

Dharma Garden

Draft Strategic Plan

The Dharma Garden steering committee is developing a draft strategic planning framework to guide the program throughout the transition to the Siskiyou property and beyond. The framework defines a vision, mission, and goals for Dharma Garden's work, as well as potential priority activities.

Dharma Garden – Roots...

Founded in 1986, the Dharma Garden is a vital and vibrant program of Dharma Rain Zen Center focusing on the spiritual and developmental needs of sangha children and their families. Many adults from the broader DRZC sangha (most of whom are not parents) volunteer to be teachers and counselors, and to create curriculum.

This joyous and effective program combines developmental psychology, Buddhist principles and practice, and the creative energy of an all-volunteer staff to serve children from preschool through high school.

After 27 years Dharma Garden's steady growth in size and complexity calls for our attention to the cultivation of a vision and plan for its future. As a result the Dharma Garden Steering Committee was formed to help coordinate its multiple programs and to provide stewardship and guidance.

Vision

Dharma Garden supports a vibrant and thriving DRZC by offering to people of all ages a way into Dharma and practice so they are able to make use of the principles of Buddhism in their everyday lives.

Mission

- Nurture spiritual practice among sangha families, children and teens through creative and time-honored expressions of Buddhist principles;
- Encourage and support young people's inherent Buddha-nature through community, compassion, sharing and play;
- Animate the whole sangha with the joy and wisdom of children, offering to sangha members the opportunity to embrace and express practice in its many forms, including teaching and receiving dharma from young people;
- Welcome and support families, children, teens and young adults as an integral part of the Dharma Rain sangha.

Values

While we hold and share many values in the Dharma Garden, three that we hold as a lens for this process are:

1. **Compassion:** Welcoming, cultivating and celebrating the spiritual lives of children, young adults and families within the Dharma Rain Zen Center sangha;
2. **Loving-kindness:** Nurturing children's innate and alive sense of the world;
3. **Connection:** Creating and modeling wholesome rituals and practices of community, caring and acceptance.

...and Shoots (Our Programs)

Dharma Garden Sunday Program:

Dharma Garden provides bi-weekly classes for children from preschool through high school aiming to cultivate emotional intelligence, social skills, and to nurture the spiritual growth of children.

Additionally, to help families meet their spiritual needs, we provide group class time for parents, childcare during zazen and temple services, as well as some dharma talks specifically designed to address the needs of parents. In addition, we seek to support sangha parents in cultivating their own practice within the center and within their families.

Dharma Camp:

Dharma Camp is designed for campers ages 9 – 18 to learn about themselves and to practice interdependence through a combination of traditional summer camp activities and Buddhist practices. The week of camp includes periods that are formal and structured, as well as periods that are informal.

Frog Song Preschool:

Frog Song preschool is currently in the early stages of development to create a comprehensive early learning environment for 3 – 5 year olds using Montessori methodology combined with lessons in compassion, mindfulness, kindness and environmental stewardship.