

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 premiere travel destination for workshops, conferences, retreats and professional training. Omega's renowned faculty and presenters have included Gloria Steinem, Eckhart Tolle, Pema Chödrön, Deepak Chopra, Jane Fonda, Bobby McFerrin, Paul Hawken, Maya Angelou, and many other creative, talented teachers and thought leaders.

WHO COMES TO OMEGA?

Omega has seen more than one million people come through its doors to grow, learn, and find a greater sense of purpose. Annually, more than 23,000 people attend Omega's 350+ 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 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 lake, woodland trails, tennis courts, basketball courts, and gardens. Farm-to-table meals, use of amenities, and optional classes in yoga, tai chi, meditation, and movement are offered daily and included in the stay.

WHAT ROLE HAS OMEGA PLAYED IN SOCIETY?

For more than four decades, 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.

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WHAT ARE OMEGA'S SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS?

Omega's commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of campus operations includes powering 100% of campus electricity through solar and wind sources. It engages in rigorous conservation, recycling, and composting programs. All takeout containers at Omega's Café are compostable. The dining service largely sources from regional growers as part of an ongoing review of all carbon-conscious purchases, and of Omega's efforts to support sustainable agriculture and local business. By using its own purchasing power, educational capacity, and commitment to sustainability, Omega is demonstrating creative ways to meet environmental challenges.

The celebrated Omega Center for Sustainable Living (OCSL) is the most dynamic example of Omega's environmental leadership.

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.

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 the 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. The OWLC offers a variety of workshops, residencies, and acclaimed Women & Power gatherings with notable speakers such as Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Natalie Merchant, Wangari Maathai, Anna Deavere-Smith, Diana Nyad, Mae Jamison, Anita Hill, and Christiane Northrup.

WHAT ARE SOME OTHER WAYS THAT OMEGA IS CULTIVATING A MORE JUST AND COMPASSIONATE WORLD?

Omega's growing community engagement effort, of nearly \$1M annually, is creating broader access through underwritten programs, nonprofit retreat grants, and a robust scholarship fund. Omega seeks to drive societal advancement not only through the work of its centers for Women's Leadership and Sustainable Living, but also through key Initiatives that help to better serve a widening circle of people in fields of service, such as: yoga teachers who work with underserved populations; educators who bring the practice of mindfulness into classrooms; veterans healing from post-traumatic stress; and nonprofit organizations who need an extended retreat to strategize and recharge.

WHAT IS OMEGA'S MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM?

As a nonprofit, Omega relies on Member support to help realize its mission and the ambitious goals set forth in its Strategic Plan. Member gifts help Omega expand and enrich its learning community through new scholarships, deeper program offerings, and becoming an even stronger force

for positive change in the world. In appreciation, members enjoy experiences designed to enhance knowledge, and create opportunities for personal impact on issues that matter, as well as discounts, special invitations, and online learning opportunities. Member benefits begin with a donation of \$120/year or \$10/month.

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.