Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Dances of Universal Peace North America. Don't forget to add naoffice@dancesofuniversalpeacena.org to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may unsubscribe if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

Even though we think the world is static, things are constantly changing, an everflowing river of energy and
life. A mountainside sheers off and becomes a pile of rocks, a carrot is pulled from the ground and becomes part of a dinner salad, a mosquito dives too close and becomes a smashed blob, a house floods and becomes a waterlogged container, a human being ends its time here and moves on to the next realm.

"Death" comes in many forms. There are often Dancers in the circle who have lost a family member or friend, and a certain dance may trigger their grief. How do we handle tears of sadness in the circle? Can we allow the grief, not rush in to try to "fix" it? We can hold sacred space and offer consolation in the face of eternal change. When a DUP circle is discontinued in a community for some reason, those who regularly participated may feel a deep sense of loss.

Pema Chodron calls this "groundlessness," and invites us to become friends with it. Another way of saying that is to die before we die, or to practice non-attachment.

Day of the Dead (Día de Muertos) is a Mexican holiday that focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. Scholars have traced the origins of the holiday to indigenous observances dating back hundreds of years and to an Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl. Other holidays around the world celebrate death and transformation: All Saints Day, Bon Festival of Japan, Hangawi in Korea, the Double Ninth Festival in China, Gai Jatra in Nepal.

Is this frightening, or is it something we can embrace with excitement - or at least equanimity? And if there is fear, can we be with it without judgment? How can the Dances help us embrace the constant flow of death and transformation?
"This is how I would die into the love I have for you, As pieces of cloud dissolve in sunlight."

~*~ Rumi ~*~

**DUPNA Request for Volunteer Circles**

Our annual holiday card is in process! This is our major fundraiser for DUPNA, and a personalized greeting to our members and friends. Many circles enjoy the tradition of gathering in November to address the holiday cards, and connecting with our wider family.

If you or your circle would like to participate, please let our regional administrator, Jen Friedman, know how many cards you can address and provide postage for by emailing her here: naoffice@dancesofuniversalpeacena.org

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Although no longer requiring memberships, the organization still accepts voluntary memberships and donations of any kind, which enable us to continue providing services such as the extensive website and these monthly newsletters.

Please click here to make a donation to support and further enliven the work of DUPNA. Thank you!

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**A Few Dances with an Attunement to Death and Transformation**

Pieces of Cloud

Lord, Make me an
DUPNA Newsletter Changes Format

For several years, the newsletter has come out monthly, but this is becoming more of a challenge than a joy for the staff. After discussion, we have decided to go to every other month, so the next issue will be at the end of 2014, a time to reflect on the year that has passed and the new year coming up. We'll see you then!

Are you interested in helping gather articles, quotes, photographs, and other items of interest for our community by becoming a volunteer on our newsletter committee? If so, please dupnamail@gmail.com to learn more.

"We think that the point is to pass the test or to overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really get solved. They come together and they fall apart. Then they come together again and fall apart again. It's just like that. The healing comes from letting there be room for all of this to happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy."

~*~ Pema Chödrön ~*~

How Our Dance Circles Help Us Cultivate Courage and Compassion in the Face of Change:

Reflections one year after the Colorado Floods

by Jen Friedman

We all face change in our lives. Jobs will come and go. People will come and go. Our perception of ourselves will shift and move along with the years that come and go. We oftentimes grieve endings and celebrate beginnings, but the truth is that held in each and every moment is an ending and a beginning. How do we face it?
this paradox with courage and compassion? How do we cultivate emotional reflexivity to weather the storm that may or may not arrive without looking for it around every corner? Implicit within the dynamics of change are the touch-stones of transformation. How we approach the inevitability of death directly correlates to the kind of life we will live. We can become stalled in our search for Wholeness by clinging to the past or to our desire for something different than what is or we can tenderly step out onto the ledge of fear with "shaky courage" and look for the next ledge to appear. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that "Faith is taking the first step even when you cannot see the whole staircase." Indeed. All the while, we hold ourselves either in self-judgment or self-compassion. Oftentimes it is the people we surround ourselves with who will tip the scale toward one or the other.

