

International Gathering of Young Theosophists

9 to 15 June 2023

International Theosophical Centre (ITC) Naarden
The Netherlands



CONTENTS

Message from the Organizing Committee

Testimonials from participants:

Lola Petiot, *France*
Francis Lim, *Singapore*
Sonja Blom, *Finland*
Sagi Sree Hari Varma, *India*
Sara Gencarelli, *Italy*
Floyd Melssen, *Netherlands*
Mel Sell, *New Zealand*
Leonardus Adi Prasetya, *Singapore*
Arturo Díaz Carrascal, *Spain*
Qian Su, *United States*
Jérémie Heussie, *Switzerland*
Nicoletta Boriello, *Italy*
Brandon Soo, *Singapore*
Fernanda Riedel, *Brazil*
Janne Vuononvirta, *Finland*
Miriam Martínez, *Spain*
Spencer Devine, *New Zealand*
Nilsa Valladares, *Honduras*
Brandon Goh, *Singapore*
Vighnesh RVS, *India*
Leo Ta, *Australia*
Elmer Overdevest, *Netherlands*
Kaio Giurizatto Utsch, *Brazil*
Catalina Isaza Cantor, *Colombia*
José Montes Cruz, *Spain*
Clover Wu, *Singapore*
Teemu Iltola *Finland*
Hannes Pettersson, *Sweden*
Merike Martsepp, *Estonia*
Gabriele Sabetta, *Italy*
Justin Tanksley, *United States*
Krista Umbjarv, *France*
Elena Bessie Camplone, *Italy*
Marko Leosk, *United Kingdom*
Igor Xavier, *Brazil*
Fátima Martín, *Spain*
Tobia Buscaglione, *Italy*
Pauline van Tol, *Netherlands*
Hanwen Kee, *Singapore*
Yunuen Fortanell, *Mexico*
Kiran Apsunde, *Ireland*
Sara Ortega, *Spain*
Wei Ling Lau, *Singapore*

Testimonials from special guest:

Kurt Leland, *international lecturer*
Tim Boyd, *International President of the TS*

Testimonials from host ITC:

Arend Heijbroek, *Chairman ITC Naarden*
Peter LePoole, *Council member ITC Naarden*
Mariël Polman, *volunteer in the kitchen*

Photo gallery

Thanks

Contact the WFYT:

World Federation of Young Theosophists

If you are a member of the TS
40 years old or younger, and want to
be informed about the Federation,
and/or get actively involved,
please write to info.wfyt@gmail.com
You are welcome to participate!

Mission of the Theosophical Society:

To serve humanity
by cultivating an ever-deepening
understanding and realization
of the Ageless Wisdom,
spiritual self-transformation,
and the unity of all life.

Message from the Organizing Committee

Elena Bessie Camplone

Catalina Isaza Cantor

Sara Ortega

From 9 to 15 June 2023 an International Gathering of Young Theosophists under the theme "*The Path of Cooperation and the Spiritual Life*" took place at the ITC Naarden (The Netherlands). This time our guest speaker was Kurt Leland who gave a seminar based on the third object of the TS and emphasized the importance of cooperation both in visible and invisible ways. The International President of the TS, Tim Boyd also joined us and program activities included youth workshops, volunteering in the gardens and the kitchen, chanting, playing games, meditations and lots of interaction and sharing moments. By the end of the gathering, a few words were repeatedly mentioned: gratitude, unity, joy, peace, magic, awareness, wholeness... We are building a spiritual family that is growing year after year, and there are bonds that are likely to last a lifetime and beyond.

A total of 51 participants attended from 20 countries: Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Honduras, India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States. This gathering was possible to a great extent thanks to all the sponsors who contributed to make this event more affordable for young participants (ITC Naarden, TS Adyar, European Federation of the TS, Blavatsky Trust, TS France, TS Germany, TS Hungary, TS Italy, TS Switzerland, TS United States, TS Netherlands), as well as other TS countries who helped their young members in some way. From the organizing committee we took the challenge of cooking meals ourselves to reduce costs and it turned out a very rewarding experience. Much gratitude to Mariël who generously helped us in the kitchen, and all ITC workers too!



Group photo of participants with Kurt Leland, Tim Boyd, his wife Lily and ITC volunteers

Testimonials from participants

Young participants kindly shared their impressions so that our readers may have a glimpse of what was experienced through their memories and perceptions



Lola Petiot

France

The international gathering organized by the World Federation of Young Theosophists which took place in June 2023 has been a wonderful experience,

bringing together young theosophists from all around the world in the beautiful centre of Naarden in the Netherlands. The conferences of Kurt Leland on the “Ladder of lives”, developed by Annie Besant, were very insightful, the nature, trees and forest, and the place were magical. Most of all, being able to share, discuss, spend time in a spirit of brotherhood with other young theosophists from all around the world has created an incredible feeling of deep connection. I really enjoyed workshops, collective activities like gardening or cooking, playing, chanting, in consciousness. This is a way of experiencing, within ourselves, Unity. The twilight sessions which were a wonderful space of sharing our intimate and sacred experiences was extremely precious. I have met deep people and know this time is engraved in my memory. A lot of gratitude to the ones who made this possible!

Francis Lim

Singapore

I could remember my first time to the Youth Gathering back in June 2022 like it was yesterday. Even the WIFI details still connects directly after a year like magic! The gathering last year was nothing



but a miracle when long lost bonds were rekindled. This year nevertheless was even a deeper one. It was something so fresh yet so familiar and I could never find words which can accurately express my experience here. My heart was yet again opened deeper, like a lotus with many petals, layer by layer, concentrically and dimensionally. I am grateful to have such karma to meet again, every single one of you.



Sonja Blom

Finland

Two weeks have passed since our meeting in Naarden. If I were to use words to describe how it was, I would say: transformative, unifying,

love-filled. What happened was Theosophy in action - a gentle yet earthshaking reminder that we are all one. Naarden is a place full of magic and it can bring out the pure core of each visitor, reminding us that we are beings of light, united by an invisible force. Working together, chanting together, learning together... The theme of the course, the path of cooperation, was in full action. At the heart of the meeting was a feeling of us being there for a reason. Each moment was meaningful. I am carrying the energy we brought to Life in my Heart, and each day I feel it there, growing even more, little by little. I would call what was awakened, self-remembrance, or rather the beginning of it. I am eternally grateful to each and every soul I got to share this experience with, I cannot wait to meet everyone again. Without the organizers none of this would have been possible - thank you for your work. Thank you to the wonderful Kurt for guiding us into the unseen.



Sagi Sree Hari Varma

India

Though I was extremely excited and my heart was filled with curiosity and vigor to experience my first T.S. gathering outside of India, nothing could have prepared me for the kind of transformational experience that I was about to have at Naarden throughout the gathering. I consider myself fairly new to the teachings of Theosophy but being around such incredible people during the conference turned into a remarkable learning experience for me not just in theory but also in practice. Some of the interactions I had with Kurt Leland, I am sure will have a long-lasting impact on me. The volunteering activities and the workshops during the gathering added to the practical implementation of the ideas discussed during the seminars.

