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## **Omega Kicks Off 40<sup>th</sup> Year With Increased Commitment to Social Advocacy, Community Engagement & Expanded Access**

*Van Jones, Marianne Williamson, Anna Deavere Smith, Jim Kwik, Dolores Huerta, Amy Goodman & Don Miguel Ruiz Among Thought Leaders Set to Present in 2017*

RHINEBECK, NY—[Omega Institute for Holistic Studies](#), a pioneer in personal growth and social change, kicked off its 40<sup>th</sup> guest season today. A premiere travel destination in the Hudson Valley and a growing destination for [online learning](#), Omega announced they are increasing their commitment to social advocacy and community engagement, through new technology and key partnerships with organizations, including the International Leadership Association, the Yoga Service Council, and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Omega also has expanded scholarship opportunities to provide greater access to their robust educational offering.

“We’re celebrating 40 years here at Omega. Thousands of programs and more than 1 million participants since our founding, our commitment to creating learning experiences that awaken the best in the human spirit is stronger than ever,” said Robert “Skip” Backus, chief executive officer at Omega. “One constant I’ve seen over four decades is that we are living in times of change. While change is constant, there is new urgency to the challenges we face in the current political, social, and economic landscape. I invite people to join us in 2017 to find inspiration, gather tools, and connect with others seeking to meet these challenges,” concluded Backus.

Omega will offer approximately 390 workshops, retreats, and conferences in 2017, as well as R&R Getaways from May through October. Additionally, they plan to launch a new mobile-friendly website later this year, adding new online learning opportunities to their existing library of articles, videos, on-demand programs, and live streamed events. Omega is also offering more than \$400,000 in full and partial [scholarships](#) to eligible applicants for more than 80 workshops taking place in 2017.

Located just 90 miles north of Manhattan, Omega offers guests an immersive experience, as it combines teaching and advocacy with modeling what’s possible—from local farm-to-table food sourcing to the use of alternative energy, to water conservation and waste reduction. This year Omega is working with three-time James Beard Award-winning chef and food equity advocate Michel Nischan, and honored chef and sustainable food systems advocate Michael Leviton.

“Food has more impact on our environmental, social, and personal health than any other factor,” said Michel Nischan, founder of Wholesome Wave. “These truths will be embodied—deliciously—by the food we prepare and serve in Omega’s dining hall.”

Guests at Omega have access to daily classes in yoga, meditation, tai chi, and movement. The Omega Wellness Center offers a wide variety of services, including massage, facials, acupuncture, and life coaching. The 250-acre campus also includes a library, sauna, Sanctuary, lake, tennis courts, basketball court, woodland trails, gardens, a café, book store, and more. Free tours of the award-winning environmental education center, the Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL), are offered weekly and by appointment.

As a nonprofit organization, Omega's holistic approach to social, cultural, and environmental challenges brings a fresh perspective to some of the most pressing issues of the day. From protecting the environment to supporting veterans, women leaders, and other nonprofit organizations to bringing yoga, mindfulness, and other wellness practices to an ever-widening community of people, Omega has chosen to put a stake in the ground.

**A Sampling of 2017 Highlights:**

[Yoga Service Conference](#)

[Nonprofit Retreats](#)

[Healing Trauma With Veterans](#)

[Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction in Mind Body Medicine](#)

[Advancing Women in Leadership](#)

[Mindfulness & Education Conference](#)

[Women & Power Retreat](#)

[Being Fearless: Action in a Time of Disruption](#)

To learn more visit [eOmega.org](http://eOmega.org), and follow Omega on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Google+.

**About Omega Institute for Holistic Studies**

*Founded in 1977, Omega Institute for Holistic Studies is the nation's most trusted source for wellness and personal growth. 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 to its workshops, conferences, and retreats in Rhinebeck, New York, and at exceptional locations around the world. [eOmega.org](http://eOmega.org)*

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