

# OMEGA



2014 Annual Report



## Dear Friends,

Looking back at 2014, I think about what we learned over the past year, how we've evolved as an organization. I think about what we can bring forward from our experience into the future, and how we can hold space for others to do the same—to explore their own paths and discover their potential to live with greater connection and purpose.

This was a very successful year for Omega, touching some 20,000 lives on our Rhinebeck campus and reaching more than a million people online around the world. By increasing our digital learning opportunities, we made it easier for people to continue learning and searching—no matter where they are. By becoming more active on social media, we built stronger connections and were able to inspire an even larger audience.

While we know the effects of our work ripple far out into the world, we gained more definitive information about our impact on the Hudson Valley region through a comprehensive study that was completed by Camoin Associates in 2014. In addition to citing Omega's significant financial impact, the report noted Omega's less-quantifiable value—the impact we have on individual lives.

Serving this vital role for the economy is a natural outgrowth of our nonprofit mission, our concern for our community and for the planet, and our approach to cultivating social change. The report also acknowledged the importance of our key initiatives, including the Omega Center for Sustainable Living, the Omega Women's Leadership Center, Service Week, and veterans programs.

As part of a global community, Omega is working to create a more equitable, peaceful, and regenerative world. The programs, events, and achievements that are highlighted on the following pages wouldn't be possible without the support of so many who believe in our mission and share our commitment to unlocking the extraordinary potential in us all. We are deeply grateful to you, and look forward to another year of hope, healing, renewal, and growth.

Warmly,

*Skip Backus*

Robert "Skip" Backus  
Chief Executive Officer

# RHINEBECK CAMPUS PROGRAMS

People come to Omega looking for inspiration, information, healing, and so much more as they nurture their personal growth and work toward unlocking their full potential. In 2014, Omega offered more than 280 workshops, retreats, conferences, and training opportunities on our Rhinebeck campus.

Omega's workshops are grouped into six learning paths: Body, Mind & Spirit; Health & Healing; Creative Expression; Relationships & Family; Leadership & Work; and Sustainable Living. Following is a small sampling of our 2014 programs.



## BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

**Living in the Moment** In a rare opportunity, Eckhart Tolle and Kim Eng led a 5-day retreat focused on gaining a deeper state of awareness and reaching a place of ease, lightness, and inner peace. The retreat filled Main Hall with 500 participants who learned practical, applicable skills for living in the present moment.

“As soon as you honor the present moment, all unhappiness and struggle dissolve, and life begins to flow with joy and ease.” —Eckhart Tolle



Holistic Life Foundation

**Urban Youth Yoga & Mindfulness** Ali Smith, Atman Smith, and Andres Gonzalez of the Holistic Life Foundation presented Urban Youth Yoga & Mindfulness, a training in teaching yoga and mindfulness to high-risk and hard-to-reach urban youth. Joined by leading meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg, they explored a variety of teaching philosophies, strategies, and techniques to create practical—and fun—curriculum.

## HEALTH & HEALING

**Live Well With Lyme Disease** Despite the spread of Lyme disease, there are still few places to turn for answers about its transmission, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment. In 2014, Omega introduced the Living Well With Lyme Disease conference, a unique forum exploring the latest information about Lyme. Presenters included Richard Horowitz, MD, Tom Francescotti, ND, and Katina I. Makris, CCH, CIH.

One participant, who had struggled with symptoms of Lyme for many years, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn about such a breadth of naturopathic and allopathic treatments for Lyme. The participant (who has requested to remain anonymous) was inspired to help others find the same information, and made a donation of \$100,000 to provide scholarships for Omega's 2015 Living Well With Lyme Disease conference. This gift will broaden the conference's audience and help others get the support they need in managing the disease.

# RHINEBECK CAMPUS PROGRAMS

Jon Gabriel



**The Gabriel Method™ of Weight Loss** Jon Gabriel's experience of dropping more than 200 pounds inspired him to write *The Gabriel Method™*, detailing his transformative approach to weight loss. In 2014, more than 160 individuals joined Jon at Omega to examine their inner beliefs and learn to lose weight while nourishing the body, mind, and soul.

"In my own personal transformation process, I was fortunate to go on many similar retreats like this," Gabriel said. "Even today, I set aside at least 2-3 weeks of each year for healthy learning immersions. . . a time where I can focus just on myself and my health. . . set goals and intentions for the future. . . eat great food and enjoy nature. . . and most of all, get inspired by an amazing group of teachers and new friends from all over the world."

## RELATIONSHIPS & FAMILY



Caroline Myss

**Understanding Our Relationships** Thought leader, best-selling author, and modern mystic Caroline Myss presented *Understanding New Patterns in Intimate Relationships*. In her first workshop on this topic at Omega, she led participants on a journey through several decades to look at shifts in the nature of how we relate to one another.

"Intimacy is a word you have to understand in a whole new way," said Myss during her opening session, as she described the emergence of the "inner self" in the post-World War II era. "The inner self drives your life. It is your most intimate relationship. And the inner self is an anomaly of our era. It's from there that you structure your relationship with the whole of your life."

**Keeping the Bond Strong** Sil Reynolds and daughter Eliza Reynolds visited campus three times in 2014, offering three workshops for mothers and daughters looking for ways to keep their connection strong throughout the pre-teen and teenage years.

Mothers worked on communication strategies and managing the balance between holding on and letting go, while daughters explored their feelings and their vision of themselves—as daughters and as young women.



Sil Reynolds and Eliza Reynolds

Bobby McFerrin



## CREATIVE EXPRESSION

**Full Circle** In 2014, Omega celebrated 25 years of dynamic singing with 10-time Grammy Award winner Bobby McFerrin. In August of 1988—one month before his mega-hit "Don't Worry, Be Happy" was released—McFerrin offered his first Circlesongs workshop on Omega's Rhinebeck, New York, campus. Since then, nearly 1,500 participants have raised their voices and enjoyed improvisational workshops with Bobby McFerrin here at Omega.



