



Spiritual Guidance Ministry Expands Reach, Opportunity for Spiritual Growth

Spiritual Guidance has been a consistent resource offered by Siena Retreat Center as a way for people to engage deeply in their spiritual life. To better meet the needs of those seeking spiritual guidance, in this past year we launched our Affiliate Spiritual Guide program.

Affiliate Spiritual Guides are trained listeners from our surrounding communities—many of whom have been trained as guides through Siena Retreat Center’s own Spiritual Guidance Training Program—who are available to meet with those scheduling sessions at Siena Retreat Center.

“We now have 15 experienced guides who will travel to Siena to meet with those who request spiritual guidance sessions while on retreat or with those who are looking for ongoing spiritual

guidance,” explains Nicki Nelson, Director of Spiritual Guidance Initiatives.

Each of these guides brings unique gifts, wisdom, and personal spiritual journeys. This variety enriches the presence of spiritual guidance at Siena Retreat Center.

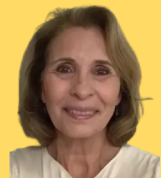
“Having this breadth of experience to draw from allows for a process of prayerful reflection and discernment so that each seeker can be intentionally matched with an affiliate spiritual guide based on the particularities of their desires,” Nelson continues. “This has been a wonderful gift to both the seekers and the guides.”



Participants in the August 2023 weekend retreat for spiritual guides pose for a group photo. “This was a very nourishing weekend for my soul,” shared one participant. “The community of women fed my spirit,” commented another.

“Being a spiritual guide has been a calling to serve others; being the conduit between the seeker and the Spirit. It is an honor and a privilege to be able to sit with someone and witness the power of the Spirit working in their lives.”

—Marilyn Kortendick



“Being open to serve as an affiliate spiritual guide at Siena is simply an outflow of gratitude for being a participant of the sacred circle of Spiritual Guidance Training. Here I received a rich supply of wisdom from gifted teachers. Being available to be present with another at Siena is a way of saying thank you to those I deeply respect.”

—Mark Petersen



“It is not unusual to come away from a retreat feeling on a high. The challenge is to incorporate the insights one has received into one’s everyday life. The affiliate spiritual director program offers a tool for further exploring the insights and invitations one has received, a pathway for watering the seeds one has planted and nurturing their growth.”

—Stephanie Mondello



288

Number of spiritual guidance appointments during the 2022-2023 program year



Volunteer Highlights

Siena Retreat Center is what it is because of the dedication of our volunteers.

Our partnership with Lakeside Curative Services, for example, provides practical help for our housekeeping team. Each week eight to ten volunteers, along with their staff coordinator, bundle our sheet sets and towels so that our housekeepers can just “grab and go.” We are thankful for their smiles and enthusiasm. This is a group we know we can count on not only to do a task, but also to brighten our day.

Siena Retreat Center is a featured volunteer partner with AmeriCorps



Lakeside Curative Services team members fold laundry to help with our housekeeping operations.

Senior. Many of our volunteers are retired, although most retired people will say they wonder how they ever had time to work!

We are very thankful for the skill sets they bring to their service here. Patience, wisdom, and dedication to our mission mean that we can all take pride in serving our guests.

From the first stop at the front desk to purchasing the perfect book to read from the Bookstore to finishing the day with dinner from our catering partner, interacting with our volunteers is a key aspect of a Siena Retreat Center stay.



“I love volunteering in the dining room. I leave with a bigger smile than I came in with. The people lift my spirits.”

—Dawn Wollersheim

Siena Retreat Center Welcomes New Staff

Debbie Giese began working as our Volunteer and Guest Service Coordinator in May of 2023. Debbie recently graduated from Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee, Kansas, with a Masters in Divinity and a certificate in peace and justice. Debbie considers her role at Siena Retreat Center a perfect mix of her seminary and ministerial background and her professional background in restaurants and hospitality.



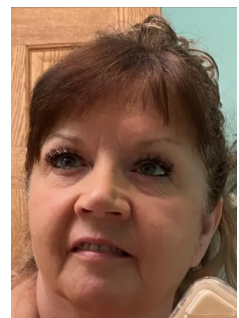
Part of her draw to Siena is our commitment to peace and justice. “I feel a strong connection to everyone who works here and to what is going on,” explains Debbie. “I value our inclusivity and getting to support people doing good work in the world.”

Our volunteers are an inspiration to Debbie because they are passionate about what Siena Retreat Center does and believe in its mission.

Debbie has lived most of her life in southeastern Wisconsin and currently lives in Waukesha. Her hobbies include reading, being outdoors, and spending time with loved ones.

Christine Houdek began working as our Business Manager in February of 2023.

Our previous Business Manager, Judy Gavigan, told Christine about the position and recommended her for it. Judy had been Christine’s supervisor when they worked for Ascension Health Care.



