



### **WHAT IS OMEGA INSTITUTE?**

Omega Institute is the nation's leading center for holistic studies. 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 New York's beautiful Hudson Valley, and listed as one of *1,000 Places to See in the USA & Canada Before You Die*, Omega is considered a premier travel destination for workshops, conferences, retreats and professional training. Omega's renowned faculty and presenters have included Maya Angelou, Thích Nhất Hạnh, Jane Goodall, Pema Chödrön, Bobby McFerrin, Eckhart Tolle, Gloria Steinem, Phil Jackson, and many other creative, talented teachers and thought leaders. Annually, more than 15,000 people attend Omega's 300+ programs in-person, and the organization reaches approximately 2 million people online.

### **HOW DID OMEGA BEGIN? WHAT DOES "OMEGA" MEAN?**

In 1977, Stephan Rechtschaffen, M.D. and Elizabeth Lesser were inspired by scholar and Eastern meditation teacher, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan to found Omega. Together, they envisioned a dynamic "university of life." Omega took its name from the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a 20th-century Jesuit priest who spoke of the "Omega Point," or the point of unity toward which all of life is evolving. This movement toward unity, balance, and wholeness—within an individual and in the culture at large—is also expressed by the word "holistic." And so, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies was born.

### **WHAT WAS THE RHINEBECK CAMPUS BEFORE IT BECAME OMEGA?**

In 1981, Omega expanded from rented facilities in New York and Vermont to its current Rhinebeck, New York home on the former grounds of Camp Boiberik, a popular Yiddish summer camp. Camp Boiberik operated from 1923 to 1979. Over the years, Omega has restored the campus while maintaining its simplicity as it has grown to more than 250 acres and more than 100 buildings, including the Sanctuary, the Ram Dass Library, the Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL), and the Omega Wellness Center.

### **WHAT ROLE HAS OMEGA PLAYED IN SOCIETY?**

Since 1977 Omega has been guided by its mission to awaken the best in the human spirit and to provide hope and healing for individuals and society. Omega has consistently been at the forefront of human development: from nurturing early dialogues on the integration of modern medicine and natural healing; to designing programs that

connect science, spirituality, and creativity; to laying the groundwork for new traditions and lifestyles – all of which are designed to uplift and expand our culture in a way that benefits us individually, and as a society. Omega has seen more than one million people come through its doors to grow, learn, and find a greater sense of purpose.

### **WHAT DO PEOPLE DO AT OMEGA?**

Most people come to take workshops and professional training in an array of subjects, with some of the nation's leading teachers. Others opt to take part in a Rest & Rejuvenation Retreat, allowing maximum flexibility to enjoy all the campus has to offer, including a wide range of services that benefit well-being at Omega's Wellness Center. Omega's campus grounds include a lakefront, woodland trails, tennis and pickleball courts, basketball courts, and gardens. Farm-to-table meals, use of amenities, and optional classes in yoga, tai chi, meditation, and arts are included in the stay.

### **WHO WORKS AT OMEGA?**

Omega employs approximately 65 year-round, salaried Core Staff to plan, design, market, and implement programs, while also managing the administrative and operational work that sustains the organization. Most Core Staff live locally in the Hudson Valley and commute to Omega's Rhinebeck campus. The campus is open to guests seasonally from late May through October, during which time Omega welcomes approximately 200 Seasonal Staff to support campus operations. Most Seasonal Staff are residential, living on campus for up to six months, and may participate in select events, programs, and classes outside of work hours.

### **WHAT ARE OMEGA'S SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS?**

Omega considers the environmental impact of its purchasing and operations as part of an ongoing commitment to stewardship. The campus supports conservation, recycling, and composting programs, and all takeout containers at the Omega Café are compostable. Omega's Food & Beverage team sources largely from regional growers, supporting sustainable agriculture and local businesses. By using its own purchasing power, educational capacity, and commitment to sustainability, Omega is demonstrating creative ways to meet environmental challenges. The Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL) reflects this commitment, and serves as a leading example of Omega's environmental work.

### **WHAT IS THE OMEGA CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING (OCSL)?**

The OCSL is an environmental education center that demonstrates and teaches what is possible through regenerative thinking and design. Operating since 2009, the OCSL integrates the campus's state-of-the-art Eco-Machine™ (natural water reclamation facility) with a robust environmental education program. The award-winning OCSL building was the first in the U.S. to achieve both LEED® Platinum and Living Building Challenge™ certification – the highest environmental performance standards available. It brings together wastewater recycling, clean energy, and other sustainability elements that can be replicated. More than a building, the OCSL is a regional hub for environmental organizations, activists, educators, and students to network and learn through a variety of programs such as: environmental conferences, workshops, and

field trips (K-12, college, and post-graduate). Past presenters have included Wangari Maathai, Bill McKibben, Vandana Shiva, John Todd, Winona LaDuke, Jeremy Rifkin, Pete Seeger, and many more.

### **WHAT IS THE OMEGA WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CENTER (OWLC)?**

Founded in 2012, the OWLC offers an interdisciplinary curriculum to support women's personal and professional development throughout their lifespan. Educational opportunities serve aspiring women who want to hone leadership skills and deepen self-understanding, as well as established leaders who are looking to make a change, give back, and further impact the world. Building on Omega's acclaimed Women & Power series—featuring presenters such as Alice Walker, Natalie Merchant, Wangari Maathai, Sally Field, Anna Deavere Smith, Diana Nyad, Mae Jemison, Anita Hill, and many more—the OWLC offers a variety of workshops, residencies, and an annual leadership intensive.

### **WHAT IS OMEGA'S MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM?**

As a nonprofit, Omega relies on Member support to help realize its mission and meet growing operational costs. Membership starts at \$10 per month, and helps Omega expand and enrich its learning community through new scholarships, deeper program offerings, and becoming an even stronger force for good. Member benefits include exclusive content, special gatherings, and discounts on workshop tuition and purchases at the Omega Wellness Center, Bookstore, and Café.