Cheryl Strayed

**Telling Your Story** Cheryl Strayed, author of the *New York Times* best seller *Wild*, shared her expertise on the craft of writing in *The Story You Have to Tell*. Fifty writers—from novice to advanced—delves into topics such as humor, emotional risk-taking, and learning to trust intuition.

Providing a balance to the special activities and entertainment during Family Week, this workshop gave parents time for personal growth and creative play of their own.

# RHINEBECK CAMPUS PROGRAMS

## LEADERSHIP & WORK

**Let the Future Emerge** The ability to sense—and actualize—opportunity is an essential leadership tool. Leading From the Emerging Future invited participants to engage with this new approach to leadership, and explore their capacity to create profound change.



Based on Otto Scharmer’s concept of “presencing” as a way to gain awareness and inspire transformation, he and Arawana Hayashi shared exercises and embodiment practices for leaders to take back to the workplace.

**Yoga, Purpose & Action** Seane Corn, Hala Khouri, and Suzanne Sterling are cofounders of Off the Mat, Into the World®, a nonprofit organization that uses yoga and somatic experiencing to inspire leadership and change.

In 2014, they returned to Omega for the seventh time to lead Yoga, Purpose & Action. During the 5-day leadership intensive, they taught practical tools of yoga, meditation, and voice while exploring issues of environment, equity, and social justice.

“We believe it takes radical self-inquiry, collaboration, and conscious action to transform the world and ourselves,” they say.

*Read about Omega’s Women’s Leadership programs on page 12.*



## SUSTAINABLE LIVING

**Edible Oasis** During their workshop, Eric Toensmeier and Jonathan Bates, permaculture specialists and coauthors of *Paradise Lot*, focused on easy-care perennial fruits and vegetables as the foundation of a home-grown edible oasis. Through demonstrations and hands-on lessons, they illustrated how to reduce our carbon footprint and eat food grown in our own yards.



**Grow Food Everywhere** Food is transformational for health and also for community—and the good news is, it can be grown just about anywhere. Farmers Ricky Baruc and Deb Habib shared gardening techniques for turning lawns, windowsills, and urban lots into sources of fresh, nutritious local food.

*Read more about Omega’s Sustainable Living programs on page 8.*

## OMEGA R&R RETREATS

Omega Rest & Rejuvenation Retreats are designed for relaxation, reflection—and fun.

Guests enjoy special R&R classes where they can learn new skills, explore nature, and engage in eco-friendly living practices. Take Omega Home With You classes make it easier to bring the Omega experience into daily life, with techniques such as journaling, making sacred space, and more.

R&R participation increased in 2014—particularly during a special July 4th weekend promotion, which saw close to 300 percent more retreatants than past years.



# OMEGA CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Over the weekend of October 24-26, Omega held the 2014 OCSL Conference, Where We Go From Here: Building the Collaborative Commons, hailed by presenter David Bollier as “the first major conference on the commons in North America.”



Including leading environmental advocate Vandana Shiva, CNN commentator Van Jones, and acclaimed author and activist Winona LaDuke, more than 15 speakers addressed climate change, agriculture and seed saving, energy supply, 3D printing, the sharing economy, green jobs, computer coding, and more.

“Enclosure & Recovery of Biological & Intellectual Commons”  
Illustration by David Hasbury of Vandana Shiva’s 2014 OCSL conference keynote



## OCSL OFFERS PERMACULTURE DESIGN CERTIFICATE

The OCSL hosted its second, 4-week Ecological Literacy Immersion Program (ELIP) in 2014. Working with teachers experienced in regenerative design, permaculture, biodynamic agriculture, and more, participants learned to better understand natural systems and how to live and work within them.

The results can be seen around campus, particularly alongside the OCSL building, where students built swales to catch and hold water, and planted mushrooms, hops, and grapes in a growing food forest.

Graduates received an internationally recognized Permaculture Design Certificate. “I know the participants are taking a fresh perspective with them as they continue their journeys toward creating the world that they want to see,” said OCSL assistant director Laura Weiland.

## THE FUTURE OF FOOD QUALITY

Farmers, journalists, chefs, educators, and others from across the country came to Omega for the second consecutive year to discuss research, collaborations, and other projects relating to food quality.

In 2013, the group began discussing what food quality is and how to achieve it. This year, they advanced the conversation and began working together to coordinate research, develop protocols, and discuss possibilities for sharing resources.



## WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Omega’s 3rd Annual OCSL Leadership in Sustainable Education Award was given to Groundwork Hudson Valley, an organization that works to help distressed communities in the lower Hudson Valley build a sustainable future.



“We’re proud to support their work, from the arts to community gardens to a science barge on the Hudson River,” said Omega CEO Robert “Skip” Backus, when he presented them with a cash award and working retreat during the Where We Go From Here conference. “We look forward to a long relationship with them.”



Van Jones

## VAN JONES SAYS OMEGA INSPIRED GREEN JOBS INITIATIVE

“I remember coming to Omega and having my eyes opened,” said Van Jones, cohost of CNN’s *Crossfire* and a pioneer in the clean energy economy, during a rousing keynote address at the 2014 OCSL conference.

He described meeting Julia Butterfly Hill—an activist who spent two years living in a California Redwood tree to prevent it from being cut down—at a previous Omega conference. “The whole green jobs thing was born on Omega’s stage with me and Julia Butterfly Hill trying to understand each other,” he said.

From starting the Oakland Green Jobs Corps, to the passage of the Green Jobs Act of 2007, to writing the best-selling book *The Green*

*Collar Economy*, to serving as President Barack Obama’s special advisor for green jobs, enterprise, and innovation—it all began, according to Jones, with a conversation at Omega.

