



Strategic Plan

Shambhala Meditation Center of Chicago : 3-5 Year Goals

The Governing Council (GC) of the Shambhala Meditation Center of Chicago (SMCC) recognizes its responsibility to the whole mission of the SMCC and that it ultimately answers to the Center of the Shambhala International Mandala, embodied by the Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. It also recognizes that at this point in time we are charged by both the Sakyong and our members to focus on a strategy of growth and outreach while respecting the needs of our community of practitioners. With this in mind, the GC offers the following goals to guide SMCC's growth and establish outreach priorities. The goals represent the culmination of previous listening and visioning campaigns, vision-to-action workshops, governance retreats, committee work, and efforts to align local priorities to those set by the center of the mandala.

Organizational Goals

Growth and Development

1. *Increase the availability of practice, study, and community opportunities to allow a greater number and diversity of individuals to connect with dharma.*
2. *Strengthen our infrastructure (i.e., governance, finance, membership, space/environment, teachers, volunteer base, community health and well-being) so that it will support anticipated growth and better serve our core community.*
3. *Remain open to unplanned, auspicious opportunities for growth when they arise.*

Outreach

1. *Explore new ways to be of benefit to the greater Chicago area.*
2. *In order to allow more people throughout the Chicago area to experience meditation and connect with basic goodness, increase off-site opportunities and effectiveness of communications to a wider audience.*
3. *Ensure that SMCC is easily found, accessible, and welcoming to diverse individuals and organizations seeking our resources or exploring our mandala.*
4. *Identify and seek out new constituencies that can enrich our mandala and create mutually beneficial relationships.*

Program and Administrative Area Objectives/Activities

After each set of /activities a contact person is listed for members who wish to volunteer, make suggestions, or give feedback.

Practice and Education

1. Provide opportunities for newcomers to explore meditation and the contemplative arts (e.g., Learn to Meditate, Meditation in Everyday Life, Level I Shambhala Training, introductory arts programs) to meet the demand from increased outreach activity.
2. Provide programs and practice opportunities to enable students to progress through the Shambhala Buddhist core path curriculum (e.g., Way of Shambhala, advanced Shambhala arts, seminary preparation) based on the guidelines established by the Sakyong.
3. Support the efforts of advanced practitioners (vajrayana and post-Warrior's Assembly students) to deepen their practice and meet requirements for further practice and study.
4. Develop a culture of service and support for the teaching environment by expanding and strengthening training for staff and coordinators.
5. Increase the number of qualified teachers (under the leadership of the shastris).
6. Work in partnership with other sectors to support outreach, efficient operations, and improved communications.

Contact: Barbara Wolkowitz

Community

1. Ensure that all visitors, friends, and members feel welcome and included by fostering a community of warm, inviting, and caring practitioners.
2. Plan and undertake Nyida Day (Shambhala Day, Mid-summer's Day, Harvest of Peace, and Children's Day) activities in collaboration with the local representative of the Shambhala Office of Culture and Decorum and offer other social gatherings.
3. Strengthen community care, support and encouragement among sangha members as individuals, couples, families, parents and children across all stages of life and levels of practice in collaboration with the Desung.
4. Encourage the practice of Shambhala Buddhist teachings in our relationships and families, and in the communities to which we belong, with particular focus on maitri and profound kindness practices.
5. Continue to strengthen our ability to work constructively with conflicts that occur within our community in collaboration with the Desung.
6. Convene community meetings as appropriate.
7. Promote responsiveness by the Center to local and global environmental and social issues.

Contact: Gretchen Neve

Communications

1. Develop and maintain consistent branding for Center communications that evokes the message of basic goodness and profound kindness.

2. Develop and implement a strategy and tools for communication within and outside of the sangha.
3. Develop and implement an effective PR strategy for the center and its programs.
4. Develop accurate, clear, brilliant, sharp, accessible language that “meets people where they are.”
5. Ensure that the community is linked to the center of the mandala through teachings, receptions, on-line communications, etc.
6. Listen and respond to concerns that surface in the community informally and formally (e.g.: surveys, focus groups, conversations, etc.) in collaboration with center leadership.
7. Ensure that members and friends get regular updates on external activities affiliated with the Center (e.g., Chicago Rehab Institute, satellite meditation groups).

Contact: Aarti Tejuja

Human Resources (including Staff, Leadership, Volunteers)

1. Develop and implement a strategy for recruiting, training, and mentoring volunteers.
2. Support leadership development and succession planning for paid and volunteer positions in conjunction with center leadership,
3. Support community participation and celebration that reflects our shared identity as citizens of the kingdom of Shambhala.
4. Strengthen patterns of communication and collaboration among the three pillars of Shambhala.

Contact: Tom Adducci

Financial Resources

1. Develop a base of financial and material resources adequate to meeting priority goals.
2. Establish and maintain a standing Dana Development Committee with the charge to develop financial planning and development activities to build a resource base adequate for Center operations and projected expansion.
3. Integrate membership development with financial planning.
4. Facilitate inclusion of bequests to Shambhala in estate planning (planned giving).

Contact: Tom Golz

Administration

1. Develop and implement systems/procedures necessary for ensuring smooth administrative operations.
2. Increase and refine the use of electronic technology for administrative and communications functions (e.g., member/program databases, Center web site, listserves, access to Shambhala International resources).

Contact: Tom Adducci

Facilities and Maintenance

1. Find short-term and long-term solutions for accommodating expanded programs
 - A. Identify and secure local venue(s) for overflow programs.
 - B. Explore and recommend low-cost renovations of present Center.
 - C. *Determine feasibility of purchasing or redevelopment of property for a new Center.*
2. Enhance and uplift present Center facilities.
3. Create and implement systems for cost-effective maintenance of present facilities.
4. Ensure security of Center and its property in consultation with the Rusung.

Contact: Tom Adducci