“Satsang”(Good accompaniment) is considered one of the most important pathways to enlightenment in the Hindu teachings and through the youth gathering, I strongly believe I have finally found a group of people with whom I could share this beautiful quest of spiritual living. A group of people, that I now consider my “Satsang”!

I am now looking forward to the next gathering in India towards the end of this year and the next and the next after that and so on. I will be forever grateful to the whole team that made this possible and last but not least I will be forever indebted to our President Tim Boyd and TS Adyar.

Sara Gencarelli

Italy

This year I went to the gathering with no particular expectations, because last year was such an all-encompassing experience that I thought it couldn't be repeated. But above all, this time I went with all my family. For the first time I wanted my children to

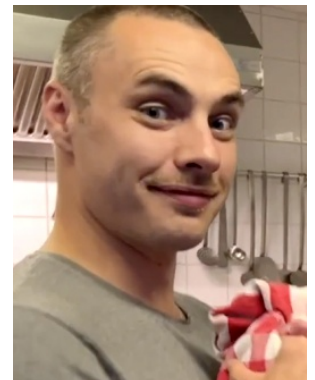


have a theosophical experience. Hence my focus was on them. It is very important that our children begin to live and get in touch with theosophy and with all the brethren of the theosophical society. And in these days as a "mother" in the gathering I have received so much, I have been able to see with my own eyes that universal brotherhood exists, and that for children it is a natural thing, it is present in their hearts and in them it is present in universal language that manages to make them communicate with everyone beyond language barriers. Where there is will there is love, and anything can be done. I could see through their changes that there are special places that invite you with their energy to calm and introspection. We have returned from this trip enriched: in knowledge, awareness, love for ourselves and for others. Children are our teachers, only by observing them we can learn so much about life and about the really important things.

Floyd Melssen

Netherlands

Some time has passed since our week at the ITC in Naarden, and only now do I start to realize how big the scope of our activities were. Not only did we meet like-



minded people, young and a bit less young, but we proceeded to lay the groundwork for a real nucleus of human brotherhood by talking together, eating together, working together and (not less importantly) playing together. The talks given by Kurt have really provided me with a new, refreshing perspective on the spiritual path. It has gently forced me into increased awareness of my surroundings and cherishing gratefulness also for those who I cannot see. Kurt very kindly offered all kinds of wisdom, both during his lectures and outside of Besant Hall. Much of that wisdom I try to incorporate now in my daily practice.

It was also a great privilege to spend a week at the International Theosophical Centre and its lush surroundings. I could feel being part of history, part of a lineage much older and stronger than just a single individual. To anyone with the opportunity I would recommend to go there and just appreciate the glistening of the dew on the garden plants.



Mel Sell

New Zealand

When I think back to the WFYT event, I remember how I felt throughout my time at Naarden: absolute peace. I feel like everyone was a living embodiment

of universal kinship. Although I had not met anyone before, everyone single person was so lovely, kind and warm. We created such a special space over our time together, even working in the kitchen together was a joy because it was just another opportunity to connect with such wonderful people.

My favourite experience was when a group of us gathered and did kirtan (chanting/musical meditation). It was such a special experience and I think everyone felt so moved from the experience we shared together. I will never forget the experience.

The energy at this gathering was vibrant and so loving. It was so fulfilling to meet other likeminded people. This experience has lit a fire in my soul and I am so excited to see everyone again.



Leonardus Adi Prasetya

Singapore

WHOLE: "What I can't sense, doesn't mean it isn't there."

Such a simple sentence in the context of this gathering means that we actually live in a deeply magical world. To me it means that everything integrates together into one. No longer I need to segregate spiritual life from personal, or ritualistic from career, or relationship from inner life.

I feel like I finally found the place I belong. And that place has all along been here, where I stand. From now on I can freely give myself permission to practice to create; be it ritualistic or artistic, mystical or physical, tangible or invisible.

Truth is truth, whether it is gained through psychic, romantic or traumatic experience. Truth is so much

closer to my heart than I have dared to believe. It has been here faithfully with me always, if only I'm humble enough to listen closely.

From here on, my life is merged into one path. In this vast universe, I am here and I am whole.

Arturo Díaz Carrascal

Spain



For me the gathering was something magical that made me connect again with my inner self. Before going I was feeling a bit off because of some weird stuff

in my life but when I arrived there, with the energy in Naarden and all the amazing people that I was able to meet thanks to the gathering, my spiritual energy was charged again to deal with everyday life. It gave me the inner strength to be more connected with my higher self and with that, having more compassion in my everyday life. The gardens were so beautiful and filled with life, you could feel the touch of the devas there, filling the air with energy.

I was really happy to be able to meet all these wonderful people from around the world and share stories and very precious moments there in Naarden with them. I felt so grateful being there and being able to share that moment with these great people.

I just want to say thanks to everyone who made the gathering possible. Blessings and hugs to all of you.

Qian Su

United States



The WFYT retreat was a beautiful experience that allowed me to finally have a glimpse of the true meaning of oneness with all that is. It offered many

moments of feeling no separation with all of the participants and nature. I am so grateful that I was able to take my kids with and that they had a chance to make connections with other future theosophists.

The kids were also able to volunteer and serve in small ways and seeing them as a part of the group fills my heart. Naarden ITC will forever be a memorable experience in my life. The organizers were fantastic and those at ITC who hosted all of us are greatly appreciated. I hope for more WFYT gatherings in the future.



Jérémie Heussie

Switzerland

What an experience. I've joined the Swiss lodge of the TS about a year ago. Weekly meetings had such a great influence on my life, but I still struggled

implementing theosophy on a daily basis in a busy lifestyle. I thought that joining the gathering would help me regarding this aspect, meeting people about my age and being able to fully commit to studies and practice for a whole week. I had no expectations on how the week would unfold. I wasn't disappointed and I must say I lived on a cloud for 6 days. Never had I experienced living with a so much loving community and connecting with so many people, also in an absolutely beautiful place. I also had a feeling of legitimacy, meeting people with the same beliefs and having been through the same questioning as mine. Thank you all again and I will definitely plan to join every year until ineligibility.

Nicoletta Boriello

Italy

They have been intense, full days that have made me more aware of myself, of all of us, of the whole world, of the Theosophical Society and of Theosophy...

and of the mission we have to fulfill, like shells in the ocean. We shared a significant experience that has gathered a great positive force that we must ride and expand and bring out.



I am convinced that what we have experienced is not only important for us, but will also be important for those who were not in Naarden in that moment, but will be able to connect to the energy we released. I think the fact everything went well and was so special is due to the simplicity we expressed, in showing each other for who we are, in the purity of our intentions, in staying together in full trust, in loving each other, and in sharing without fear. I want to share this sentence about simplicity, that sums up well the deep sense for me: "Simplicity is the form of True Greatness" (Francesco de Sanctis).