### Omega in ACTION

#### OMEGA JOINS 400,000 FOR PEOPLE’S CLIMATE MARCH

On Sunday, September 21, an estimated 400,000 people took to the streets of Manhattan to show their support for strong action on climate change. The OCSL was proud to take part with well over a thousand other businesses, unions, faith groups, and environmental organizations. The message to government leaders who were assembled during the United Nations Climate Summit was clear: We need strong, scientifically meaningful, and decisive action on climate change. Our future and the future of our children depend on it.

## WOMEN’S PERMACULTURE RETREAT AIMS TO CONNECT, RENEW & BUILD

Omega hosted what’s become an annual gathering for both the Northeastern Women in Permaculture group and the regional gathering for permaculture educators, authors, organizers, and practitioners. The retreat supports inclusion and a diversity of leadership perspectives from women of different backgrounds, in a safe, supportive, and empowering environment.

### Omega in ACTION

#### OMEGA CEO SPEAKS AT NET POSITIVE ENERGY + WATER CONFERENCE

The Omega Center for Sustainable Living—the first green building in the United States to achieve both LEED® Platinum and Living Building Challenge™ certification—was the subject of remarks by Omega CEO Robert “Skip” Backus at the Net Positive Energy + Water Conference in San Francisco, California.



I went from feeling paralyzed by the degraded state of many of our natural systems to feeling inspired, empowered, and equipped with the tools to nurture the regeneration of the Earth.”

—ELIP Participant

## NATIONAL LAND TRUST LEADERS MEET AT OMEGA

The National Land Trust Leadership Council chose Omega’s Rhinebeck campus as the site of its annual retreat. The Council was created by the Land Trust Alliance—a network of some 1,700 individual organizations—to nurture communication and innovation among top conservation leaders in the country. Omega was an ideal setting for strategizing about important issues of land conservation—and also seeding deeper relationships for future collaborations.

## COMMUNITY LEARNS ABOUT STEWARDING WETLAND HABITATS

Omega partnered with the Town of Clinton Conservation Advisory Council and Hudsonia, Inc., for a morning workshop to help inform town residents about the wetland habitats they steward on their properties. The information shared stemmed from a survey Hudsonia conducted of ecologically significant habitats in the area. Omega’s wetland areas were used as examples for landowners, town officials, and others who attended.

# OMEGA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CENTER



**Omega in ACTION** A feature story in *Fast Company* magazine declared, "The Omega Women's Leadership Institute is a kinder, gentler boot camp for women leaders who want to change the world."

## WOMEN & MEN: THE NEXT CONVERSATION

During the 2014 Women & Power Conference, Women & Men: The Next Conversation, men and women explored how to live, love, and work together as whole human beings. Men have long been invited to attend the conferences, but this was the first year they were invited as keynote speakers and workshop presenters.

Authors, athletes, business leaders, artists, and activists were all part of the conversation, each demonstrating how they are moving humanity forward and breaking out of boxes that have constrained women and men for centuries. Featured speakers included long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad, educator and activist Tony Porter, Grammy Award winner India.Arie, poet Carlos Andrés Gómez, and many more.



Diana Nyad



I wake up every day, not a woman, not an atheist, not a Democrat, not a child of sexual abuse, not a lesbian. I am all those things in part. But I am defiant in not letting myself be defined or limited as only one of those things.... Really, I'm a person who just won't give up. I'm a citizen of the world, like you."

—Long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad at the 2014 Women & Power Conference



# OMEGA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CENTER

## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INTENSIVE LEADS THE WAY FOR NEW PROGRAMS

In its second year, the 5-day Women's Leadership Intensive was led by meditation teacher and author Sharon Salzberg, yoga instructor and wellness coach Leslie Salmon Jones, human rights advocate Mallika Dutt, OWLC cofounder Carla Goldstein, and OWLC director Michele Bertran.

It was an opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue and self-reflection, and also use tools such as writing, yoga, and meditation to look at the changing nature of leadership—and what it means to them.

The Intensive focused on four women's leadership essentials: values, voice, vision, and voyage. Participants looked inward and to each other to discover how to “become the kind of leader the world needs now.”

In all, the OWLC offered eight new workshops in 2014, building on the success of the annual Women & Power gathering and the Intensive. The new programs covered a breadth of topics, from conflict resolution to financial literacy to public speaking to “flying” on the trapeze—all geared to support women on their individual leadership journeys.

The rollout of these new programs is an exciting advance in the OWLC's development of an interdisciplinary curriculum for women's leadership.



Top row: Leona Palmer, Carla Goldstein, Leslie Salmon Jones, Sharon Salzberg; bottom row: Michele Bertran, Mallika Dutt

### Omega in ACTION

#### OWLC HELPS ADVANCE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

OWLC director Michele Bertran participated in a mediation training with InAccord Justice Centers, where she represented the work of Omega and the OWLC with others working for peaceful solutions and just outcomes.

Held in Denver, Colorado, the training was led by Shauna Ries, cofounder of Mediators Without Borders and InAccord Justice Centers. Ries and Bertran coteach the OWLC workshop, *Leading With Emotional Courage*.

## RESIDENCY OPPORTUNITIES HELP WOMEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Juno Women's Leadership Residency is a unique opportunity for women making a difference in the lives of women and girls. During 2-day or 5-day retreats, residents stay in Omega's Juno Cottage and have access to all campus amenities. They enjoy time, space, and inspiration to complete important work.



While on campus, residents contribute to the Women's Leadership Questions Project—answering three questions about leadership asked by previous residents, and leaving behind questions of their own. The discussion fosters a sense of connection among residents through sharing the experience, and also informs further OWLC curriculum development.

In the acknowledgements section of her book, *Never Can Say Goodbye*, a *New York Times* best-selling anthology, Sari Botton wrote, “Omega Institute's Women's Leadership Center generously granted me a weeklong residency in their nicest cabin at their beautiful center in Rhinebeck.” Sari also expressed her

gratitude in a *Chronogram* magazine profile, saying that her retreat was “restorative and productive in equal measures.”