In our Dance circles, we have a profound opportunity to practice the art of facing change with courage and compassion and love and acceptance; all in the presence of other beloved beings, whose attitudes and behaviors toward us and toward themselves help us cultivate (we hope) self-kindness and compassion. We have the opportunity to hold others in their journey. We might say, in each and every moment of the Dance, we are given the exact opportunity to dance with change in a loving way. Right foot. Left foot. "Am I on pitch?" "Am I holding someone’s hand too tightly?" "Are they holding mine too tightly?" "The Dance leader is not speaking loud enough for me to understand!" "That’s not how I would do it!"

Letting go of the inner dialogue in order to experience the profound connective feeling of the Whole can be truly transformative! And, we do it all together! Every week. Every month. For one to two hours at a time or for 4-7 days on end. What a gift!

As human beings, we need spiritual companionship, community, and relationship to help us integrate the moral stress that accompanies being human in a world of change. Communal experiences of love, acceptance, and compassion foster resilience in individual lives and help us spiritually integrate the dance with groundlessness that accompanies each successive wave of death and transformation that we will inevitably face in our lives. Being in a community that actively practices compassion helps us move beyond the narrow horizon of survival instincts, stress responses, and constrictive emotions. Indeed, our Dance circles are a really good place to practice!

We were given one such opportunity to practice here in our circle one year ago this month when massive flooding rocked (or washed) our Northern Colorado community.

Click Here to read the complete article
Colorado flood relief volunteers digging out a home in Lyons, CO, following the floods of September 2013

~*~ Death & Transformation to Higher Ground ~*~
by Kriya Judy Goodman
Boulder by way of Lyons, CO

Sing with me:

*The river she is flowing
flowing and growing
The river she is flowing
down to the sea
Oh, mother carry me
your child I will always be
Oh, mother carry me
down to the sea*

One year ago on September 11, 2013, my world and the world of so many others was forever turned upside down. I know now the meaning of "ground zero" ... because I'm still there. Ground zero: being homeless and jobless and dependent upon the government (I'm living now in a FEMA trailer) is a very vulnerable place to be; where "home" takes on a new meaning.

DUP videos out there, so if you have a good-quality Dance video you would like to share with the community, please send the links to dupnamail@gmail.com to be shared in upcoming newsletters.

The Gratitude Alphabet

Autumn is a time of Thanksgiving celebrations in both the United States and Canada.

This year DUPNA is offering a series of posts on its Facebook page - the alphabet gratitudes - that will start November 1st with the letter A.

Each day will have a new post, where you can add your gratitudes that begin with the letter of the day, for 26 days, through the alphabet.

Join us in expressing the many gratitudes we have in our lives!

If you haven't 'friended' us yet on Facebook, click here to do that now.
For 4 days after the flood, we were in isolation in Lyons, Colorado. All we could do then was watch, wait, and help others. The mantra for that time was "Holy shit!" And, be enveloped in that sense of calm that comes from helping others. That sense of peace; a knowingness of what life is really about: Being One with Spirit.

The devastation of our outer world. The destruction of my and so many others’ physical houses. The pure and sheer power of the force of the river. Mother Nature. Was she angry? Was she retaliating for what humans, in their arrogance, have done to try to take control of the world we were meant to share and live in peace and harmony?

OR was it a forceful reminder that there really is no death? Where did the apple tree go? Where did the piano go?

I felt the fairies twittering on the land: "It's ok!" "We're ok!" "You're ok!"

THERE IS NO DEATH.... Just change. Just transformation. Just go with the flow.

Ebb and flow....I guess we’re on the ebb now! What remains constantly, dependably is change....and Love. The Beatles had it right! "Love is all there is!"