Thanks to all the guys for the wonder they have given me, each one with their own way... it will always remain in my heart.

Brandon Soo

Singapore

"Being the me that I truly am"

What does it mean to be "I"? What is my real identity? These were repeating themes in my life that I often wondered

about. Well, I find that there is no easy answer to this. How we identify ourselves is dynamic and changes with the situations in our lives. But during the youth conference, I found some illumination towards that.

My background is that I am an art student and I am introverted by nature. So you must imagine how it will feel like to attend a conference with 50 people, some were familiar and some were strangers. But the reality is different from what I have imagined: I found myself opening up to the group and there was a strong sense of camaraderie. Through the volunteering and workshops, I felt that I was truly at home and shared with them on the last day that I was glad to have found my spiritual family. The reunion with my spiritual family enlarged my sense of self, even after I left the ITC, a part of them remained etched in my heart.

I was also given a wonderful gift. I believe the angels of the place have shown me my potentialities. Talents I had forgotten, strengths left unpursued. I was uninspired to create art and music for almost a year. But when I was there, I played the piano, almost guided,



and remembered the joy I had from music and art. It was a much-needed reminder that I should not forget my purpose among the drudgery of daily life. I felt the creative impulse came from my higher self and it told me one thing - create.

So in a way I felt that I was discovering myself and uncovering part of my purpose as well. Truly, this conference has unveiled the light within. It taught me to be the me that I truly am.



Fernanda Riedel

Brazil

When I decided to go to the 2023 Naarden Young Adults meeting, I knew it would be really cool, after all, I have participated in many theosophical meetings

since my childhood and adolescence. However, I was positively surprised, as it was even better than I expected. I was able to meet incredible people, to have unforgettable experiences, to interact with invisible beings, to record moments of fraternization with the drone, to teach the group an ancient tradition of theosophical meetings in South America, and to renew the heart with divine wisdom. I am very happy to have participated and I hope to be able to meet all my friends in Brazil in 2024, in Paraíso na Terra, the "Brazilian ITC". I miss Naarden already. It was absolutely perfect.

Janne Vuononvirta

Finland

I participated in the Youth Gathering a year ago too, and it was something miraculous. A group of strangers came together and experienced a sense of oneness. This time I didn't dare to expect anything knowing that comparing my experience to the last year would only bring burden to my present experience.



This time we had almost 20 people more than last year. The rumors had spread and the energy was inviting more people. Again, I had a feeling of meeting my spiritual family. Even though I met some for the first time in this life, I felt there was a deep connection between us. I believe that we belong to a band of souls who travel together this spiritual journey. Before meeting you, I had the experience that I was walking my path alone - now I believe that we may reach enlightenment together.

The program with Kurt was somehow really refreshing. I appreciate his openness about his clairvoyant experience and his dedication to the topic. Also, his talks help me to connect some of my past experiences to my current spiritual practice.

After the gathering I feel gratitude and joy. I feel that I have more clarity about my spiritual path and I'm more connected to my deepest aspirations, and to others.

Miriam Martínez

Spain

Magic or creativity is always present in our lives. It is easier to "believe" in it when we are little children, as the world at that age is a constant discovery.



However, it seems to be a certain period during our lives when the daily routine becomes mechanical and repetitive. And I must say that this week with all of you has been "PURE MAGIC": from your beautiful smiles to the sound of your voices, the chirping of the birds, the wild forests, and all we have shared. Thanks to Naarden and all of you, I feel the creativity again, and the joy in my heart. I am convinced it is not something I think of, but a shared bond that transcends time and space, that invites all of us and the more to come to be part of siblinghood, friendship, and fraternity. In other words, to discover and live within us that Life is something where all nature creatures belong, as it is part of our spiritual work and legacy to recognize and honor the divine spark smiling when we look to everything with eyes of Love.



Spencer Devine

New Zealand

This 2023 WFYT event in Naarden will always hold a special place in my memories and heart. I've never partaken in an event so unique, special and

wholesome before, it has made me feel very privileged and so grateful for the opportunity to participate. For a VERY long time I had yearned and craved to meet more like-minded people around my age bracket and in a sense, it was quite overwhelming suddenly being stuck with 50 or more young theosophists. It was a lot to process especially being so far from home but nonetheless like everyone else I was filled with joy. My highlight of the whole event was having the opportunity to partake in the daily workshops and I'll cherish that the most. It felt extremely refreshing and fun to be able to have such deep discussions with all involved and be present in all the heart-warming, non-judgmental energy that emanated the whole time. Thank you to all the organisers and volunteers who helped make this happen. I hope to be able to keep coming back to these events in the years to come!

Nilsa Valladares

Honduras

Participating in the Youth Convention held in Naarden has been an extraordinary experience. This multicultural and fraternal space is possible



thanks to the efforts of many Theosophists who, over the years, have kept the Theosophical Society and its ideals alive. Throughout the days, with the readings, activities and the work carried out, began to appear the magic that is possible only when many hearts beat in unison. That principle of Unity was embodied, which despite the various nationalities, languages and personal circumstances, manifested itself very easily, imbuing us with a powerful inspiration to share with those who were waiting for us at home. I can affirm

that this meeting and its experiences and teachings validate in some way what the heart already intuited. Ideals must be lived, they must jump from books to human life, and spread to everything that exists so that the divine plan continues in motion. I am very grateful to the organizing team, to the hosts and to the young theosophists for the beautiful shared experience.

Brandon Goh

Singapore



Unity, beauty and beatitude abounded in our gathering, but in the labyrinth of the unknown stood I. With abounding love and joy, meeting old comrades, yet

without support, inner and outer. Learn that there is no other, and tear the giant weed asunder, but there it was, a wall transparent. Despite all efforts, this barrier persisted, a gentle reminder of the mysteries that remain, closed doors and delays. And so, I accepted its presence, allowing it to be, surrendering to the flow of timeless moments. The first step lies in forgetting oneself — I am the Work, the Work am I — and merging in the river of life. For in the dance of oneness, all will find the way.

Vighnesh RVS

India



I said this during this first meeting at Naarden – I am usually very skeptical about large group workshop type of events. I don't usually come away from them with

any tangible sense of progress or meaningfulness, since it takes me forever to warm up to people in the first place. TS youth gatherings, though, have always defied those presumptions and surprised me. The connections are easy. The interactions have meaning. And the bonds are enduring. There was also quite a bit to learn – not just from Kurt, and from the experiences everyone shared – but also from the tiniest

of exchanges while working together in the kitchen or on the grounds, and even in the cloak and dagger in playing the werewolf game at nights.

New bonds were forged, and old ones re-forged, stronger. Ideas were tossed about – and some of those will take root and become important outlets for the tremendous, compassionate energy shared within the WFYT, and hopefully effect meaningful change in the different corners of the world we've all returned to. Good things will happen because we met. Let's make it count, while we take a beat every now and again to laugh at ourselves!



Leo Ta

Australia

The experience that I have had in Naarden is summarized in a few keywords.

