



## LEAPYEAR 2017/2018 - Information Packet

Through the multiple personalized challenges in LEAPYEAR, students ages 17-23 gain the experiences and teachings needed to make a graceful and powerful transition into creative, independent adulthood, taking part in a unique accredited year of college that is developmentally appropriate, transformative, and above all “real.”

Each LEAPYEAR starts with a 10-week guided group semester of language, service, and cultural immersion in Latin America or India, and culminates with a three-month individual internship that is chosen from over 6,300 options throughout the world. Both of these demanding learning journeys are bracketed by intensive residential retreats in California that form a guided inner journey that allows you to put your “outer” life into an intrinsically meaningful inner context. LEAPYEAR is a full palette of physical, mental, social, spiritual and cultural challenges that also includes a full curriculum of essential Life Skills, college and work-readiness training, and formal and informal rites of passage.

The program is complex and layered with experiences and time for reflection, so please read through this packet carefully to better understand an approach to learning that is likely more comprehensive than any you’ve yet experienced. LEAPYEAR is designed to be a place for you to do the hard work of maturing and evolving. For this to be effective, the program will push and challenge you. We are looking for people who are serious about transforming themselves and who have enough self-awareness that they are hungry for more. **This is not a program that can be done passively!** LEAPYEAR is NOT meant to be done as therapy, or for those in spiritual crisis, or for those under the grip of an active addiction, including tobacco. It is for those who wish to gain deeper levels of self-awareness, language fluency, emotional literacy, and broad international experience.

We look forward to receiving your application, and accompanying you on a transformative journey!  
Enthusiastically yours,

Cassie Bull  
Executive Director

### LEAPNOW: Transforming Education

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## LEAPYEAR PROGRAM OVERVIEW & CALENDAR

Two LEAPYEAR programs start each year, one in September and the other in January. The September program runs from September-May, and the January program runs January-August. The September cohort has up to 36 students, and the January cohort is smaller with up to 22 students.

### LEAPYEAR Group #27: Arjuna Group (Fall 2017/Spring 2018)

Sept. 19 – Sept. 27, 2017	First Retreat
Sept. 28 – Dec. 4	Group Travel – India or Latin America
Dec. 5 – Dec. 12	Second Retreat
Dec. 13, 2017 – Jan. 10, 2018	Return Home – Curriculum Continues
Jan. 11 – Feb. 1	Third Retreat
Jan. 27 – 28	Rite of Passage Weekend - with Parents
Feb. 1 – April 24	Individual Internship
April 25 – May 4	Fourth Retreat



### LEAPYEAR Group #28: B Group (Spring 2018/Summer 2018)

Feb. 6 – Feb. 13	First Retreat
Feb. 14 – April 15	Group Travel – India or Latin America
April 16 – April 23	Second Retreat
April 24 – May 10	Return Home – Curriculum Continues
May 11 – May 31	Third Retreat
May 26 – 27	Rite of Passage Weekend – with Parents
June 1 – Aug. 13	Individual Internship
Aug. 14 – Aug. 22	Fourth Retreat



**GROUP TRAVEL (10 WEEKS):** Each LEAPYEAR cohort splits into travel groups of 8-10 members, each with two adult leaders. Students can choose between group travel in Asia or Latin America. While traveling, LEAPYEAR students stay at home stays and local guesthouses, and live as the locals do. This is generally simple, but not primitive – most of the time we have a bed to sleep in and running water. Food is basic, and the primary challenges are culture shock, cold, heat, fellow group members, staying healthy, rain and bugs.

These are sample itineraries, and are likely to be different than the actual travel itineraries specific to your group:

**NORTH AND SOUTH INDIA:** Orientation in Kochi, the beachside town in Southern India, known for its colonial history and diverse population. Directly experience the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian and Sikh religions. Work at a wildlife rehabilitation center outside Bangalore and support ending the horrible “dancing bear” industry. Serve the local community by building houses, alongside the families that will live in them, in tropical Tamil Nadu. Learn and practice yoga and meditation in a peaceful and traditional ashram setting in Kerala. Travel to Sri Lanka and take classes and explore traditional arts in Kandy, one of the country’s most culturally rich cities. Live with a host family and experience the richness of culture, family and social structure, and a delicious diversity of foods. Trek in the Knuckles mountain range, the breathtaking central mountains of Sri Lanka.