In those 5 days of isolation in Lyons, before we had help; before it was declared a national emergency; in the midst of chaos, while we were pulling people and things out of the rubble; witnessing awestruck the force of the river; what kept me calmly functioning were the songs and dances in my heart and head.

***************

Go sweep out the chambers of your heart
Make it ready; make it ready
to be the dwelling of the beloved
when you depart, love will enter
in You, VOID of yourself....

***************

....Cuz she lifts you up and she turns you around
and she puts your feet on HIGHER GROUND....

***************

Upcoming Dance Camps & Events submitted to the DUPNA website from around our Region:

~*~

One Heart, One Love, One Reality
with
Tasnim Fernandez
Oct. 25-26
Avila Beach, CA
Contact:
Dorene
805-602-1827

~*~

Confluence: River of Darkness, River of Light
with
Hayra Fatah, Pat Adams, and Daniel Kirchhof
Oct. 31-Nov. 2
Vashon Island, WA
Bless us, oh mother, sister, and lover;
Take us to your hearts
Teach us your mercy, strength, and compassion
Enfold us in your love....

***************

All the dance songs and chants and the kids' songs; all the kazillions of songs in my repertoire kept me calm and knowing it would be alright.

***************

Don't worry about a thing, every little thing is gonna be alright!

***************

Click Here to read the complete article.

"Fear of death will be removed when we become convinced that 'I am deathless,' won't it? We should understand the truth that 'I am the True Self that is pure existence, pure consciousness, pure bliss; I am deathless.'"

~*~ Amma ~*~

Website Wisdom
by Shivadam Adam Burke,
DUPNA's website manager

This month, Shivadam answers the question: How can the DUPNA website assist with my event planning?

There are many valuable resources in our "Dance Organizer Toolkit," including tabling materials (such as an email sign-in sheet; DUP brochure & poster; and a "Glossary of Common Words and Phrases" to offer to your new dancers); flyer and handbill templates; and informational resources like the "Guide for Event Planning" and a sample Liability Waiver...and more!): Click Here to check out the Dance Organizer Toolkit. While you're there, be sure to bookmark it so you can return often when you need some ideas or help for your event.

Contact:
Martha
206-367-0389

~*~

Live at Lava!
with
Conne Zareen & Friends
Nov. 14-16
Lava Hot Springs, ID
Contact:
Connie Zareen
208-756-3076

~*~

The Circumference of Forever
with Maboud & Tara Andrea
Nov. 15
Truth or Consequences, NM
Contact:
Maboud
505-438-0820

~*~

Attunement as a Way of Being:
1 Day Retreat & Renewal
with Jen Friedman

Return to the Top
When scheduling an event, we hope to avoid scheduling in a way that might conflict with other events nearby. With so many wonderful Dance retreats and camps to choose from, it can be helpful to organize an event in your area after checking with other organizers and/or looking at other events listings. Most events that have been scheduled soon appear in several places on the DUPNA website:

- Most of us have visited the One-Time Events Listings page: http://dancesofuniversalpeacena.org/allonetimeevents.asp

- You can also check scheduled events per State or Province by clicking on the "Find the Dances" map: http://dancesofuniversalpeacena.org/find-dances-of-universal-peace.htm

- We also host a wonderful DUP Global Events Calendar: http://dancesofuniversalpeacena.org/na-calendar.htm

- Also, we have a section devoted to annually recurring retreats and camps, which gives a general idea about the timing of events in your area: http://dancesofuniversalpeacena.org/dance-retreats-and-camps.htm

And, did you know that the DUPNA website also features a World Events & Holidays calendar? Here, you can reference religious observances, as well as more "cosmic" events like eclipses, both for event planning and simply to find inspirational themes for your events or Dance circles (This calendar is not an exhaustive list; if we have missed something, please let us know!): http://dancesofuniversalpeacena.org/na-worldevents-calendar.htm

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**Haiku on Death & Transformation**

We did not receive any haiku on this month's theme. Next month's theme is Resolution.

