



Land of Joy

Buddhist Retreat Community

Volunteer Information



Land of Joy is located in the beautiful Northumberland National Park, close to the Scottish border in the North of England. The property is 42 acres in total, enough to provide for the development of Land of Joy's vision from its beginning through to the full development of its potential.

The centre is open all year round though generally with fewer and smaller retreats during the winter. We can currently accommodate roughly 20 guests on each retreat. Our retreats cover a variety of topics from Introductions to the Lam Rim, more in-depth retreats such as exploring the nature of the mind and tantric approximation retreats.

Everyone working here is a volunteer. Each person has his or her own motivation for assisting the centre, but essentially those working here have a sincere wish to serve others in a profound and extensive way and we strive to have a very harmonious team. It is a beautiful place to be, providing the opportunity to offer sincere service in an environment allowing you a chance to explore how to approach life with an open heart and reflective mind, and to connect with the dharma.



The on-site long-term team is made up of the Centre Director, Spiritual Programme Assistant, Manager, Housekeeper, Cook and Grounds Manager, along with other more short-term, general volunteers. We also have a Garden Advisor and Woodland Manager who live off-site. We hope to grow a lot of the food required by the centre in our walled garden, so having people who can help maintain this outdoor space is essential. We also sometimes need help in the kitchen (particularly during bigger retreats) and general garden work and DIY things around the house!

All volunteers follow a volunteer agreement working 30 hours a week with two days off (for full-time volunteers). Having such a small team does mean that we all need to be flexible and open to sharing tasks. Accommodation, food and personal toiletries are provided in return. Accommodation is relatively simple, but we aim to

provide all volunteers with their own room. However, it is important to consider how you will feel about living with a small team of people for an extended period of time. Also, being in the countryside with very limited public transport links from the centre itself means it can be difficult to get around if you don't have a car. We do have bicycles that can be borrowed!

The words of a previous volunteer....

"Volunteering at the Land of Joy was a memorable experience mainly because it gave me the chance to work closely with Maria and Jenny. Over the six weeks I spent at the center, the three of us developed a rhythm in sync with the unexpected (and sometimes bizarre) experiences that comes with living in the wild terrains of Northumberland. Each situation was met with humor and an increasing sense of curiosity about what would be coming next.... Together, we experienced a storm so fierce that it left us with no electricity and a flooded temple. We really had the chance to bond when the center's phone and internet access was cut off for a week, and we only had each other to turn to for entertainment, and that we did...By the time we had to live without heating for 6 or so days, we were so accustomed to confronting challenges, that we began to enjoy huddling around the fire in the sitting room each night until we were so tired that could fall asleep in our rooms without noticing the cold. A few days before I left the center, Venerable Mark kindly gave me a string blessed by Lama Zopa. The string is tied around my wrist, reminding me of a time in life that makes me both happy and sad: happy as I was able to share a moment in life with special individuals, and sad as I know that period of time can never be re-created.