**LATIN AMERICA: GUATEMALA/NICARAGUA/HONDURAS:** Begin with an orientation outside Guatemala City. Volunteer on the construction of a school built solely from collected trash. Live with host families in the ancient city of Quetzaltenango while studying Spanish and working with local non-profits. Trek through the highlands to Lago Atitlan, the cultural center of the indigenous Mayan communities. Fly to Nicaragua, orient in Leon, and climb one of many active volcanoes. Continue with two weeks of language immersion and volunteering with a school and eco-

lodge in the coffee-growing highlands. Spend two weeks on Ometepe Island in the middle of Lake Nicaragua in homestays learning permaculture and sustainable living. Finish by getting a PADI Open-Water Scuba certification on Roatán Island in Honduras.

**RETREATS:** Four intensive retreats at LEAPNOW's campus in northern California. These weeks are the backbone of the program and the foundation for all exploration. The focus is on working with peers to learn vital skills for living, undergoing rites of passage, enhancing emotional literacy, building supportive community, and receiving orientation about group and individual travel. Each day includes at least one hour of a physical discipline (yoga, movement, dance), 3 hours of physical work, free time, and 3-6 hours of the living skills curriculum (See the Curriculum Outline for details.)

**RITE OF PASSAGE CEREMONY:** The retreat weeks after the mid-program break culminate in a dramatic rite of passage into adulthood. One or both parents join the participants for two days to give their son or daughter their blessings while consciously letting them go into adulthood. In the words of author Rachael Kessler, a rite of passage is a *"structured process guided by adults in which young people are helped to become conscious about the irrevocable transition they're in, given tools for making transitions and separations, initiated into the new capacities required for their next step, and acknowledged by the community of adults, as well as their peers, for their courage and strength in taking that step."* Participants prepare for the rite of passage during the 4-5 months prior to the ceremony. Without a rite of passage, it is difficult to know when and how we become adult. This is reliably one of the most inspiring and transformative parts of the program.

**SOLO INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP (12 weeks):** Following the rite of passage, participants travel on their own to do an internship, volunteer work, or study in a country of their choice. This builds naturally on the group travel, and allows for tailored career or other exploration and continued language acquisition. Participants work with an internship specialist to explore LEAPNOW's database of more than 6,300 opportunities to find a fitting internship. Traveling solo to another country and working in a new situation is in itself a significant rite of passage – and the internship starts four days after the rite of passage ceremony. Past program participants have chosen to: work in orphanages in India, study art in Cuba, rescue baboons in South Africa, learn permaculture in Spain, study kung fu & Chinese in China, teach at a school in Patagonia, work with midwives in Indonesia, provide basic services to street children in Guatemala, and much more.

**ACADEMIC CREDIT:** All LEAPYEAR participants are enrolled as full-time students with Naropa University and receive a full year of college credit. LEAPYEAR students earn lower-division credits - the equivalent of the first or second year of an undergraduate program. LEAPYEAR graduates have transferred to Vassar, Stanford, Wesleyan, Hampshire College, University of Vermont, Bennington College, Reed, Smith College, College of the Atlantic, U. of Michigan, Long Island University, Evergreen State, Warren Wilson College, and many other universities. Students may also opt to use LEAPYEAR credits to complete high school.

**A YEAR OF ONGOING SUPPORT & RESOURCES:** The final retreat is devoted to making transitions effectively, exploring job options and strategies, re-entry to the larger world, endings, and program closure. After the formal program ends, LEAPYEAR graduates have access to a full year of life path counseling, the database of internships in the U.S. and abroad, and no-cost LEAPYEAR reunions that are held each June after program completion. A further accredited year of college is available through LEAPNOW, and is called LEAPYEAR2 (details about this program can be found on the LEAPNOW website.)