Send your haiku to dupnamail@gmail.com

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Dec. 6
Longmont, CO
Contact: Jen
303-746-5191

Where the Gaze of Love Falls, a Flower Blooms
A Dances of Universal Peace Retreat
with
Anahata Iradah
Jan. 23-25
Phoenix, AZ
Contact: Parvati
602-412-7386

Joyful Journey Dance Retreat
with Bernie Heideman & Sky Majida
March 6-8
Joyful Journey Hot Springs
San Luis Valley, CO
Contact:
May we each, in our own way and own time, awaken to the truth of our Limitless Being.

Sincerely,
The board and staff
Dances of Universal Peace North America

Death pushed me to the edge, nowhere to back off.
And to the shame of my fears,
I danced with abandon in his face.
I never danced as free.
And death backed off, the way dark backs off, a sudden burst of flame.
Now there's nothing left but to keep dancing.

It is the way
I would have chosen
had I been born
three times as brave.

~*~ Mark Nepo ~*~
How Our Dance Circles Help us Cultivate Courage and Compassion in the Face of Change:  

*Reflections One Year after the Floods in Colorado*  
by Jen Friedman,  
Longmont, CO

We all face change in our lives. Jobs will come and go. People will come and go. Our perception of ourselves will shift and move along with the years that come and go. We oftentimes grieve endings and celebrate beginnings, but the truth is that held in each and every moment is an ending and a beginning. How do we face this paradox with courage and compassion? How do we cultivate emotional reflexivity to weather the storm that may or may not arrive without looking for it around every corner? Implicit within the dynamics of change are the touch-stones of transformation. How we approach the inevitability of death directly correlates to the kind of life we will live. We can become stalled in our search for Wholeness by clinging to the past or to our desire for something different than what is or we can tenderly step out onto the ledge of fear with “shaky courage” and look for the next ledge to appear. Martin Luther King, Jr. said that “Faith is taking the next step when you cannot see the whole staircase.” Indeed. All the while, we hold ourselves either in self-judgment or self-compassion. Oftentimes it is the people we surround ourselves with who will tip the scale toward one or the other.

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As human beings, we need spiritual companionship, community, and relationship to help us integrate the moral stress that accompanies being human in a world of change. Communal experiences of love, acceptance, and compassion foster resilience in individual lives and help us spiritually integrate the dance with groundlessness that accompanies each successive wave of death and transformation that we will inevitably face in our lives. Being in a community that actively practices compassion helps us move beyond the narrow horizon of survival instincts, stress responses, and constrictive emotions. Indeed, our Dance circles are a really good place to practice!

We were given one such opportunity to practice here in our circle one year ago this month when massive flooding rocked (or washed) our Northern Colorado community.
It began with a day or two of welcome rain to cool off what had been a relatively hot summer for Colorado. I didn't think twice about it until the few days of welcome rain reminded me of my time living in Portland, Oregon where water can pour from the sky at a consistent rate for weeks on end without questioning it. But, we don't live in Oregon - we don't have big rivers that will carry that water to the ocean and the rain was coming at a rate that was too fast for the already saturated, typically arid landscape. We learned first of massive flooding in Estes Park where the St. Vrain River begins high in the Rockies and then flows through the town of Lyons, Colorado where high red rock canyon walls created a bowl for the river, taking out homes and businesses by the hundreds; not insignificant for a town the size of 3,000.

We soon learned of major flooding when the river jumped its course because it was rushing so fast just west of the town where I live in Longmont, Colorado. My husband works in Denver and it was pure grace that got him home before the 2 major interstates were soon flooded. A day later, it seemed half of our town was underwater!

