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Dear Thầy,
Dear Friends, Families, and Young ones,
Dear Cosmos,

June 18, 2026

We hope that you and your loved ones are well, peaceful, and safe wherever you are.

For many months, we have been looking forward to welcoming you back to Deer Park Monastery for the upcoming retreat season, beginning with Teen Camp this summer. It is therefore with a heavy heart that we must share some difficult news: Deer Park Monastery needs to cancel all of our upcoming in-person retreats at the monastery, including Teen Camp, Family Retreat, and Vietnamese Retreat. The Buddha the Scientist Retreat will now be held off-campus.

We know this news may come as a shock. Many of you have already made plans, arranged time away from work, purchased tickets, and prepared your children and loved ones to come home to the mountains and practice with the Sangha. We are deeply sorry for the disappointment, sadness, and inconvenience this brings, especially to the young people and families who have been looking forward to this time together.

The reason for this decision is that Deer Park Monastery is currently under review by the County Departments of Planning and Public Health. The County has asked us to obtain certain permits and to bring several areas of our facilities and programs into compliance with current building and health regulations. This includes permits related to organized camping, renovations to our main kitchen and the nuns' kitchen, and review of some existing structures on the monastery land.

Please know that we have been meeting, looking deeply, and working very hard to find another way forward. Since spring, we have formed a dedicated team, including legal counsel, to meet with County officials, understand their concerns, and explore possible solutions. We had hoped to avoid canceling the retreats, and this decision has been very painful for us.

Deer Park Monastery has been operating for 26 years as a place of practice and refuge for many people. We want to cooperate fully with the County and do what is needed in the right way. After several meetings and a formal notice from the County early this month, it has become clear that continuing to host these retreats before completing the required steps would place the monastery in a very difficult and vulnerable position.

At this time, we feel that pausing our in-person retreats is the most responsible way to protect the monastery, care for our community, and preserve our ability to serve the Sangha in the future. We do not make this decision lightly, and we ask for your understanding and support as we move through this challenging time.

All retreat registration fees will be fully refunded. Our registration team will contact you directly with details about the refund process and any next steps. We are very sorry for the inconvenience, disappointment, and possible financial difficulty this cancellation may have caused. We know that some friends may have already made travel arrangements, and we deeply regret the impact this may have on you. Although the monastery may not be able to compensate for all outside expenses, if this cancellation

has created a significant hardship, please reach out to us. We will do our best to listen and offer support where possible. We humbly ask for your understanding and forgiveness.

We also know that the impact of this news is more than financial. Deer Park has been a spiritual home for many of us, a place where children, teenagers, families, friends, and practitioners of all ages can return to the practice, to the mountains, and to the Sangha. It is not easy for any of us to hear that the monastery must pause these retreats. However, we know that through the practices of stopping, deep looking, kindness, and compassion, we can get through this difficult period together.

In the coming weeks, we will be looking deeply at how we can continue to offer the practice and our presence. One possibility is to offer online retreats and practice opportunities, as we did during the COVID years. We know that practicing online is not the same as being together in person at Deer Park, but we also know from experience that many families, young people, and friends were still able to find peace, connection, and joy through online practice. This may be an opportunity for all of us to creatively bring the practice more fully into our own homes and daily lives.

At the same time, not all is lost. We are grateful that there are still two offerings available. The Sun My Heart Colorado Retreat at the YMCA of the Rockies this August still has openings, including for families and young people. There will also be a substantial children's program. Many of our Deer Park monks and nuns will be present for this beloved retreat immersed in nature and surrounded by majestic mountains.

There is also the Happy Families Change the World online course, which has already begun but is still open for registration. This offering was created to support the Thich Nhat Hanh School of Interbeing and to help families bring the practice more fully home into their daily lives.

Please stay connected with us as we continue to explore other ways to serve you, including possible online offerings for teenagers, families, and other communities of practice.

During these coming months, we ask that you keep Deer Park in your heart and send us your support. We will be doing our best to meet the requirements of the County so that, in due time, we may once again welcome you to the monastery for retreats.

As practitioners, we are also doing our best to nourish ourselves, to take refuge in the Sangha, and not to allow this moment of adversity to bring us down. We still have each other. We still can practice no matter where we are. We trust that Thầy, our ancestral teachers, and the Dharma are here to guide us through this period, with clarity, courage, and compassion.

We hope that you and your family will continue to support your own practice at home. May we all maintain gratitude, joy, and peace in our hearts. As Thầy has taught us, no mud, no lotus. With the Dharma and the support of the Sangha, we trust that this difficulty can be transformed into new opportunities.

Until we meet again, please know that you are in our hearts.

From the Great Hidden Mountains of Escondido,
With all our love and gratitude, deep bows to all of you,



Brother Pháp Dung
(on behalf of *The Monks and Nuns of Deer Park Monastery*)