## SUPPORT FOR OWLC

Omega Women's Leadership Center is deeply grateful to those who have shown their support through financial contributions. We extend special thanks for a generous challenge grant, which matches every dollar contributed to the OWLC with an additional \$4. We also appreciate significant support from the NoVo Foundation, the Henry Kimelman Family Foundation, The Eileen Fisher Community Foundation, It's Time Network, The Isabel Allende Foundation, and Josie Maran Cosmetics.

### Omega in ACTION

#### 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS EXPLORED AT UN COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN

OWLC director Michele Bertran attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women at the UN headquarters in New York City. The 2014 theme was challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls.

Bertran attended a session on the progress made in the almost 20 years since the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, and the ongoing work toward achieving gender equality.

# MINDFULNESS

## A LEADING SOURCE FOR MINDFULNESS PROGRAMS



Jon Kabat-Zinn

In 2014, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Sharon Salzberg, and Mirabai Bush were among a roster of leading voices in the field of mindfulness practice who shared their insightful teachings on campus.

Other highlights of the season were a beginners' meditation workshop with Matthew Daniell and an exploration of mindful self-compassion with Steven Hickman and Michelle Becker.

Professionals trained in practices ranging from Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction to Mindfulness-Based Eating Awareness to Contemplative Practice in Higher Education.

Together, these programs reflect Omega's commitment—for more than 35 years—to helping individuals learn to connect to the present moment, ourselves, each other, and the world.

## BRINGING MINDFULNESS TO THE CLASSROOM

More than 175 educators, administrators, school psychologists, family therapists, and parents gathered for Omega's Mindfulness & Education Conference, with keynote speakers Jack Kornfield, Amishi Jha, Linda Lantieri, and Daniel Rechtschaffen.

One participant, Susan Meyer, said she'd been feeling like "a fish out of water in the current educational environment" and questioning how much longer she would continue in the profession. After the conference, she felt invigorated to start the school year with a more conscious approach.

Meyers was one of 38 educators who received a scholarship to the conference, provided by a generous grant from the 1440 Fund through the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. The 1440 Fund also supported Omega's Contemplative Practice in Higher Education workshop in 2014, making it possible for 17 educators to receive scholarship awards.

“One of the biggest realizations I brought home from the conference is that if you can't control anything else in your school environment, the most basic step you can take is to maintain a daily mindfulness practice.

Even if I'm teaching in an environment that doesn't actively embrace the benefits of mindfulness, I can do it in my room, in whatever capacity I can manage.”

—Susan Meyer, Mindfulness & Education Conference participant and scholarship recipient

## MILITARY EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN ADDRESSED IN TWO RETREATS

In 2014, two retreats focused on unique issues of women's military service: Stronger Together, led by Laurie Leitch and others, and Healing From Military Trauma, with Major Susan Lynch and Andrea Lucie.

The retreats were made possible in part with grants from the Bob Woodruff Foundation, which funds innovative programs in communities where veterans, their families, and caregivers live and work, and by the J.M. McDonald Foundation, which is dedicated to improving education and social programs in and around upstate New York.



“Our conference brings together some of the most forward thinking experts in the treatment of veterans' trauma who use complementary and alternative medicine, and also includes leaders in resilience studies.

We know there are a number of highly successful treatment options and we want to get them into the hands of health-care professionals working directly with veterans, so they have every resource available.”

—Carla Goldstein, chief external affairs officer, at Omega's 3rd annual Veterans, Trauma & Treatment conference

“I learned that there were other women who had experienced many of the same challenges and stressors that I had. We all spoke the same language and understood each other's perspectives. . . [The retreat] allowed me to finally feel safe and relaxed enough to feel my emotions openly. . . That was a huge breakthrough for me.

I am very proud to have served in the military. The Army provided our family with a good life but it also had its unique challenges. I am grateful that Omega and its benefactors can appreciate the need to address those unique challenges women experience in the military. . . The healing that I experienced through this workshop will never be forgotten.”

—Judy Buchanan, Stronger Together retreat participant

# VETERANS

# SERVICE WEEK

## SERVING ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE OTHERS

Service Week is a unique opportunity for nonprofit organizations to experience working retreats on Omega's Rhinebeck campus. Throughout 10 years of this signature program, a total of more than 300 organizations and 4,000 individuals have participated.

The first session of Service Week, made possible with funding from the Dyson Foundation, focused on Mid-Hudson Valley nonprofit organizations that address social service, social justice, and safety-net needs.

Richard Heyl de Ortiz, former executive director of Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA), Ulster County, said that he and his colleagues used the retreat to visit long-standing distrust and acrimony within the organization.

"Service Week helped us realize and build on our organizational strengths, which in turn allows CASA to manage and embrace change," he said.

Service Week's second session, the Women Serving Women Summit, is hosted by the Omega Women's Leadership Center. The session focused on organizations that serve the interests and needs of women and girls.

"The effects of the Summit continue tangibly through our annual operating plan goals developed at the retreat," said Kavita Bali, senior director of strategic partnerships and alliances at Care USA, "and more intangibly through our improved relationships with each other, as a direct result of being able to spend time together."



Omega is an organization but we are also a community. Service Week is one of the ways we support our nonprofit peers, and strengthen a network of relationships among organizations in our extended community.

Over the 10 years since we started Service Week, hundreds of organizations have participated. Thousands of lives have been touched directly, and even more through a ripple effect that cannot be measured."

—Omega CEO Robert "Skip" Backus

Participants in Omega's Service Week, May 26–30, 2014



10 YEARS

300 ORGANIZATIONS

4,000 INDIVIDUALS

## RAM DASS STILL CONTRIBUTING TO OMEGA'S STAFF CURRICULUM

Ram Dass—one of America's most beloved spiritual teachers and author of the groundbreaking classic *Be Here Now*—was a founding advisor to Omega and an integral part of designing the original staff programs on campus. Since then, Omega's Holistic Education Program has evolved into a robust curriculum that now offers more than 2,500 innovative classes to seasonal and core community members. Each season, a diverse selection of lifelong learning programs are taught by professional teachers on topics such as leadership, sustainable living, service, writing, mindfulness, dance, yoga, art, and more.