Resistance: the resistance lasted for the first 2 days and diminished on the third day. Resistance includes both being resistant to people, environment and energy in the forms of skepticism, aloofness and judgment.

Realization: the lectures brought to light the realization of being ignorant towards the existence of the Devas. The ignorance is "Eyes of the flesh only see things of the flesh".

Awareness: the clarity of mind to know that ignorance is still there and the mind is still limited. And to know clearly, every single layers of ignorance need to be peeled off.

Integrity: the state of monitoring the ego or selfish desire or personal ill will, always observing from moment to moment and choose to function not from personality but from the Self. Do what is right, not what is easy.

Gratitude: the feeling of being grateful for every thing that has happened in life in order to help peeling off the layers of ignorance one by one. Even in pain there is still mercy. Suffering is a gift that contains mercy.

Elmer Overdevest

Netherlands

What another amazing WFYT gathering! I honestly did not really know what to expect of this 2023 edition - it was much longer, there were a lot more people, quite a different theme and set up and some new activities, but it exceeded all that I could wish for! Content-wise, it opened up a whole new world that I really did not understand, but truly fascinated me! These days made me much more aware of all that is hidden yet surrounds us everywhere. Kurt is such a wonderful teacher, and I think I speak for all if I say that he left us all inspired!

It was also wonderful to see that so many people could make their way to the beautiful and special place of the ITC in Naarden. Besides making new connections or strengthening old ones, it was truly a time of cooperation amongst all and for me personally it is so special that we can create this space in which everyone is loved completely for who they are. Super grateful to have been able to be part of this special event.



Kaio Giurizzato Utsch

Germany

As I've come to expect, this occurrence of our meeting has been a joyous occasion for the kind, loving and fun people strewn around the world to come together and inspire greatness in each other, for the work that is to come.

As a friend said to me this time around, nearing my last day, when I was confronted with the blues: "There is a time for taking, and a time for giving." Now it's time for giving. I had to leave early this time around but what gives me solace is the knowledge that this movement will continue and that we will meet again!





Catalina Isaza Cantor

Colombia/Adyar

Just a couple of weeks ago, in a magical place on the outskirts of Naarden, a group of luminous souls met again from the multiple dimensions of their fascinating beings. Amidst forests, songbirds and a sacred atmosphere, these young in body and wise in soul, managed to build an environment of cooperation, solidarity, union, mutual growth and siblinghood... With the guidance of their "Uncle Kurt" they were able to explore and continue to unveil the mysteries that lie beyond the unsuspecting gaze of the human eye. A sweet white force was created, a stream of light that, since then and forever, is to cover us with its mantle in every step we take, a form of light that inhabits us from within and urges us to share with those who cross our path the blessing of having been together for 7 days. We are not the same after Naarden and we have a clear mission: not to let the flame that guides us go out; to be light, love and compassion for all those around us; and to contribute so that the world becomes more like what we live together, and every being on earth can enjoy a similar happiness. When I think (feel) about this meeting, two words come to my being: gratitude and wholeness. Until next time, siblings of the soul!

José Montes Cruz

Spain

Other worlds exist in this... and there are many door gates to step in. I would dare to say that, one of those doors is in Naarden. The privilege and the golden opportunity, to become part of such magical and mystical place came to me one more time. There, pure nature surrounded by the Devas, the energy harmoniously embraces your soul, what a gift! And, of course, the very best, soul siblings that maybe was the first time that we met in this present life, but



probably many of us already met before. Sacred moments of sharing inner life with each other, arose spontaneously. Sometimes, deep messages in the silences. New paths, new teachings, good memories that will be always in our hearts. Thanks to TS, ITC Naarden, Kurt Leland, and all of you guys. All of You are the inspiration to still walking the path of life, to be in the world, but in a deeper level, in stillness, in connection with the source, aware of the divine flame that is inside us.



Clover Wu

Singapore

It was easier to be myself during the youth convention at the ITC. It's the simplest thing, yet the hardest thing to do – to be oneself. The drudgery of life can sometimes make me feel like I'm on a hamster wheel of death – running on the spot without purpose. The weakness of the personality and the incessant rush toward achieving results were wearing out my spiritual fervor, and I easily forgot myself and my purpose.

When I finally got to the ITC again for the youth convention, relief came over me like magic. Magic in the freedom of the trees, the paths, the slightly overgrown gardens, the magnetic statues, the houses with their windows that glisten in sunlight and moonlight. Being there reminded me that in order to face hardship in the world, it's important to reconnect with the divine in all things and replenish our spiritual reserves to go back into the real world renewed. The ITC was definitely quite the extraordinary spiritual reservoir and center.

Extraordinary also were the people at this convention. We just got each other. Whether or not we possess the clairvoyance to see the essence of someone, we knew on a spiritual level that that essence is who we really are. That gets the personality out of the way of us relating from our highest selves to each other's highest self. I was full of joy to reunite with friends I hadn't seen in since last year and meeting new friends was like a reunion of souls, too. It was

easy, helping with preparing the meals, with cleaning, with gardening, because it felt like we were one body, working together. Through walks and talks, games and chanting, my fellow youths and I bonded on a soul level. Kurt Leland and his seminar opened me up to how important, natural, and approachable it is to collaborate with various beings of Nature and attune ourselves to their needs. His presence alone moves me deeply and encourages the unfolding of compassion within me.

When we are true to ourselves, we shine brighter and everyone around us can benefit from it. I know me and everyone came out of this convention shining brighter to clear the mist and gloom in our lives and consequently in those of others. Even if the light wanes at times under the strong winds of hardship, we can always find our way back to ourselves – through each other.



Teemu Iltola

Finland

The week in Naarden ITC was most of all transformative on different levels. There were moments that I cannot describe with words, moments that gave me a feeling of something greater and universal. Inner visions and clarity in certain topics. A lot of "eye-opening" moments where pieces of old and new knowledge came together in a most supportive way. Atmosphere of openness, discussions and sharing formed a ground where real learning could happen. Also, there were warm moments that were more "personal learning". Moments where you found yourself dealing with nervousness around new people, how to participate or act in different situations. All those experiences formed a one-week school that was the kindest, stimulating, eye-opening and also challenging experience.

Aftermath of this all was a feeling of bliss and warmth that I try to carry as much as I can in this world of constant stimulation. And if I ever lose it for a while, let me find the spark again in darkness.

Hannes Pettersson

Sweden



I have many good impressions and memories from this youth gathering at the beautiful ITC Naarden. From the lectures, talks and sharings with Kurt I especially take with me the (for me) new thoughts about the devas. For example, I have never before understood the meaning of rituals and ceremonies but now when I think of them as a way to communicate and cooperate with the devas I understand them better. I also gained a deeper understanding of my own spiritual experiences thanks to Kurt.

I also have to mention the great workshops, especially the one about storytelling because it emphasized the importance of creativity and humor in spiritual work and everyday life!

Last but not least I really enjoyed all the old and new friends I met, people who made this gathering a wonderful experience!