***LEAPNOW reserves the right to make changes to any program in order to provide the best possible experience, safeguard participants or respond to changing political or climatic conditions.***

## Why LEAPYEAR?

LEAPYEAR is a creative response to needs of young adults that are profoundly unmet; a successful approach to transform a system of education that is obsolete. We know that there are simply better ways to help young adults learn what is truly important to know.

Though this approach fails for many people, our society still asks our children to sit in classrooms from age 5 to 22, learning passively and focusing on mastering content. One result is that people graduate high school with their wholeness, aliveness and motivation to participate in life significantly compromised. Most have learned that education is something that is done to them, rather than something that proceeds naturally from innate passion & curiosity.

Between the ages of 17 and 23, emerging adults are faced with three momentous and potentially thorny transitions: high school to college, family to independence, and adolescence to adulthood. During this challenging life stage, fundamental questions about identity arise with a sense of urgency, and our life purpose may begin to call to us. Most people don't get much help with these challenges, but are rather told to simply continue with their schooling. Absent a compelling reason for being there, college is hard to justify at up to \$60,000 per year. It's much more fruitful to take time "on" to try out real work in the world, to learn about other cultures, to wrestle with fundamental questions about meaning, and to lay down a foundation for a life based on integrity, fulfillment, personal evolution, and creativity.

LEAPYEAR provides these elements in one integrated experience:

- College credit based on guided exploration, six months of international travel, myriad real experiences and 2 months of directed reflection.
- Learning focused on finding an inherently meaningful **context** for your life, rather than continuing college and memorizing *more content* selected for you by well-meaning others, which may be unconnected to your passion and unique life purpose.
- An environment free of drugs and alcohol
- A cohort of motivated peers who are committed to knowing themselves and exploring the world.
- An affordable year of college that gives you what you need developmentally, with access to financial aid and generous grants.
- Fully integrated and systematic teachings about how to become an adult and formal and informal rites of passage.

School isn't supposed to be a polite form of incarceration, but a portal to the wider world.

R.Lov

*The desire to learn is one of the strongest human drives. However, the delight and success in learning is diminished by the assumption that all children learn the same way. This leads to tracking what's wrong and labeling and medicating those that don't fit the norm. This deficit focus stifles children's natural intelligence, ingenuity and sense of self-worth. Kids get so lost in what they can't do, that they forget what they can do better than anyone else. Rather than focusing on what is wrong, we must begin to help our children recognize what is right about them and how to use what's right to overcome challenges.*

smartwired.com

Modern schools and universities push students into habits of depersonalized learning, alienation from nature and sexuality, obedience to hierarchy, fear of authority, self-objectification, and chilling competitiveness.

Arthur Evans

*We as a society are failing our youth in critical ways. We are failing to equip teenagers and emerging adults with the basic tools for good moral reasoning. We are failing to teach them how to deal constructively with moral, cultural and ideological differences. We are failing to teach them to think about what is good for people and in life. We are failing to equip our youth with the ideas, tools, and practices to know how to negotiate their romantic and sexual lives in healthy, nondestructive ways.....We are failing to teach our youth about life purposes and goals that matter more than the accumulation of material possessions and material comfort and security. We are failing to challenge the too-common need to be intoxicated, the apparent inability to live a good, fun life without being under the influence of alcohol and drugs. And we are failing to teach our youth the importance of civic engagement and political participation, how to be active citizens of their communities and nation, how to think about and live for the common good.*

Christian Smith – *Lost in Transition*

In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.

Eric Hoffer

## Why LEAPYEAR? continued...

According to Emerson, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Emerson knew that our lives work better when we take time to know ourselves – our minds, our bodies, our feelings, our relationship to something greater than ourselves, our energetic being, our social awareness. In our time, the period of emancipation that follows high school is an ideal time for conscious and open-ended exploration.

It isn't enough to explore while sitting in a chair in a classroom. We learn to be adults by doing what adults do – living and working in the world. No classroom learning can replace this. How can you choose a college major without real life experience to inform your choice?