In 2014, furthering a unique and firmly rooted legacy at Omega, Ram Dass participated in an interview series with chief operations officer Lois Guarino (eOmega.org/RDinterview). Ram Dass also offered Omega's seasonal community a wonderful recorded teaching. Embracing new technology along with ancient wisdom, Ram Dass and Omega continue to inspire an integrated approach to personal and social change.



Lois Guarino and Ram Dass (via Skype)



I like to say: There are two institutions in one. One institution is for the participants and one institution is for the staff, and they are coming to a school for their spiritual development."

—Ram Dass

# CAMPUS



When I come to Omega, I feel like I'm walking into the possibility of the future."

—Participant



### Omega in ACTION

#### TOP MEDIA MENTIONS

In 2014, Omega was named one of the best meditation retreats in the U.S. by *Outside* magazine and one of the best yoga retreats by *USA Today*. The *Wall Street Journal* included Omega in "More Meditation Centers Offer Spiritual Awakening on the Go," an article that touted an increase in accessibility of shorter-length personal growth retreats.

# CAMPUS

## OMEGA FOODWORKS BRINGS MORE LOCAL FOOD TO THE DINING HALL

Serving approximately 300,000 meals throughout the season, Omega's food purchasing choices really make a difference.

In 2014, Omega purchased ingredients from more than 15 local farms and producers—including 145 gallons of maple syrup, 13,000 pounds of green-leaf vegetables, and 2,800 quarts of biodynamic yogurt.

"By emphasizing healthy, organic, and local ingredients in our menus, we provide nourishment for our guests while also having a positive impact on the regional economy," said Robert Turner, executive chef and general manager of Omega FoodWorks. "By becoming a champion of local and organic purchasing in the Hudson Valley, we've been able to help shape the conversation taking place about sourcing and distributing local foods."

Robert Turner



## MORE OMEGA STORE THAN BEFORE

The physical footprint of the Omega Store was expanded by roughly a third, delighting visitors who were able to browse more easily through an inspiring selection of items. Improved lighting and new display cases further enhanced the shopping experience.

The Store saw its busiest year to date, with an increase in sales of nearly 12 percent over 2013. Top-selling books included *John of God* by Heather Cumming and Karen Leffler, *Discovering Your Soul Signature* by Panache Desai, and *The Way of Mindful Education* by Daniel Rechtschaffen.

## NEW DORM PROVIDES COMFORT & CONNECTION

Omega's newest dorm, Elm, opened during the 2014 season, providing guests with a reasonably priced housing option built according to the Living Building Challenge™ model.

Much more than just a place to stay, Elm was designed with community in mind. Gathering spaces include an indoor common room and outdoor porch, where guests can meet, connect, and share their experience. Elm is also wheelchair accessible, and equipped with Wi-Fi and air conditioning.





**EMPOWERING PEACE THROUGH CREATIVE EXPRESSION**

The Omega Peace Quilt is an annual, seasonal community project led by quilt artist Helema Kadir. Each year, Kadir chooses a theme related to peace, one that is broad enough to allow myriad interpretations and the creative imagination of the Omega community to flower.

The series marked its tenth year with the theme “empowering peace through creative expression.” Since its inception in 2005, more than 500 individuals have participated in the project.



Helema Kadir

IN THE WORLD



Elizabeth Lesser and Oprah Winfrey

“All of us have conversations waiting to be had with the people in our lives—conversations about love and forgiveness, about what we need from each other and what we mean to each other. We don’t have to wait for a life-or-death situation to reveal what is in our hearts. That’s what I learned through this experience with my sister—that the greatest gift we can give is our most authentic self. That’s as life-giving as a bone marrow transplant.”

—Omega cofounder Elizabeth Lesser on *Super Soul Sunday* with Oprah Winfrey, where she discussed her sister’s battle with cancer and how becoming her bone marrow donor transformed their relationship

# IN THE WORLD

## OMEGA IN NYC

During An Evening With Adyashanti in New York City, guests were invited to engage in silence, participate in dialogue, and receive teachings from one of America's most gifted teachers on the subject of spiritual awakening and living an enlightened life.

“When you rest in quietness and your image of yourself fades, and your image of the world fades, and your ideas of others fade, what's left? A brightness, a radiant emptiness that is simply what you are.”

—Adyashanti

Adyashanti



### Omega in ACTION

#### MAIN STREET'S QUEST FOR PEACE

Omega's chief external affairs officer, Carla Goldstein, joined Dan Harris, author of *10% Happier*, as a guest on ABC News' *Real Biz with Rebecca Jarvis*. The segment, titled "Main Street's Quest for Peace," explored the business side of approaching meditation.

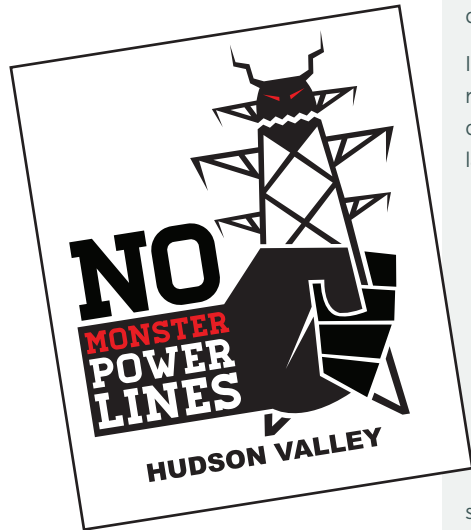
Goldstein spoke about the growing need, in our consumer-driven culture, for individuals to seek more meaning and purpose, saying that people are thinking more about what they love doing, what they're good at doing, and what the world needs, as well as how to make enough money to support their families and contribute to their communities. "That's really what people come to Omega for," she said, "They want to line those things up."

