

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **OMEGA AWARDS GRANTS TO 25 NONPROFITS FOR UNIQUE STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT**

### ***Omega Flagship Program Kicks Off - 8th Annual Service Week to Focus on Reinforcing Hudson Valley Social Safety Net Services & Nonprofits Working to Empower Young Women & Girls***

RHINEBECK, NY – As service-oriented nonprofits struggle to survive in the current economy and carry out their missions in spite of reduced funding and budget cuts, Omega has offered grants to 25 nonprofit organizations, many of whom serve young women and girls throughout the region, to participate in a retreat at Omega's 195-acre campus in Rhinebeck, New York. At a time when nonprofits providing safety net services to vulnerable populations are forced to do more with less, the grant from Omega provides a rare opportunity and resources so organizations can take the time to plan, network, build capacity, and develop paths for future collaboration.

"These are extremely challenging times for nonprofits and the people they serve, as service demands and needs are high and resources are down. Omega's Service Week offers a unique opportunity for grantees to meet organizational challenges through reflection, teamwork, planning, and networking," said Carla Goldstein, chief external affairs officer at Omega and director of the Omega Women's Leadership Center.

Grantees will attend two-day, two-night organizational retreats that include free room and board, a private meeting space, use of all the facilities at Omega, and a consultation with Omega's partner, the New York Council of Nonprofits, at an on-site Nonprofit Wellness Clinic.

"Omega's Service Week, which now includes the Women Serving Women Summit, has had a unique, profound and deeply positive influence on the nonprofits that have participated over the years," said Doug Sauer, chief executive officer of the New York Council of Nonprofits. "This year's focus on nonprofits that are providing and protecting safety net services in the Hudson Valley, along with the bringing together of organizations that support young women and girls in particular, reflects the potential of Service Week to contribute to systemic change," said Doug Sauer, chief executive officer of the New York Council of Nonprofits.

"Our grants recognize the power of collaboration and allow organizations to come together for the greater good. The Women Serving Women Summit is a new program of the Omega Women's Leadership Center (OWLC). The summit brings together nonprofits that work to support and empower young women and girls," concluded Goldstein.

The program has two parts:

- 1) ***The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Women Serving Women Summit***, May 28-30.

The only nonprofit leadership retreat of its kind, the summit includes a pre-event site visit from the OWLC, which will inform and shape the gathering in May. Through this initiative, the OWLC is also gathering information about the current state of young women and girls nationwide, as well as the challenges and missions of the organizations who serve them. The summit is a key component of the new OWLC, a groundbreaking expansion of Omega's core commitment to support lifelong learning, thought

leadership, purposeful and inspired living, and community building. The OWLC will formally launch September 21, 2012, at Omega's bi-annual Women & Power conference.

2) **The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Service Week**, May 30-June 1.

By bringing together social service organizations based in the Hudson Valley, Omega provides a de facto planning conference for some of the region's most critical nonprofits, many of which have lost or been stripped of any funding for strategic planning. Grantee organizations can utilize the time to develop strategic plans, cultivate relationships among their board members and with other nonprofits on campus, re-engage with their mission statement, deepen staff cooperation, and enjoy some much needed peace and relaxation. Service Week is funded in part by a grant from the Dyson Foundation.

Service Week will feature a welcome keynote address from John Elstrott, chairman of the board of Whole Foods. Elstrott will focus on ways that organizations can expand their reach in the community and form partnerships with businesses and other social change organizations.

"Despite current economic pressure and rising demand for service, nonprofits still have a responsibility to operate sustainably. I look forward to working with Omega Service Week grantees to help them achieve a greater level of sustainability for their organization," said John Elstrott, chairman of the board of Whole Foods.

Omega is pleased to award 2012 Service Week retreat grants to the following organizations, which are actively engaged in creating a more compassionate and sustainable world:

**Women Serving Women Summit Grantees**

Alternative Network for Employee Wellness (ANEW-NY)  
American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
Black Women's Blueprint  
Children's Media Project  
Cornell Cooperative Extension—Ulster County  
Girls for Gender Equity (GGE)  
Holistic Moms Network, Dutchess County Chapter  
Hollaback!  
Human Rights Project for Girls  
Lower Eastside Girls Club  
Strong Women, Strong Girls (SWSG)  
The TMI Project  
2020: Project Women  
YWCA of Ulster County

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Service Week Participants**

The Children's Home of Kingston  
The Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CADVSA)  
Council on Addiction Prevention and Education of Dutchess County (CAPE)  
Dutchess County Community Action Partnership  
Hudson River Healthcare (HRHCare)  
Mental Health America of Dutchess County (MHADC)  
Newburgh Community Action Committee, Inc. (NCAC)  
Nubian Directions II, Inc.  
Regional Economic Community Action Program (RECAP)  
Safe Homes of Orange County (SHOC)  
Worker Justice Center of New York (WJCNY)

“It is with profound gratitude that Safe Homes of Orange County thanks the Omega Institute for this opportunity to work on enhancing our goals and objectives to take our agency to the next level in providing comprehensive, culturally competent, and compassionate services—all while indulging our senses in an environment that embodies peace and tranquility. This experience will enable an organic process, building on a foundation free from outside stressors of everyday life,” said Kelly Kostyal, executive director of Safe Homes of Orange County.

“Our Health Center Managers are looking forward to this retreat. They oversee Hudson River HealthCare's 20 practice sites, directing health care activities at the center. Our patients are often uninsured and in need of comprehensive health services. The nurse and operation managers work hard everyday to get the patients everything they need. This retreat represents an opportunity for self reflection and renewal. It would not be possible without this generous grant from the Omega Institute,” said Katherine M. Brieger, RD, CDE, chief operating officer at Hudson River HealthCare, Inc.

For more information about Omega’s annual Service Week event and the grant program, please contact Marta Szabo, at 845.266.4444, ext. 403, or by email at [MartaS@eomega.org](mailto:MartaS@eomega.org).

**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. [eOmega.org](http://eOmega.org)*

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