Our world is becoming faster, less personal, more electronic, less private. The work of human maturation and deepening tends to be slow, inward, personal, and may require time when we aren't accessible to others. To help students deepen, we restrict the use of electronic media, cell phones, the Internet, and tuning out through "tunes" during LEAPYEAR retreats. This can help an individual hear his or her own quiet, guiding inner voice, and open up to life's depths and vertical dimension.

Everything that happens during a LEAPYEAR is in service to becoming aligned with oneself, to regaining the wholeness that is our birthright, so that all of our faculties, not just our mental faculties, are available to us as we negotiate living in an increasingly complex and challenging world.

The Inuit word for storyteller is *isumataq*, meaning "a person who creates the atmosphere in which wisdom reveals itself." This is the intent of LEAPYEAR – to offer a series of real experiences through which a person can discover the resources of their own character.

In LEAPYEAR we assume that people are inherently curious, that the most efficient, enduring, and profound learning takes place when initiated and pursued by the learner, that all people are creative if they are allowed to develop their unique talents, and that freedom of inquiry is essential to the development of personal responsibility.

One of the many joys of running LEAPYEAR is that we work with participants who wish to know who they are. An enduring bond is created among students and between students and faculty that is both rare and vitally important.

We cannot always build the future for our youth,  
but we can build youth for the future.

Darius D. Matlock

*The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be those  
who can-not read and write, but those who cannot,  
unlearn, and relearn*

Alvin Toffler

Education takes place when the spirit and soul  
are engaged and involved.

Michael Meade

*Living is learning, and when kids are living fully and  
energetically and happily they are learning a lot,  
even if we don't always know what it is.*

John Hold

One must go out of one's house to begin  
learning.

Ghanaian Proverb

*Let yourself be silently drawn by the strange pull of  
what you really love. It will not lead you astray.*

Rumi

The solution to a problem in life is found by  
stepping more fully into life.

Bradford Keeney

*Education either functions as an instrument which  
is used to facilitate the integration of the younger  
generation into the logic of the present system and  
bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the*

*practice of freedom – the means by which men and  
women deal critically and creatively with reality and  
discover how to participate in the transformation of  
the world*

Paulo Freire

Education is meant to take us into a future we  
can't grasp or foresee.

Author Unknown.

## PROGRAM LOGISTICS

- ▶ **LEAPYEAR REQUIREMENTS:** Minimum age is 17 by the start of program. Maximum age is 23. Participants must have completed up to their junior year of high school, and be able to attend the full program. To do the program for college credit, you must have completed high school or equivalency. **We don't accept tobacco smokers, or anyone actively in the grip of an addiction.** Anyone in reasonable physical condition should be able to complete the program successfully. A vegetarian/restricted diet can be maintained.
- ▶ **APPLICATION & ADMISSIONS:** Interested applicants must submit a fully completed application and must have an **in-person** interview with a LEAPNOW staff member. Once an application is received, we contact the applicant to arrange the interview. We meet with prospective students on an ongoing basis at our office in northern California and also schedule periodic interviews on the East Coast and in Colorado. There is no application deadline. We accept people until the program is full, then create a waiting list.

Once accepted into a program, participants receive a detailed trip preparation packet. This packet, together with a regularly-updated LEAPYEAR web page, covers program details, transportation, gear & equipment, health & immunization info, communication during the program, climate & living conditions, college credit and financial aid, detailed trip itinerary with contact info, required documents & paperwork, financial details & tuition agreement.

- ▶ **GROUP SIZE:**

**September – May program – up to 36 students.** The September start LEAPYEAR group splits into four smaller groups of 10 each with 2 adult leaders to travel in Asia & Latin America. Student: Staff ratio on retreats in the U.S. is 4:1, and 6:1 when traveling.

**February – August program – up to 22 students.** The February start LEAPYEAR group splits into two smaller groups of 11 each with 2 adult leaders to travel in Asia & Latin America. Student: Staff ratio on retreats in the U.S. is 3:1, and 5:1 when traveling.