Jarvis said, "People are looking for meaning in life and they're looking for it in a multitude of ways. And this is one of the ways they're fulfilling it."

## OMEGA'S WINTER HOME

At Blue Spirit Costa Rica, Omega offered classes with notable faculty Joan Halifax Roshi, John Perkins, James Van Praagh, and more. In a beautiful, natural setting along the coast of the Pacific Ocean, visitors exercised body, mind, and spirit—filling their stay with a balance of classroom time, exploration, evening events, and rest.





Omega in ACTION

**OMEGA ENCOURAGES CONVERSATION ABOUT PROPOSED POWER LINES**

Acting on our commitment to building a resilient economy and environment, Omega joined the Hudson Valley Smart Energy Coalition to address the proposed high-voltage power lines, and explore the impact they may have on the Hudson Valley’s natural assets, communities, and businesses—including Omega’s Rhinebeck campus.

In an article “With Power Comes Ambivalence,” the *New York Times* reported that the project would affect more than 80 municipalities in 18 counties, causing concern among residents and business owners about land values, tourism, agriculture, and more.

Responding online to the article, Omega CEO Robert “Skip” Backus wrote, “We need to be sure to have a full and rich conversation about all the costs involved in this proposal. It’s easy to point out numbers concerning congestion costs to businesses and residents’ utility bills, but other short and long term costs are less transparent. Let’s be sure to understand what best serves all the communities both upstate and downstate.

Omega looks forward to the discovery process and finding the best solution for all—one that addresses energy requirements in a sustainable fashion, while preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the Hudson Valley.”

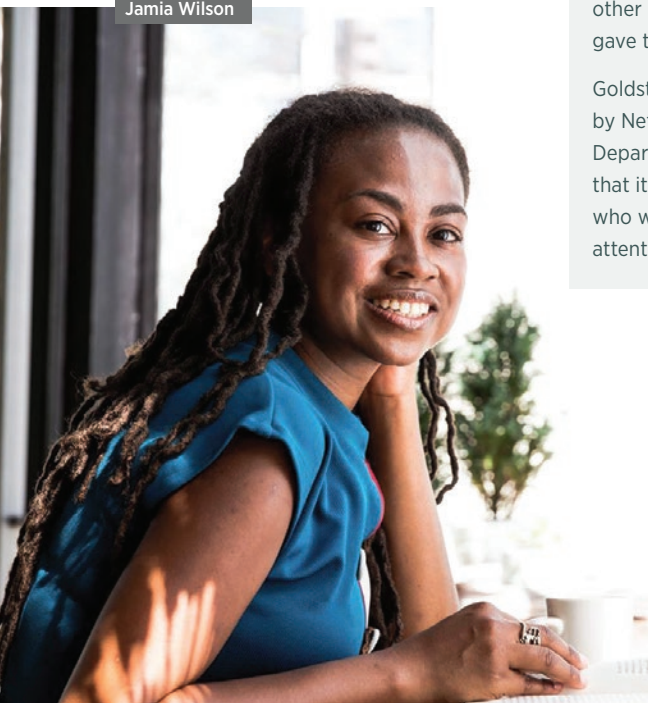
Omega in ACTION

**OMEGA ATTENDS NETROOTS NATION CONFERENCE & WATER RALLY**

Omega board member, Jamia Wilson, and chief external affairs officer, Carla Goldstein, attended the 2014 Netroots Nation conference in Detroit, Michigan. Designed to “educate, stimulate, and inspire the nation’s next generation of progressive leaders,” the gathering included more than 80 panels, 40 hands-on training sessions, a film series, and other events. The speakers included U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, who gave the keynote address.

Goldstein and Wilson also participated in a march that was organized by Netroots and others in response to the Detroit Water and Sewage Department’s announcement, made while the conference was in session, that it would be shutting off service to more than 17,000 of its customers who were unable to pay their bills. The rally resulted in national media attention and suspension of the water shutoff.

Jamia Wilson



# ONLINE

We have continued to expand our online learning opportunities—offering more content and reaching more people. Our 2014 lineup offered a number of affordable and free programs, including interactive online workshops, live events and webcasts, video and audio content, and programs on demand. Our online video content had more than 114,000 views from 159 countries—from Australia to Zambia.



## MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE OMEGA

In 2014, Omega Digital released 11 online products, including live streams, webcasts, on demand video, audio recordings, and more. Among the top-viewed spots were clips from talks by Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön, addiction specialist Gabor Maté, and alternative medicine practitioner Deepak Chopra. For the first time, keynote videos from the Where We Go From Here and Women & Power conferences were released for on-demand viewing online. It’s getting easier to experience Omega wherever you are.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Omega now has a blog on the *Huffington Post*, where new content is featured on a regular basis. Highlights from 2014 include interviews with Omega faculty Deepak Chopra, Erica Jong, and Alanis Morissette. Other posts ranged from “Print or Digital: It All Has Environmental Impact” to “8 Ways to Cope With Grief at Milestones.”

## COME HOME, WHEREVER YOU ARE!

Nearly 100,000 people follow Omega on Facebook and Twitter, and thousands more on YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, and other social media platforms. Posts include links to interesting articles, information about upcoming workshops, inspirational quotes and photographs, and much more. If you’re not following us, find us and join the conversation.



# DEVELOPMENT

Omega is deeply committed to providing transformative education opportunities to individuals and society. In 2014, 1,751 generous individuals, foundations, and corporations gave \$3,335,476 to support Omega initiatives, programs, scholarships, and infrastructure, with each and every gift strengthening our ability to awaken the best in the human spirit.



Robert "Skip" Backus, Carla Goldstein, and friends of Omega

In 2014, the Omega Center for Sustainable Living's Where We Go From Here Conference opened with a special reception that was attended by nearly 100 guests. The October 24th event featured warm welcomes by Omega leadership, remarks by board chair, David Orlinsky, and a brief meditation led by Leslie Booker.