It was during this time, that the Longmont Dance Circle became an important support infrastructure for members of our circle who were affected by the flooding. I quickly learned of three people who lost their homes - a single mother and daughter in Longmont and a dancer living in the mountains outside of Lyons. Another member of our community lived just outside of the roadblock on the road from Longmont to Lyons where every day she and her family would experience the back and forth movement and sounds of military and emergency vehicles going to help people still stuck in Lyons and for weeks to a month or more, they would live with the worry that a dam might burst above the town of Lyons, bringing a new wave of water which could potentially take out their home. I would learn of at least three more people later who did not lose their homes, thankfully, but who had close calls and were processing much emotional stress.

At the suggestion of a dancer, I set up a ‘google doc’ so that we could assess resources and needs among our Dance community. About 20 people added their contact info to the document and offerings of assistance - anywhere from spare rooms to vehicles to borrow; babysitting and shopping services. Anyone who was in need could directly contact the person for help. Through the Dance community email list, we also raised about $350 in donations that went directly to helping with emergency expenses and food for the three who lost everything. When it was deemed safe for our mother and daughter to go to their home to see if they could salvage anything, members of the Dance circle came to help dig the house out and loaded up the items that might potentially be re-usable.

The weekend immediately following the flood had at least three regularly occurring Dance circles, including our Longmont Dance. All events were canceled since we didn’t know which roads were open and/or safely passable. The following month at our Dance, we held a ceremony with the water and rocks of the St. Vrain River, blessing them and sending love and compassion to all beings in need, before returning them to the river. It was an opportunity for everyone to grieve the experience of what had happened; hold one another with compassion and kindness; and envision a new way forward together. A place where everyone could simply come as they were and be accepted in the circle. I remember a lot
of tears at that particular dance and the grace and generosity of the dancers who were not directly flood affected.

Outside of the circle, I offered spiritual direction and deep listening sessions for members affected by the flood and others in the circle offered bodywork sessions to help process the trauma. The Goddess Retreat which I had been slated to serve on the leadership team for, a week later; put out a call for assistance and at the retreat, collected clothing items for the women who lost everything. For the next two weeks, my garage was filled with bags of clothing as people affected by the flood came over to try things on. What wasn’t taken by them was donated to the many flood relief stations that had been set up in our town.

In the October 2013 DUPNA newsletter, we put out a call for help and some 20 people from around the United States and Canada donated over $500 to these three women in our circle who had lost everything. Alhamdulillah! The power of community.

Now- after a year of moving from shelter housing to shelter housing, our mother and daughter have recently moved into a home with financial assistance from the federal, state, and local governments. We celebrated their joy at the possibility for a new beginning even as we honored the loss of their former ways of knowing themselves.

For them and for all who were affected here in Colorado and for all beings: We look toward a way forward that is reflexive enough to hold the unknown change yet to come. We hope to always be a community that seeks to practice kindness, compassion, and loving in all that we do. We continue to practice dancing with groundlessness and holding each other in grace and generosity so that we all may be resilient in our approach to life and death. It has definitely been a year of transformation. May we all be so blessed.

Peace, blessings, and love to all!

Toward the One,

Jen Friedman
Jennifer@jenniferfriedman.com

* Jen is a Dance leader and mentor-in-training living in Longmont, Colorado. She is in the final weeks of her Master of Divinity program at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, where she has had an amazing journey filled with unexpected beauty including an independent study to Colombia, South America for the international young adult Dance leader gathering; a recent educational trip to Turkey with a renowned Sufi scholar; a 6 month chaplain internship serving the hospice unit at a hospital; and her required year-long internship serving with DUPNA. She hopes to continue her work of “embodiment ministry,” out in the world following graduation. Jen is a former member of the DUPNA board and is currently serving as the new office administrator for DUPNA.
Death and Transformation....to Higher Ground!
by Kriya Judy Goodman, Boulder by way of Lyons, CO

Sing with me:
The river she is flowing
flowing and growing
The river she is flowing
down to the sea
Oh, mother carry me
your child I will always be
Oh, mother carry me
down to the sea

One year ago on September 11, 2013, my world and the world of so many others was forever turned upside down. I know now the meaning of “ground zero” .... because I’m still there. Ground zero: being homeless and jobless and dependent upon the government (I’m living now in a FEMA trailer) is a very vulnerable place to be; where “home” takes on a new meaning.