- ▶ **HEALTH, SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION:** The safety and well-being of our students is our first priority. LEAPNOW has safely sent over 1,800 students all over the world since 1994. The current world situation raises questions for our students and their families, and it is very important that you feel confident and secure as you embark on a program involving international study and travel. We constantly monitor the world situation through the U.S. State Department, and through a network of individual and organizational contacts in 32 countries that function as our eyes and ears on the ground. We design and modify our group travel to avoid hot spots, health risks and political trouble, and individual internships are arranged with safety as a fundamental consideration.

Our group leaders are experienced both as travelers and leaders, and each group of students travels with at least two leaders to ensure that any individual emergencies can be given the attention needed for resolution. During the individual internship period, each individual stays in close contact with his or her group and with the LEAPYEAR program staff, and relates on a daily basis to an in-country sponsor who is directly responsive to that individual's needs.

LEAPYEAR starts with a lengthy retreat in the U.S. before any travel commences – allowing us to give a comprehensive orientation, get a good sense of each of the participants, and lay down a foundation for healthy group dynamics before leaving the country. Throughout our travels, participants have ready access to medical attention, potable water, clear information about health risks, and in-country orientation about each new place we visit. The program is designed to move from more structure to less over the course of the year – allowing each participant to learn and practice safe traveling skills before striking off individually in the second half.

## **COST**

The cost of LEAPYEAR is \$34,900 and includes all scheduled program activities, food and accommodation during the program, one full year of college credit, and one additional year of internship placements and access to LEAPNOW resources. The cost of LEAPYEAR is comparable to mid-range private colleges – even though 6 months of travel are included in the cost.

**Federal financial aid is available to program participants enrolled as full-time students at our accrediting university.** Additional private scholarship money is available to LEAPYEAR participants to help with financial need that is not met through the financial aid process. For example, in the fall of 2015 the average scholarship received was \$6,000 per student.

Not included in the program fee is the cost of round-trip transportation to northern California during the program, personal medical insurance and spending money, visas, and the two international round-trip airfares (one to Latin America or Asia for the first semester, and the other elsewhere in the world for the internship.)

Each participant's family signs a payment agreement that spaces payments out over the first five months of the program.

## **TESTIMONIALS**

*"Hardly a day goes by when I don't think about Isaac and the profoundly amazing year that he had with LEAPYEAR. I have been meaning to write a letter to you and all the staff, thanking you for all the opportunities that you provided. Your program is like walking down a hall with a thousand doors beckoning to be opened. I think it is hardest to write a thank you for the most profound things. If I had to say, "Thank you for the delicious meal," that would be easy. But LEAPNOW offers such a multifaceted program that touches so many parts of a person's heart and soul that I honestly wouldn't know where to begin. It is ironic that I am a writer, but you have me stumped! Just know that you are in my heart, both for what you did for Isaac, but what you also did for Michael and me. Your ceremony last February was meaningful beyond words."*

**LEAPYEAR Parent**

"LEAPYEAR so far has been the most meaningful year of my life. I have learned more and grown more in this time than I ever thought imaginable...certainly more than my year in university or in all 4 years of high school put together. From LEAPYEAR I have gained a powerful foundation for a life of growth, meaning, clarity, and integrity. With the tools LEAPYEAR has given me, I discover more each day what it means to live a life of learning, loving and ever-returning to myself and my path."

**LEAPYEAR participant**

*"Many thanks for your gift of commitment to growth. Our family will never be the same. Your gift will give and give, again and again."*

**LEAPYEAR Parent**

"Thank you to LEAPNOW for teaching these skills of happiness over this last year. While I still do not fully grasp everything that I was taught, it keeps showing up slowly in my life and pieces of this mysterious puzzle called life start to align."