Merike Martsepp

Estonia



Visiting Naarden for the first time, I was especially positively surprised, because I had no idea what a gathering of young theosophists would represent. Visiting it for the second time, I realized how great things can take many external forms. It was a precious and beautiful experience that we had there, which I can't fully put into words. Half of the attendees were new to me, but I still left knowing that I have a bigger spiritual family than I could have ever imagined. I hope that I will meet you many more times and that we can undertake and accomplish many amazing things together!

But among others, there were also some theosophists of a more mature generation, beautiful souls who did voluntary work at the center. I just love the sparkle in

the eyes of those who are excited about timeless ideas and willing to do anything to bring even just a little bit more of them into the world. The Gatherings of Young Theosophists are as fleeting as a burst of blossoms in a spring garden for each individual who attends them. And while these flowers are gorgeous, and hopefully will inspire us until next spring, their purpose is to mature into fruit. I hope from the bottom of my heart that we will be just as enthusiastic and close during the fruit ripening period!



Gabriele Sabetta

Italy

Time in Naarden remains suspended: once again I had this feeling. Generally, time in our ordinary lives slips out of our hands and events run at great speed.

But in Naarden everything seems to happen "outside of time": there is a level shift, everything dies and is reborn. Everything ends and begins again in Naarden.

At Naarden every gesture, every word, every glance – everything – is charged with meaning, overflowing with spirit: whether this depends on the particular frame of mind of the participants or on the magic of the place, or both, it's unknown: but this energy, if experienced with true and sincere openness, destroys the rigid barriers of the self and leads us to a higher truth. Naarden offers the possibility of experiencing the new beginning, the ever-possible restoration of the original condition of innocence and freedom, narrated in every myth. The exchange and embrace with brothers and sisters from all corners of the world, the sharing of all kinds of activities, the passionate study, can provoke the breaking of rigid identifications of the self and lead to new "revelations" through clearer and brighter forms.

What we experienced at Naarden, the new beginning of our spiritual life, must now be guarded as a precious treasure, must find a place in the center of the heart and sweetly cherished, so that we can witness the new greatness of our spirit at all times and in all places.

Justin Tanksley

United States

The WFYT youth gathering at the ITC in Naarden was more than I could ever have imagined. Prior to my arrival the mind was projecting all sorts of



possibilities and I learned the mind was wrong. My heart on the other hand, was filled with a tremendous sense of love for my Theosophical family. The program delivered by Kurt Leland was enlightening and inspiring. The grounds at the ITC are more than remarkable and most beautiful. The outer experience of the trip for me was amazing and yet the inner experience was beyond any words that I can write. I came to the WFYT retreat with many ideas and thoughts in my mind but I left with nothing but love and inspiration in my heart. Yes, there is a deep friendship forged in an experience like this one but also a deep remembering of the family we already are.

Krista Umbjarv

France

This year's gathering was rather exceptional in quite a few and, I would say, unexpected ways. All the different aspects of the event, like participating in



the lectures and workshops, doing various volunteering activities, and just spending some time together, created a unique and unforgettable atmosphere and impression that, I am sure, all participants will remember for a long time. It would probably be difficult if not impossible to convey to those who were not present what went on. I wonder whether even those of us who we were there could currently formulate and truly understand the underlying forces that were put into movement during the event and whether it will not in some cases take even years to unveil their true impact. I am truly grateful to all the organisers, participants and especially Kurt who all together created this amazing space for everyone to be able to discover themselves.



Elena Bessie Camplone

Italy

Once again this year's gathering of young theosophists took place at the beautiful international center in Naarden, Netherlands. These were days of full sharing, where cooperation was truly lived out. We all got to cook together, garden, and share deep mystical and spiritual experiences, with the kind and understanding guidance of Kurt Leland who brought us to a different level of awareness. I think for many of us there is a "before and after" Naarden 2023.



Marko Leosk

United Kingdom

October 2021 I moved to Brazil, Porto Algre to live in a community house. I was about to finish Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy* when Emmanuel from the community house gave me a Portugese copy of *The Secret Doctrine* part I. I already had the Estonian version but I decided to see if I can encourage myself to learn Portugese in a faster rate with this version.

Months later I travelled to Peru and was unable to return the book to Emmanuel so we spoke on the matter and decided to wait to return the book.

Febraury 2022 I moved to London and attempted to ship the book back to Emmanuel - with 3 rose quartz crystals from Peru added as gifts for Emmanuel and 2 other of our mutual friends. The post service claimed it was lost and Emmanuel never received it but a week before I was due to fly to Peru in July 2022, the book made a sudden reappearance.

Hastily I departed to Peru, Cuzco, taking the book with me in hopes to ship the book back to Emmanuel. I had been filming in Peru and after the last day of the shoot, I spoke to Emmanuel and decided to not ship

the book to Brazil from Peru in case it gets lost again and perhaps this time for good. We decided to wait until this can be done in person, perhaps.

August 2022 I returned to Europe and the book stayed in the envelope along with the 3 crystals in it.

June 2023 I was packing my bags to travel to Naarden and found the envelope in my cupboard. I held it in my hands and decided to pack this with me - it felt right to do so.

In Naarden, I met a dear brother Igor from Brazil who we became close friends with only to discover later he was flying to Porto Alger! I spoke to Emmanuel and connected him with Igor. It all connected and the book was returned to Brazil after many years.

This story summarises my experience at Naarden. Beautiful, happy, kind, adventorous and unpredictable. So much life! Enthusiastic. It all connected and it felt like something that has happened before, but perhaps not during this lifetime. *(image proof below)*



Igor Xavier

Brazil

The two weeks that I spent at ITC were like a dream, with gentle people, I could feel the energy of Nature, the connection with the moment and the feeling when we were meditating in group. Working in the gardens was different, to me it's not a daily activity, so, one more reason to be a nice thing to do. I felt like I was part of something bigger, something good and peaceful. I really loved being there!!!





Fátima Martín

Spain

I feel very lucky to be part of the WFYT, and extremely thankful for its existence. Meeting all together and enjoying this atmosphere feels like a

reward after times of lonely seeking and questioning; it is a sweet and soft gift, that fills the heart with solid hope and recharges the will batteries. It is very unique, to feel so naturally connected to the needs and ideas of others; there is a kind of glue or substance that makes this understanding so easy and so deep.

After my second youth encountering I can say that it is not just luck or specific circumstances, I feel this magic fraternity is a result of:

- Each individual's honest commitment with living a more conscious, caring and surrendering to Divine life
- The interest towards our Guidance Masters that support the activity of the TS and I am sure, enjoy seeing us all together
- The physical expression of each one's heart aspiration towards Unity

Thanks so much to the ITC, to the board members and organizers of the WFYT, to each and all of the participants... I can't wait to meet you again and clean the grasses of the whole flooring of Naarden and beyond!!