“Home” for me is the Dances. “Home” is meditation. “Home” are the songs that are always in my head and heart. “Home” is turning around and helping others; even when you are at “ground zero.”

For 4 days after the flood, we were in isolation in Lyons, Colorado. All we could do then was watch, wait, and help others. The mantra for that time was “Holy shit!” And, be enveloped in that sense of calm that comes from helping others. That sense of peace; a knowingness of what life is really about: Being One with Spirit.

The devastation of our outer world. The destruction of my and so many others’ physical houses. The pure and sheer power of the force of the river. Mother Nature. Was she angry? Was she retaliating for what humans, in their arrogance, have done to try to take control of the world we were meant to share and live in peace and harmony? OR was it a forceful reminder that there really is no death?
Where did the apple tree go? Where did the piano go?

I felt the fairies twittering on the land:
“It’s ok!” “We’re ok!” “You’re ok!”
THERE IS NO DEATH....
Just change. Just transformation. Just go with the flow.
Ebb and flow....I guess we’re on the ebb now!
What remains constantly, dependably is change....and Love.
The Beatles had it right! “Love is all there is!”

In those 5 days of isolation in Lyons, before we had help; before it was declared a national emergency; in the midst of chaos, while we were pulling people and things out of the rubble; witnessing awestruck the force of the river; what kept me calmly functioning were the songs and dances in my heart and head.
Go sweep out the chambers of your heart
Make it ready; make it ready
to be the dwelling of the beloved
when you depart, love will enter
in You, VOID of yourself....

Cuz she lifts you up and she turns you around
and she puts your feet on HIGHER GROUND....

Bless us, oh mother, sister, and lover;
Take us to your hearts
Teach us your mercy, strength, and compassion
Enfold us in your love....

All the dance songs and chants and the kids’ songs; all the kazillions of songs in my repertoire kept me calm and knowing it would be alright.

Don’t worry about a thing, every little thing is gonna be alright!

I sang them out loud when I could and in my head when I couldn’t. All the while, Jen and the Longmont Dance community was rallying around...raising money
(I’ve spent that money raised many times over... Should I get a suitcase, food, or should I go to Mexico and Dance in the sun!?)

The memory of the deep peace and love of the Dance community envelops me in the knowledge of the knowing that truly....

We are the Ones we’ve been waiting for!

And still today the Dances continue to “enfold me in their love.” I look forward to a time standing still once a month in the Dance circle where we truly dance our prayers and meld into the family of the circle. Where I pray from my heart for others and for us all, the inhabitants of Mother Earth.

In the end,
We are saying thank you.... thank you is our practice...

Thankful in the midst of the upheavel. For the community of dancers. For the sufi choir sisters. For they all lift me up and turn me around and put my feet back on higher ground...
Thankful for the two months sleeping on the floor of my 5 yr old grandson's living room.
( “dita.. r u gonna live here with us forever?” )

Thankful for the FEMA trailer, which has put a roof over my head and allowed me to save money for my next quest.
Tiny house?
Boulder affordable housing?
Wherever i land.. this whole flood experience has been a lesson in TRUST..faith.. knowing.. that i/we are in the everloving arms of the creator..

And She's got a divine plan..

We are saying thank you
we are saying thank you
we are saying thank you
thank you is our practice

Amin. Amen and So be it!
Kriya
iamgoodwoman@gmail.com
734-905-6868

*A year after the devastating Colorado floods of 2013, Kriya is currently living in a FEMA trailer park in Boulder, Colorado. She is a long-time dancer and mentored Dance leader and is very passionate about leading songs and dances with children. She aims to relocate to a community of dance-friendly, earth-loving beings where she can build a “tiny house” on a small plot of land to call her own and find the physical grounding to thrive and magnify her Love and Light into the world.*