The 2014 Women & Power Conference opened with a Friday evening reception that was attended by more than 90 guests. Close friends of Omega enjoyed desserts prepared by the Omega Café as they met with the Women & Power faculty. Over the course of the conference,

attendees were moved to contribute a total of \$40,020 to the Omega Women's Leadership Center.

In November, Omega's Stewardship Council—comprised of Omega's most active contributors who make annual financial contributions of \$5,000 and more, or offer significant volunteer expertise and guidance to support core initiatives, programs, and the campus—convened for a thought-provoking dinner in New York City. Members of the Council have informed how Omega has stewarded its energy, water, and land, advised how and with whom Omega partners, supported the programs Omega develops and curates, and have contributed toward the understanding of how the Omega community best uses its resources to support personal, social, spiritual, ecological, and cultural change.

Hosted by Stewardship Council co-chairs Patty Goodwin and Manuela Roosevelt, this year council members explored the OCSL's conference theme, Building the Collaborative Commons, and shared their ideas and hopes for addressing the commons in Omega's long-term plans.

# THANK YOU

## HELPING OMEGA CREATE INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

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With deep appreciation, we thank all those who share Omega's commitment to awaken the best in the human spirit and cultivate the extraordinary potential that exists within us all. This list recognizes generous contributors who supported Omega's programs and initiatives, including the Omega Center for Sustainable Living and the Omega Women's Leadership Center, between January 1 and December 31, 2014.

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# AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Statement of Financial Position

	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$1,588,046	\$751,302
Loans Receivable	1,400	1,159
Accounts Receivable	125	8,637
Donations Receivable	25,445	365,028
Prepaid Expenses	447,258	401,794
Inventories	255,290	225,615
Deferred Program Costs & Marketing Expenses	464,884	485,064
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>2,782,448</b>	<b>2,238,599</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Land	1,207,896	1,207,896
Buildings and Improvements	20,015,527	18,883,199
Administrative Equipment/Software/Web	4,233,589	3,321,204
Campus and Profit Center Equipment	2,926,930	2,764,004
Accumulated Depreciation	(9,514,693)	(8,966,632)
Investment In NYSED Structure	101,796	61,359
Investment In Art	7,296	7,296
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>18,978,341</b>	<b>17,278,326</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$21,760,789</b>	<b>\$19,516,925</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$232,724	\$137,374
Accrued Expenses	545,122	391,662
Line of Credit	1,050,000	500,000
Mortgage Payable, Current Portion	38,004	35,975
Taxes Payable	96	2,049
Deferred Program and Grant Revenue	3,644,896	2,602,767
Program Credits Outstanding	256,908	290,554
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>5,767,750</b>	<b>3,960,381</b>
<b>Long-Term Liabilities</b>		
Mortgage Payable, Net of Current Portion	1,297,995	1,335,999
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>7,065,745</b>	<b>5,296,380</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	13,497,112	13,291,280
Restricted	1,197,932	929,265
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>14,695,044</b>	<b>14,220,545</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$21,760,789</b>	<b>\$19,516,925</b>

## Statement of Cash Flows

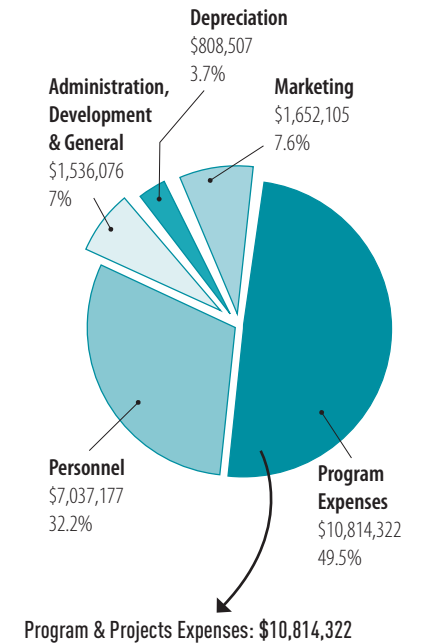
	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
<b>Cash Flows From Operating Activities</b>		
Change in Net Assets	\$474,499	\$32,797
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	808,507	714,935
Loss on Disposal of Equipment	52,257	5,035
(Increase)/Decrease in Operating Assets		
Accounts and Loans Receivable	8,271	(2,101)
Prepaid Expenses	(45,464)	19,891
Inventories	(29,675)	26,870
Deferred Program Cost	20,180	(165,158)
Donations Receivable	339,583	(266,426)
Increase/(Decrease) In Operating Liabilities		
Deferred Program and Grant Revenue	1,042,129	76,641
Accounts Payable	95,350	(1,127)
Taxes Payable	(1,953)	(5,273)
Accrued Expenses	153,460	128,533
Program Credits	(33,646)	56,522
<b>Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities</b>	<b>2,883,498</b>	<b>621,139</b>
<b>Cash Flows Used In Investing Activities</b>		
Investment In NYSED Structure	(40,437)	(61,359)
Equipment Purchases, Net	(2,520,342)	(2,004,609)
<b>Net Cash Used In Investing Activities</b>	<b>(2,560,779)</b>	<b>(2,065,968)</b>
<b>Cash Flows Used In Financing Activities</b>		
Proceeds from Line of Credit	550,000	500,000
Payments on Mortgage Payable	(35,975)	(34,054)
<b>Net Cash Provided by/ (Used In) Financing Activities</b>	<b>514,025</b>	<b>465,946</b>
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash</b>	<b>836,744</b>	<b>(978,883)</b>
<b>Cash, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>751,302</b>	<b>1,730,185</b>
<b>Cash, End of Year</b>	<b>\$1,588,046</b>	<b>\$751,302</b>
<b>Other Supplemental Information:</b>		
Interest Paid	\$94,300	\$80,968