Tobia Buscaglione

Italy

I am personally not sure the best way to celebrate and remember an experience is to come back home bumped into everyday life and start

talking about it, sharing feelings, regretting what we could not do, emphasizing what we appreciated and which met our own expectations. But you know, sometimes it's also time to take stock.

I would like to suggest a couple of travel notes and postcards to describe our journey together, in fact, a

journey is often the path itself and the destination point at the same time: during this path we opened a curtain that would be very difficult close even if we wanted to. We explored our own cave, entering the labyrinth of our minds and souls, with a bright purpose in our hearts, seeking for the spirit or ghost, safely hidden inside a shell, that supports us to bring it out there in the world and make it real, tangible, by connecting to the true and intimate part of ourselves, recognizing the Self in the others as equal and different from us, and in the beings who inhabit other realms. We managed to provide food to all the participants thinking like a family with needs and duties, knowing that we have to feed ourselves and not just to eat, learning to ask and to take care, doing every our little thing with the mindset of who is building a cathedral, without forgetting to be deeply grateful ever.

Pauline van Tol

Netherlands



Another youth conference was planned in Naarden, the Netherlands, this year. Another joyful meeting of young theosophists from all corners of the world, from New Zealand to Brazil. The conference had Kurt Leland as a guest speaker, who taught us about the world of the devas and about acting more and more from a perspective of unity consciousness. During the week, we discussed together in workshops, had walks in the magical forest around the ITC, cooked or worked in the garden together, sang mantras together, meditated together, played games together, wrote stories together, or listened to each other's stories about own experiences with magical happenings in our lives. The more time we spent together as individuals from all sorts of backgrounds and places, the more I felt that these outer distinctions slowly began to fade away. What was left was a more and more synchronization from within, as chords that were played more and more in a harmonious tune. What this tune sounded like? Our sharings on the last day, and how we looked back at the conference, could potentially shed more light on this. Maybe it was joy. Maybe it was love. Or maybe an embodiment of this unity consciousness.



Hanwen Kee

Singapore

I have always struggled with perfection. Using words like "this and that happened because I'm not perfect/She's not perfect/He's not perfect" or like

"what did you expect from me/them? I'm not perfect" or "they are not perfect, I'm having too high expectations from them".

But now I realise that it's not that the universe is not perfect. It's our expectations that's keeping us from realising that the universe is perfect. The entire cosmos is in perfect geometry and harmony but because in our petty minds we have expectations of how things should be, that blind us from seeing that the universe is happening right before our very eyes.

Once we let go of our expectations and see that we are in fact living in the present moment and in acceptance of what is happening around us, we can discover inner peace and inner joy.



Yunuen Fortanell

Mexico

Personally, it was a magical event that surpassed my expectations. I enjoyed meeting many theosophists I had met before only online. When the

organization of the event started, I was not sure if I would be able to attend because of my job. But all aspects that were needed for me to attend aligned. I even had the opportunity to arrive at the ITC about 15 days before the event. So, I worked as a volunteer, and I met many theosophists who, some years ago, were young theosophists as well. They made me feel very welcome and I could see an example of the type of kindness and wisdom I want to project myself.

During the Young Theosophists gathering, the feeling of connection and siblinghood was even more intense. It was like if all of us were friends since a long

time ago. I bet that is the case from past lives. I am very thankful that in my last year as young theosophist I got the chance to participate in this event, that has been so meaningful for my recent start as a middle-aged theosophist. I hope during coming years I can still attend future gatherings.

Thank you very much for everything.

Kiran Apsunde

Ireland



Attending the Youth Conference at ITC Naarden was an experience that I had eagerly awaited after a year full of ups and downs. Having had a

wonderful experience at the conference last year, I was excited to return and reconnect with the amazing souls I had met. Amidst the hustle and bustle of our daily lives, it is easy to lose sight of our spiritual nature. The gathering provided a much-needed escape to recharge my spiritual batteries and reconnect with the immortal higher Self.

The conference offered a safe and inclusive environment that allowed each participant to truly be themselves and share their challenges, experiences, and stories. This cultivated a deep sense of oneness among us, reminding me of the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, "*We are here to awaken from the illusion of separateness.*" From the group chanting sessions to the engaging workshops, late-night games, and casual discussions on various topics, there was an abundance of joy and fun. Additionally, engaging in volunteer activities with a pure sense of service fostered a spirit of universal brotherhood.

One of the highlights of the conference for me was the sessions led by Kurt on Cooperative Work. These sessions were filled with wisdom and provided valuable insights for my personal spiritual journey. I deeply appreciated the knowledge and guidance shared during these sessions.

The Youth Conference at ITC Naarden, as expected, was a transformative experience that allowed me to deepen my self-awareness and forge meaningful

connections with others. It served as a reminder of the importance of nurturing our spiritual growth while embracing the collective spirit of unity and service. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.*" I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of this wonderful event.

ITC Naarden is a remarkable venue that radiates positivity. As Theosophists, I believe it is our collective responsibility to preserve and cherish this valuable asset in every way we can.

Sara Ortega

Spain

This has been such a joyful and refreshing experience! When one starts treading the path of inner search for Truth, one soon discovers the path is not that crowded, and so it may take a while (many years!) to find like-minded people of your age to connect with. And that itself probably is part of the journey... so one can keep building inner strength, self-reliance, awareness, etc and therefore grow in capacity to become an "agent" of Life as Kurt beautifully put it. And when ultimately we find these people who you can relate with, it feels comforting, in a way which goes beyond understanding. It warms the heart, and it causes to open up the innermost sacred essence, because there is harmony and consciousness in a similar wavelength all around.

One of the highlights of the gathering for me was the chanting sessions, which were spontaneously organized by the talented Leo who was inspired two days in a row! A group of souls singing in tune for:

Om Shanti - World Peace / Self Peace

Om Mani Pad Me Hum - Self Purification

Aatma Premam - Self Love, Self Forgiveness/Compassion

Each time a few words, an embracing melody, binding us together as a whole, manifesting and feeling the energy of unity consciousness and cooperation. Such a beautiful, timeless, profound experience. In those moments one feels truly alive, yet losing the sense of "me". Eternally grateful to the Universe and its Grace machine, for everything fits so perfectly!



Wei Ling Lau

Singapore

In the land of Naarden, I embarked on a journey, To the gathering of Young Theosophists, an opportunity. Unfazed by the cost of travel, I knew in my heart, That the experiences awaiting me would be priceless art.



As I arrived, I was warmly embraced, By the organizers, their kindness encased. Guides in this foreign domain, Provided me with information, easing any strain.

A volunteer led me through the center's door, Attending to my needs, making my stay so much more. The days of the gathering unfolded with grace, Under Kurt's wisdom, we found our spiritual place.

In the plenary introduction, hopes were shared, I expressed my wish for transformation, each soul bared. Kurt's lectures inspired, unveiling the master's way, Teaching us to live in harmony, with nature as our sway.

With stories untold, he shared the unseen, Annie Besant's legacy, a guiding light, serene. Amidst nature's embrace, we discovered a magical site, Connecting energies, in a pool of energy's might.