**LEAPYEAR 2012/13 student**

*"We heard from Mike this morning from the baboon compound. I could hear the sounds of the newest batch of baby baboons in the background. He tells me there is a troop of wild warthogs who graze on the compound garbage, but, gratefully, are shy of people and back away when you walk by slowly. So exciting to hear of such wonders and that he is safe and occupied in yet another incredible spot on our Planet Earth."*

**LEAPYEAR parent**

## ACADEMIC COURSEWORK

All LEAPYEAR students are enrolled as BA Undergraduate students at Naropa University and earn a full year of college credit. To be eligible for college credit you must have completed high school by the start date of your desired program. (It is possible to use LEAPYEAR to complete your final year of high school.) Everything that is studied and learned within LEAPYEAR is directly relevant to the program activities. Daily writing, public speaking, and group presentations are an integral part of the curriculum.

### ► FIRST SEMESTER: INDIA PROGRAM

**Cultural Immersion: India:** Ten weeks of travel, homestays, internships, service work, and spiritual study in India. Required ethnology projects, and independent study. Daily reading and writing.

**Wisdom Traditions of India:** Study Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism in India. Learn spiritual practices and live in intentional communities with focus on Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga and Meditation.

**Contemplative Practice and Community:** Develop a daily practice of physical movement, meditation, and journal writing and learn techniques to effectively communicate and build community.

### ► FIRST SEMESTER: LATIN AMERICA

**Spanish Language Immersion:** A month of 1-on-1 Spanish language study plus 6 weeks of travel and study in Latin America

**Cultural Immersion-Latin America:** Readings, ethnology projects, and independent projects relating to the Latin American countries we live and work in – Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras.

**Contemplative Practice and Community:** Develop a daily practice of physical movement, meditation, and journal writing and learn techniques to effectively communicate and build community.

### ► SECOND SEMESTER: (BOTH INDIA & LATIN AMERICA)

**The Whole Human Being:** Daily journal writing, introduction to meditation, yoga, and other introspective practices. Focus on the integration of mind, body, emotion and spirit.

**The World as Classroom:** 12-week internship in a country of your choice. Work is augmented by readings, ethnology projects, daily reading and writing.

**Being the Change:** Learn the skills needed to live in integrity, develop emotional literacy, make graceful life transitions and learn to be at home in your own body.

**Diversity and Multiculturalism:** Develop awareness around important topics such as race, cultural identity, gender studies, and privilege through group discussion, cultural projects, and readings.

*"I have been crazily appreciative of LEAPNOW. I want to let you guys know that. I had a moment this weekend where I realized I am actually falling in love with myself and the whole world around me. You guys over there at Maacama holding down our fort are seriously inspirational human beings and I am profoundly glad that the universe brought me to this program because I really do not think I could have handled being asleep much longer. So thank you for this creation you brought to Planet Earth and thank you everyone else back there for doing an absolute beautiful job of bringing it into reality so effortlessly."*

## LIVING SKILLS CURRICULUM

Beyond the academic coursework for college credit, you can expect to learn more in the following areas:

**Personal Life Map:** Comprehensive Life Review • Exploration of Core Values • Identify Life Goals • Rites of Passage & Life Transitions • Identify & Overcome Personal Barriers to Success

**Explore the World of Work:** Acquire Practical Skills: Cooking/Baking • Gardening/Landscaping • Carpentry • Construction • Environmental Work • Social Service • Career Exploration Through a Three-Month Personalized Internship • Job Readiness Skills • Resume Preparation • Public Presentations • Career Path Exploration • How to Navigate College & Alternative College Pathways

**Cross-Cultural Exploration:** Three Months of Spanish Immersion **OR** Intensive Exposure to the Language, Religions, and Culture of the Indian Subcontinent • Home Stays • Service Work • Experience Daily Life in Other Countries • Explore, Identify & Question Cultural Assumptions

**Cultivation of the Body:** Daily Work Outdoors • The Basics of Nutrition • Daily Physical Discipline (Yoga, Dance, Movement, Tai Ch'i) • Breath Work • Physical Challenges Such As Trekking & Physical Labor • Learn How to Remain Grounded in Your Body Under Stress

**Cultivation of the Mind:** Regular Writing & Journaling • Meditation • Self- Inquiry • Learn New Skills, Then Teach Others • Group Presentations & Storytelling • Discussion of Required Readings • Learn Effective Teaching & Presentation Techniques • Develop Mental Discipline Through Understanding Emotions, Practicing Meditation & Daily Physical Discipline, & Through Meeting Inner & Outer Challenges.