## Statement of Activities

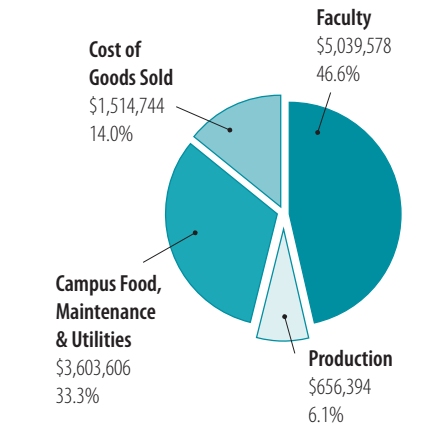
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2014 Totals	2013 Totals
<b>Revenues</b>				
<b>Program Activities</b>				
Programs and Housing	\$16,381,986	-	\$16,381,986	\$15,084,013
Meals Revenue	45,116	-	45,116	42,126
Omega Digital	44,836	-	44,836	20,312
Omega Store Revenue	1,348,346	-	1,348,346	1,192,878
Cafe Revenue	359,885	-	359,885	343,815
Wellness Center Revenue	750,410	-	750,410	721,304
Other Sales	6,259	-	6,259	2,134
<b>Total Program Activities</b>	<b>18,936,838</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,936,838</b>	<b>17,406,582</b>
<b>Donation Revenue</b>				
Donations - Unrestricted	1,315,833	-	1,315,833	633,071
Women & Power - Restricted	-	79,064	79,064	161,956
OWLC - Restricted	-	1,100,147	1,100,147	1,165,096
Scholarship Fund - Restricted	-	294,044	294,044	39,937
Major Fund Drive - Restricted	-	34,451	34,451	335,553
Ram Dass Library Fund - Restricted	-	1,520	1,520	853
Other Restricted Donations	-	510,417	510,417	170,802
<b>Total Donation Revenue</b>	<b>1,315,833</b>	<b>2,019,643</b>	<b>3,335,476</b>	<b>2,507,268</b>
<b>Investment Activities</b>				
Revenues-Investment Income	6,025	-	6,025	9,636
<b>Miscellaneous Activity</b>				
Miscellaneous Income	44,347	-	44,347	61,501
<b>Assets Released from Restrictions</b>	<b>1,750,976</b>	<b>(1,750,976)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>22,054,019</b>	<b>268,667</b>	<b>22,322,686</b>	<b>19,984,987</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
<b>Program Expenses</b>				
Program Faculty	5,039,578	-	5,039,578	4,610,464
Program Production	656,394	-	656,394	533,071
Other Guest Expenses	1,314,656	-	1,314,656	1,150,543
Kitchen and Housing	1,493,545	-	1,493,545	1,488,912
Campus Expenses	795,405	-	795,405	751,142
Omega Store Cost of Sales	780,991	-	780,991	699,038
Other Cost of Sales	46,779	-	46,779	1,820
Media Production Costs	31,433	-	31,433	7,806
Cafe Cost of Sales	224,387	-	224,387	188,273
Wellness Center	431,154	-	431,154	413,100
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>10,814,322</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,814,322</b>	<b>9,844,169</b>
<b>Administrative Expenses</b>				
Personnel	7,037,177	-	7,037,177	6,661,198
Administrative	983,529	-	983,529	886,410
Development	115,109	-	115,109	108,728
Marketing	1,652,105	-	1,652,105	1,448,632
General	437,438	-	437,438	288,118
Depreciation	808,507	-	808,507	714,935
<b>Total Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>11,033,865</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,033,865</b>	<b>10,108,021</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>21,848,187</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,848,187</b>	<b>19,952,190</b>
<b>Increase In Net Assets</b>	<b>205,834</b>	<b>268,667</b>	<b>474,499</b>	<b>32,797</b>
<b>Net Assets at Beginning of Year</b>	<b>13,291,280</b>	<b>929,265</b>	<b>14,220,545</b>	<b>14,187,748</b>
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>	<b>\$13,497,114</b>	<b>\$1,197,932</b>	<b>\$14,695,044</b>	<b>\$14,220,545</b>

## 2014 Overall Expenses

Total Expenses: \$21,848,187



Program & Projects Expenses: \$10,814,322

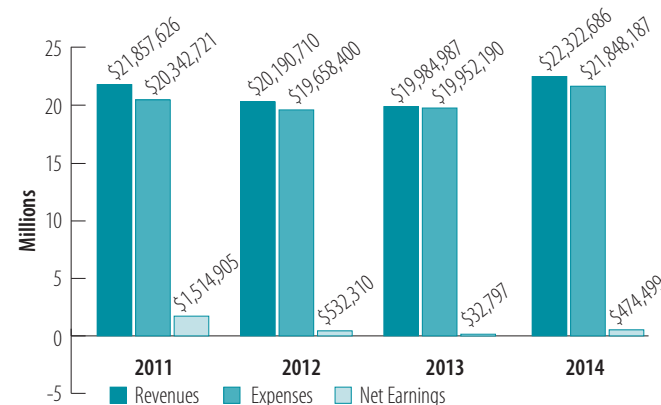


Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, Inc. is qualified as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax-deductible, as allowed by the law.

The Statements of Financial Position and Activities is summarized here. A complete copy of the last annual report filed with the New York State Office of the Attorney General may be obtained upon request by writing to the:

New York State Office of the Attorney General  
Charities Bureau  
120 Broadway  
New York, NY 10271

## Comparative Revenues, Expenses, and Net Earnings





2014 Omega staff

Founded in 1977, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies is the nation's most trusted source for wellness and personal growth programs. As a nonprofit organization, Omega offers diverse and innovative educational experiences that inspire an integrated approach to personal and social change.

Located on 250 acres in the beautiful Hudson Valley, Omega welcomes more than 23,000 people each year to its workshops, conferences, and retreats in Rhinebeck, New York, and at exceptional locations around the world.

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# OMEGA



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Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, Inc.

150 Lake Drive, Rhinebeck, New York 12572

845.266.4444 eOmega.org

