

**Omega Contact:**

Chrissa Pullicino  
845.266.4444, ext. 404  
[ChrissaP@eOmega.org](mailto:ChrissaP@eOmega.org)

**Clearwater Contact:**

Julia Church  
845.265.8080, ext. 7112  
[Julia@Clearwater.org](mailto:Julia@Clearwater.org)

## **OMEGA TO AWARD \$10,000 GRANT TO CLEARWATER**

*Omega Breaks New Ground by Offering its  
First Annual Leadership in Sustainable Education Award*

HUDSON VALLEY, NY, June 8, 2012 – Omega Institute, home of the award-winning [Omega Center for Sustainable Living \(OCSL\)](#), today announced the creation of a new annual award to acknowledge nonprofit peers who exemplify leadership in sustainable education, and who share Omega’s commitment to building a more just and sustainable world. Omega has chosen environmental champion, [Hudson River Sloop Clearwater](#), as the first recipient of the \$10,000 cash award. Omega will present the award at 10:45 a.m. on Saturday, June 16, 2012, during [Clearwater’s annual music and environmental festival](#) at Croton-on-Hudson, New York.

“To further our 35-year commitment to environmental stewardship, Omega has created the 2012 Leadership in Sustainable Education Award to recognize a nonprofit organization that has demonstrated significant leadership in sustainability education,” said Robert “Skip” Backus, chief executive officer at Omega and visionary behind the Omega Center for Sustainable Living.

Omega, a nonprofit organization dedicated to lifelong learning through innovative educational experiences, launched the OCSL, an environmental education center and natural water reclamation facility, in 2009. The OCSL is the first green building in America to achieve both LEED® Platinum and Living Building Challenge™ certification, the highest standards currently available in sustainable architecture. Furthermore, the OCSL, a key initiative at Omega, serves as the umbrella to a wide variety of sustainability efforts on Omega’s Rhinebeck, New York campus, including a number of sustainable education programs offered annually.

“For more than 40 years, Clearwater has played a vital role in the Hudson River region with educational programs that inspire leadership in sustainability. We are proud to support Clearwater’s mission and recognize their outstanding leadership with our first annual Leadership in Sustainable Education Award,” concluded Backus.

“Clearwater is honored to receive this recognition from Omega Institute for our work to create a healthier, greener, more sustainable and equitable Hudson Valley,” said Jeff Rumpf, Clearwater Executive Director. “Clearwater is working to carry forward Pete Seeger’s legacy, cultivating new and diverse environmental activists with environmental education, watershed awareness, and stewardship training. Along with Omega Institute and our partners, we are building a green, sustainable future, one that empowers communities with opportunities for green jobs and puts the “eco” into the economy.”

Clearwater’s Green Cities Initiative supports and educates Hudson River communities on how to incorporate principles of sustainability into all phases of municipal and community planning. The Green Cities initiative also calls upon civic and political leaders to consider the environmental impact of long-term policy and infrastructure decisions and how they may affect the health of Hudson River and the long-term economic vitality of the region.

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In addition to the \$10,000 grant, Clearwater will also receive an organizational development grant for a strategic planning retreat at Omega, to help strengthen their organization and further its mission. Clearwater will also be honored at Omega's annual [Design By Nature](#) conference, October 19–21, 2012.

**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 195 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. The Omega Center for Sustainable Living is an environmental education center and natural water reclamation facility on Omega's Rhinebeck, New York campus. The OCSL is the first green building in America to achieve both LEED® Platinum and Living Building Challenge™ certification – the highest standards currently available in sustainable architecture. The OCSL brings together wastewater recycling, clean energy, green architecture, and other sustainability elements that can be replicated locally and globally and provides sustainability education for students of all ages, professionals, policy makers, and developers. [eOmega.org](#)*

**About Clearwater**

*For over 40 years, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater has been at the forefront of the environmental movement as champion of the Hudson River, working to pass landmark legislation like the Clean Water Act, providing innovative educational programs, environmental advocacy, and musical celebrations, including the renowned annual Clearwater Festival, to inspire, educate, and activate millions of people. Founded by music legend and environmental activist Pete Seeger, the organization began with the launch of the sloop Clearwater in 1969—a majestic replica of the sloops that sailed the Hudson in the 18th and 19th centuries. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 106-foot-long sloop is among the first vessels in the U.S. to conduct science-based environmental education aboard a sailing ship, creating the template for environmental education programs around the world. More than half a million young people and hundreds of thousands of adults have experienced their first real look at an estuary's ecosystem aboard Clearwater. The organization's strong connection to youth, environmental education, and its agenda to create the next generation of environmental leaders, are all part of building and strengthening a Green Cities Initiative for a green economy and a more inclusive and diverse environmental movement. Utilizing the greatest natural resource in the region, the Hudson River, Clearwater has become the grassroots model for producing positive changes to protect our planet. [Clearwater.org](#)*

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