteen 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 state house. He has studied with Joanna Macy numerous times, is a member of the Interhelp Council and has been facilitating the Work that Reconnects since 2011. He lives in Watertown, Mass with his wife and



enjoys spending his spare time making kombucha and hard cider, keeping bees and growing and preserving vegetables.