The International Theosophical Centre, a mystical forest, Where dreams come alive, possibilities manifest. Volunteering activities filled our days with joy, Cleaning stairs, tending to the land, each task we employ.

Nourished by the love from Elena and friends, Food made with care, a gift that never ends. In the workshop, we weaved stories as a team, Creating a tapestry of thought, a collective dream.

Leo surprised us with a chanting workshop divine, Angelic devotion filling our hearts, a sacred shrine. Tears of gratitude flowed for the unseen realm, Their presence known, a larger group overwhelmed.

With love and kisses, we bid farewell, Grateful for the team who made our hearts swell. A magical gathering etched in memory's embrace, Leaving us with warmth and a smile on our face.

Testimonials from special guest



Kurt Leland

*International lecturer for TS
Adyar, practicing clairvoyant*

When I wrote the description for "*The Path of Cooperation and the Spiritual Life*", I worded the final sentence carefully: "*As we work, study, and play together, we may find ourselves surrounded by a mutually supportive community based on the ideal of unity consciousness.*" There was no guarantee that we would get there--and I did not want to imply that I or the program could make it happen. Yet, by the end of the week, we certainly had achieved this intention. I was astonished at the amount of cooperation I saw in the garden and the kitchen, as well as the enthusiasm shown by the group during my presentations and the good-natured laughter and high spirits present at all times. I was especially touched by the degree of trust present in the group when we shared our spiritual and mystical experiences during the two "*In the Twilight*" programs. In our final meeting, when people spoke about what the week had meant to them, several used a favorite phrase of mine: "spiritual family". If the Young Theosophists would not mind having an "elderly" uncle in their midst, I would be happy to join your spiritual family!

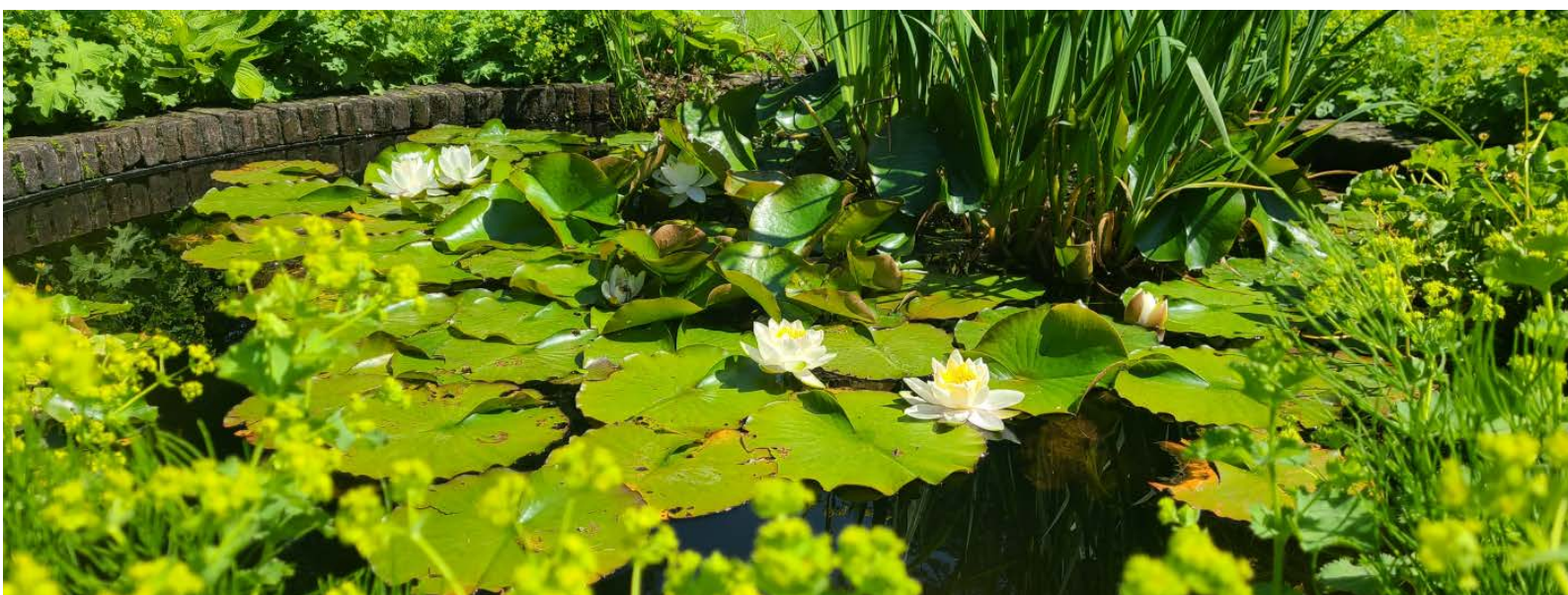
Tim Boyd

*International President of
the Theosophical Society*

Again this year the WFYT group met at the International Theosophical Centre in the Netherlands. The numbers of young members attending keeps growing, as do the number of countries represented. This year was special because an even younger generation was present as YT parents brought their kids along. It was another high energy group that organized itself around The Path of Cooperation. Whether it was program planning, giving loving attention to the ITC gardens, cooking the meals, watching over the kids, or participating in the meetings; caring and mutual cooperation was the theme. The bonds that the group is forming will benefit the TS and the world in days to come. I was proud to be a small part of it.



Lotus flowers in the garden pond in front of St. Michaels house



Testimonials from host ITC



Arend Heijbroek

Chairman ITC Naarden

We were very happy and privileged to host the second WFYT gathering at ITC Naarden again. The importance of meetings like these where young and serious TS members learn, experience and work together, making life lasting friendships, can not be underestimated. The networking, programming and food was very well organized. The meals were really excellent, several of the gardens looked better than in many years due to the cooperation with the garden group. Congratulations with your teamwork. Moreover, the program with Kurt Leland created an important base for the future of the WFYT, and allowed to experience some of the finer energies at ITC.

Know that you are always welcome at the European home of the TS.

With warm greetings from our ITC team.



Peter LePoole

Council member at ITC

As part of the support team of ITC I had, like last year, plenty of opportunity to observe and share in the great energies created by this gathering of young theosophists. From different countries and backgrounds you were all visibly united in your quest for growth and a meaningful life. There was lots of happiness, joy, and of course emotions. I was privileged to have been part of this.



Mariël Polman

Kitchen volunteer at ITC

I enjoyed (and still enjoy) participating and helping with the gathering. It was an experiment in cooking ourselves – no professional cook – and it worked out well. My job was to help in the kitchen: washing, cutting, cleaning and organising. Very practical, but also full of encounters, in conversation or in a look of attention and of joy.

Supporting in the kitchen is inspiring because that too is done from the unity, with attention and love, the unity of the gathering, the place, the weather, the unity of life. The atmosphere was good, open, sparkling and energetic. It was precious to be there. I am looking forward to next year.