**Develop Emotional Literacy:** Learn to Identify & Presence Emotions • Locate Feelings in the Body • Learn to Constructively “Move” & Work with Sadness, Anger, Fear & Excitement.

**Social Skill Acquisition:** Effective Communication • Conscious Speech • Conscious Listening • Conflict Resolution • Teamwork • Attention to Community • Embracing Differences • Balancing Group & Individual Needs • Learn To Live in a High State of Integrity

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

**A Full Year of College Credit.** Successful completion earns the student a full year of academic credit.

**Language Acquisition and In-depth Exposure to and Understanding of Host Cultures.** Participants will get to know Asia or Latin America well, then have an opportunity to learn about another region during the Individual Internship. In the process they have two major opportunities to gain conversational language skills.

**Wisdom, Maturity, and Experience:** Beyond their intrinsic value, these outcomes are exactly what colleges are looking for in new applicants. Participants generally become seasoned world travelers.

**Enhanced Job Readiness and Career Direction:** Participants will attend regular presentations from adult mentors representing diverse walks of life. They will do intensive work focused on identifying life purpose. The 12-week Individual Internship allows for in-depth and practical career exploration. The program incorporates regular creative writing, regular oral presentations, mock interviews, and resume writing.

**Radically Enhanced Emotional Literacy and Social Skills** – Emotional literacy has been found to be a greater predictor of success than IQ and is not directly addressed in traditional education. Communication and relationship skills development also support greater success both personally and professionally.

**Self-confidence:** The program encompasses so many diverse experiences, work environments, skills, and challenges, that self-confidence is greatly enhanced – confidence based on meeting real world challenges in real time.

**Physical Fitness:** Through daily exercise, physical work and healthy eating.

## IS LEAPYEAR FOR ME?

### LEAPYEAR is for me if ...

- I'm between 17 and 23 and feel a "call" to service, exploration and personal transformation
- I'm willing to deal with culture shock, new and challenging situations, and primitive living conditions.
- I'm also enthusiastic about making a journey into my own unknown inner terrain.
- I'm willing to explore my thoughts and feelings in depth and learn about my shadow and my negative feelings.
- I'm motivated to find out what I'm made of, and to find renewed sources of meaning
- I look forward to being challenged to grow in many new and different ways.
- I'm willing to abstain from using drugs, alcohol and tobacco for the duration of the program (9 months).
- I REALLY want to do this program for MY OWN reasons.
- I'm willing to do hard work and be uncomfortable in order to learn more about myself.
- I'm willing to be part of an intense and honest group.
- I'm very interested in learning to embrace mature and responsible adulthood.
- I'm very interested in learning to live in integrity and willing to be held to a high standard of personal accountability.

### LEAPYEAR is NOT for me if ...

- I'm looking for a vacation, a party, or a chance to "hang out."
- I think that LEAPYEAR is just a good chance to travel and get college credit
- I only want to do it because **someone else** thinks it's a really good idea for me.
- I only stick with something until I become bored or uncomfortable or judge it as "a waste of time."
- I regularly use drugs, alcohol or tobacco or am in the grip of an active addiction.
- I need therapy for a serious psychological condition.
- I know what I know, and I don't want anyone else to tell me different.
- I'm not willing to be away from my boyfriend/girlfriend, friends and family for months at a time.
- I like parts of the program, but other parts don't really work for me.
- I don't want anybody telling me what to do with my time.

