

Embracing Transition: The Alphabet Sangha Coordinators

by Deb Schneider, Alphabet Co-Coordinator

Sangha is all about walking a spiritual path in community. It's a condensed example of the concept of interconnectedness so important in Buddhism. We are all the same in so many ways, and we all need each other to evolve as human beings. Alphabet Sangha offers us the opportunity to live this Buddhist teaching.

We come to the [EBMC Alphabet Sangha](#) acknowledging the presence of a rich long history that owes many bows to our founding and sustaining teachers (past and present): Larry Yang, John Mifsud, J. Doyle, Lien Shutt, Shahara Godfrey, Arinna Weisman, as well as many others combined with all the volunteer coordinators before us--they paved the way and were instrumental in creating the community we all feel when we attend the weekly sits. We seem to be growing weekly, and just a few weeks ago celebrated our sangha by having a picnic by Lake Merritt, showing our joint Oakland and Sangha pride.

Recently, the Alphabet Sangha embarked on and embraced a change in coordinators: in August, Andy Jones stepped down after giving generously of his time and ideas and supporting the sangha for over two years! In classic Andy fashion, his generosity continues as he remains on the Alphabet Leadership Sangha, including supporting our newly implemented 2nd Tuesday of the month Sangha Potlucks. Fortunate for us, Andy's face and spirit will still be out and about at EBMC and on Tuesday nights. Thank you, Andy, for the spirit and love and many laughs you brought to your service as Volunteer Coordinator!

Joining me as co-coordinator, which I have been doing for almost 1.5 years, will be Carlos Marquez, who shares this about how he came to the Sangha and what moves him to serve in the coordinator role: "I decided to attend the Alphabet Sangha because I needed to connect with the LGBT community. Our struggle to eliminate prejudice and social injustice is in full consistency with our quest for enlightenment as individuals and as a community.

"I decided to become a coordinator because it's a way for me to support a community that has given me not only a spiritual refuge but also the opportunity to meet and connect with wonderful human beings. Thank you for the opportunity."

Our Sangha continues to shift and change: we welcome Carlos into his new role, and send Andy off with much appreciation and gratitude! For all those who identify on the alphabet spectrum, we welcome you to come and sit with community and seek refuge, and be sure to join us for our next 2nd Tuesday of the month potluck!



(left to right) Kip, Ramon, Andy and Carlos