Photo Gallery



First evening introductions

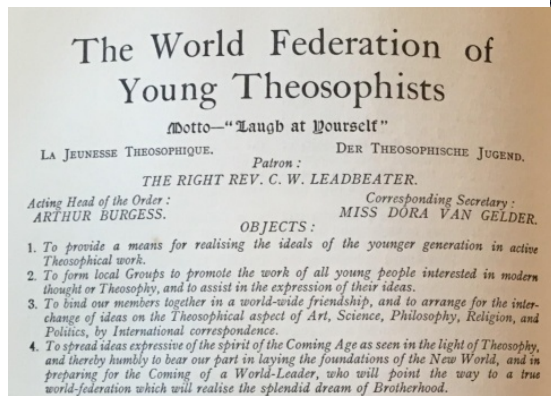


Mornings started with meditations and a good stretch

Kurt Leland facilitated morning sessions on cooperative work



Motto "Laugh at yourself"
from an earlier WFYT constitution



Fátima, arquitect specialized in bambu, offered to make a beautiful motif over the Buddha statue



Volunteering activities in the gardens in front of St Michaels house with ITC workers



Back at Crystal Hall to feed our bodies



"OM" circle leading to a meal





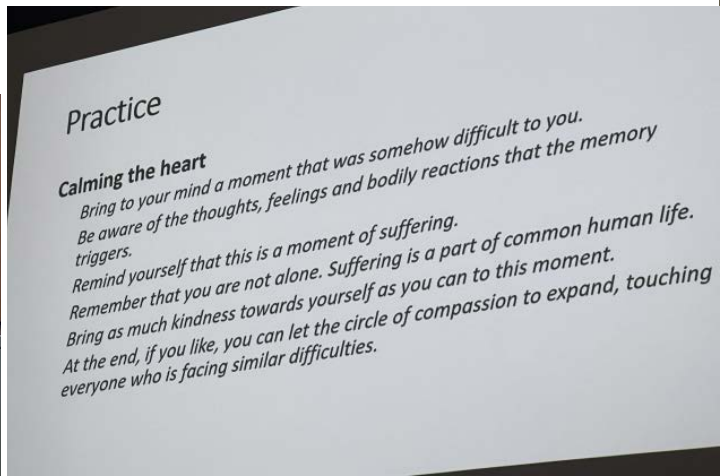
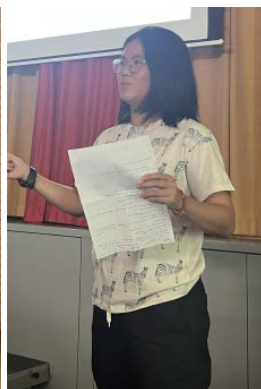
Storytelling workshop



Art workshop



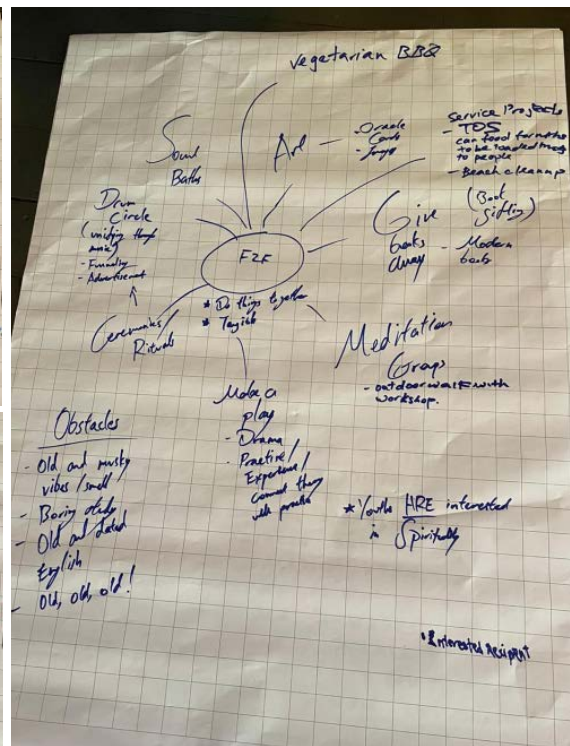
Compassion workshop



Workshop on "Sharing the Light" to brainstorm ideas to try at our respective lodges considering their circumstances

SPREADING THEOSOPHY:

- © SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT
 - IG
 - TIKTOK
 - FACEBOOK ETC
- © FACE-TO-FACE SUPPORT GROUPS
 - RELATABILITY
 - SUCCESS STORIES
 - LISTENING TO THE YOUTH & CATERING FOR THEIR NEEDS
- © JOURNALING GROUP
 - CREATING A COMMUNITY & TRUST
 - FACILITATES FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION



How can we be effective in spreading theosophy?

- no official recruitment programme
- Being the light; embodying theosophy
- Practical solutions/workshop/materials to people's problems/challenges
- Meditation as an entry point
- reading group & film discussion group
- Spontaneous circumstances (leaving books around)
- books in public libraries
- Festivals & events
- University/colleges/schools talks... integrated in the educational program.

ii - Engaging activities ~ dynamic

- A space where people can be free to explore their spiritual path
- Youth guide for newcomers & new members
- Keep producing content on online platforms

***NO TIKTOK (or...?)**



At Besant Hall, Sara made sure snacks were always ready!

There was a lot of volunteering activity in the kitchen... prepping, cooking meals.... and cleaning the dishes





Kurt led a walk around the grounds of the ITC

Both children and adults trod the labyrinth



There was time for playing games...

...chanting sessions...



...exploring outside the ITC...



...having fun together...

...and silence within.





Tim and Lily with the youngest participants



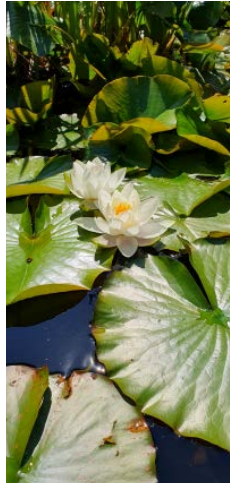
Interactive conversation with Tim and Kurt



In the Twilight sessions precious experiences were shared



Closing circle in the last session



Statues in the Garden of Meditation



Time to say goodbye... with hugs, smiles, hearts full of joy and love... until we meet again!



Thanks

To all young theosophists who could join, each one brought a unique energy to build a magical collective experience, full of Life, kindness, sensitivity, goodwill, openmindedness, and heartfulness.

To the ITC Naarden, a wonderful host for such a gathering, an international Centre suited for transformative retreats.

To all theosophical sponsors who made this event possible in the first place.

To General Secretaries and Presidents of Regional Federations of the TS for their explicit support and best wishes for the youth movement.

To Kurt Leland for generously sharing his experiences and vision on the third object of the TS as the foundation of the cooperative work and towards the spiritually dedicated life.

To Tim Boyd for wholeheartedly supporting the youth movement, and sharing moments and conversations.

To all workers at the ITC Naarden.

Our deepest gratitude - may it inspire the work to be done in the future of the TS in all corners of the world.