*"Whatever its destination, what sets a sacred journey apart from an everyday walk, an adventure, or a tourist trip is the spirit in which it is undertaken. It is sacred if it sensitizes the individual to the deeper realities of his own being and of the world about him – if it brings together the inner and outer worlds, the physical landscape serving as a mirror for the inner one."*

**Roger Housden**

*"I am so incredibly amazed by this year and this experience I have just completed. It's as though the world has opened its arms to me, and I know that I will continue to achieve all that I dream of.*

*I am filled with more gratitude and more love and more respect than I had ever thought possible. This year is one I will hold in my heart forever. I have come out a new person, and I feel complete. I found something this year that had been missing in my life. My mind often drifts to the laughs we have shared together, the tears we have shared together, the experience we have shared together.*

*This program is life-changing, eye-opening, and truly one of a kind. I had never expected to gain this much, and I have realized I still have a whole life ahead of me. You are people I will never forget, and I cannot wait to meet again, and hug you.*

*Thank you for the lessons, thank you for love, and thank you for giving me back my life."*

**LEAPYEAR India 2006 Graduate - letter received May, 2007**

## LEAPYEAR FACULTY BIOS:

**CASSIE BULL** directs all LEAPNOW retreats, oversees the campus kitchen and is LEAPNOW's artist-in-residence. After earning a BFA from Wichita State U., Cassie had a full career as a professional dancer, choreographer and teacher in Colorado and New York. Discovering that there was more happening in her dance classes than just learning to dance, Cassie earned a Masters in Somatic Psychology in 1988 and worked in psychiatric hospitals, bringing her love of movement and creativity to the mentally ill. As a therapeutic activities program director in a psychiatric hospital in New York, she developed a horticulture program, a dance/yoga program, and a cooking program for adolescent and adult addicts as well as leading movement therapy groups for the residents at the psychiatric hospital. During this time Cassie received her Advanced Registry Dance Therapist certification and certification in Authentic Movement. She subsequently directed the Somatic Psychology Department at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado, training dance therapists and body-centered psychotherapists. She is deeply interested in the confluence of movement, passion and creativity and is a faculty member at our accrediting university and a certified yoga teacher.

**SAM BULL** founded LEAPNOW in 1994 and co-created LEAPYEAR with Cassie in 2001. After earning a B.A. from Princeton University in 1982, he made a decision not to use the word "career" until he was at least 30, choosing instead to follow the "golden thread" of whatever he most wanted to do. This resulted in 9 years of exploration in the U.S., Asia, Central America and Europe. Some of the highlights included: Extensive study in Hindu and Carmelite (Catholic) monasteries in India and the U.S.; work as a carpenter, waiter, computer consultant, folk music café manager, park ranger, lobster fisherman, and trail crew leader in California and Alaska. He has coordinated a program for the homeless in Seattle, directed a job-training program for youth-at-risk (the New Hampshire Conservation Corps), and was the Career Services Director and International Student Advisor at a university in Colorado. Sam is a Senior Fellow of the Hendricks Institute of Ojai, California where he was certified in Conscious Relationship Transformation and Body-Centered Transformation. He is also a faculty member at Naropa University.

LEAPYEAR core faculty are regularly joined by guest teachers for 1-2 day intensives on creative writing, yoga, shamanic journeying, Native American ceremonies, Sufi and Druidic teachings and more. Guest teachers have included Sandra Ingerman, Kathlyn Hendricks, Mark Saito, Michael Eller, Shabda Kahn, Susan Mayginnes and others.

**GROUP TRAVEL LEADERS:** Group Travel in India & Latin America is led by former Peace Corps or AmeriCorps volunteers, LEAPYEAR graduates and other experienced leaders with a proven track record of success leading groups in Latin America and India. Leader names and bios are posted in the specific group web pages 2-3 months prior to the start of each program.

*"At a point in my life when all I knew to do was surrender to the Divine, LEAPYEAR flew into my inbox on an angel's wing. My 18 year-old daughter, who had always been brilliant and magical, was very lost. Because of her experience with LEAPYEAR and the loving and inspired leadership of Sam & Cassie Bull and their team, the very first year of the program, she found herself again.*

*She healed issues with her Dad that went back at least 8 years to when we got divorced. She found a path that has served her well in life. And she found a tribe of friends that she is still very close to, even though they are scattered over at least 4 continents that I know of.*

*... LEAPYEAR was such a turning point in her life. I will always be grateful that she had that chance. I will always encourage any parent who wants more in life for their beloved child who hangs on the brink of adulthood to invest in this program."*

**LEAPYEAR parent**