Christine has worked as a certified surgical technologist and as office manager and front desk receptionist at Ascension Health Care. She was drawn to Siena Retreat Center because she wanted to broaden her horizons as a business manager in a less stressful environment. Christine enjoys working here because of her co-workers and the atmosphere they create.

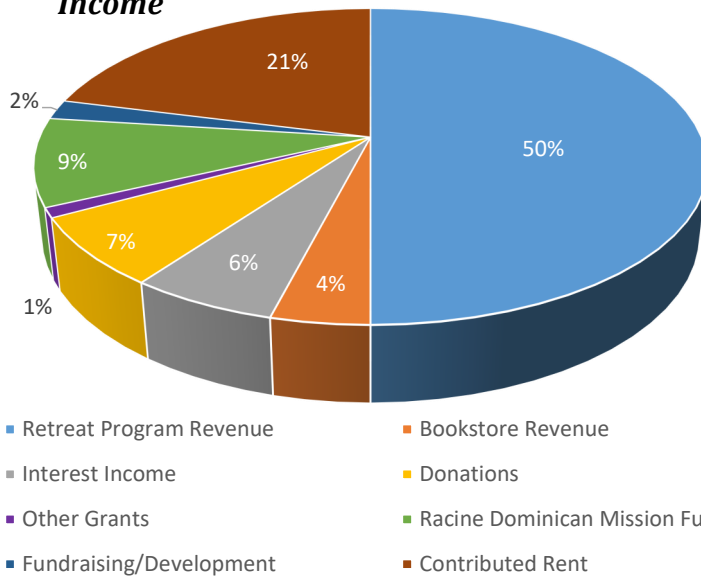
Christine has lived in Caledonia for nineteen years. She is married with one son and two grandchildren. Her hobbies include baking, knitting, crocheting, and cross-stitch. She also loves to travel with her husband, especially in the tropics,

2,681

Hours donated by volunteers

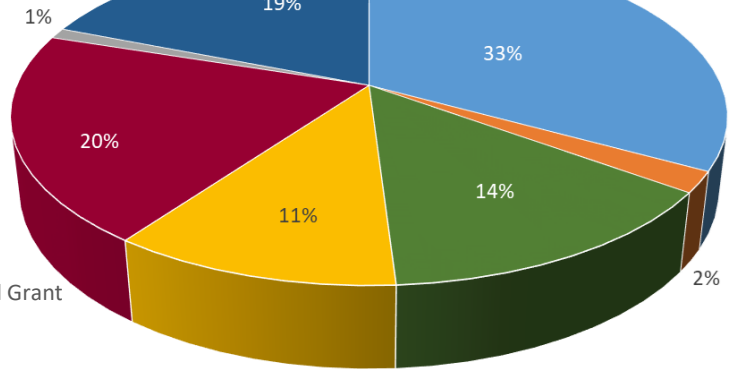
2022-2023 by the Numbers

Income



- Salaries and Benefits
- Building and Maintenance
- Contributed Rent
- Other Expenses
- Bookstore Expenses
- Food and Laundry
- Scholarships

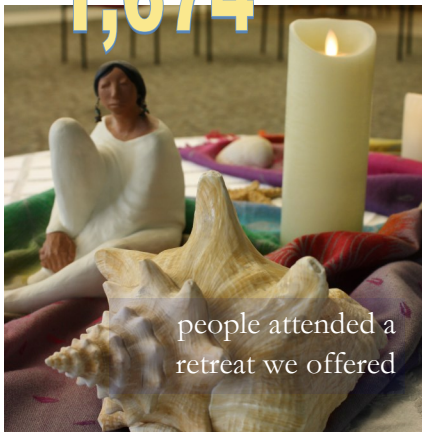
Expenses



Our overall budget total for the year was approximately \$1,500,000.

Number of People Served

1,674

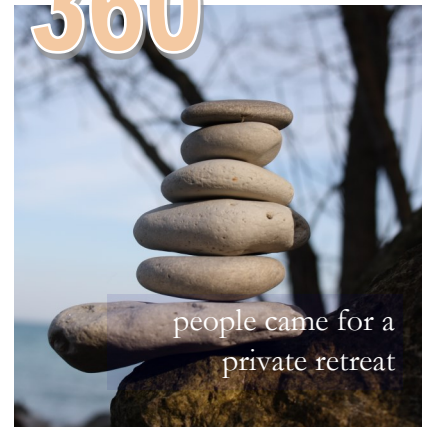


31

Graduates of our
2021-2022 Spiritual
Guidance Training
Program



360



15

new bereavement companions
were trained



1,954



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New Donor Initiative Launched: The Siena Circle

Our new giving initiative, the Siena Circle, has completed its first year. The Siena Circle was created to provide a level of support vital for the future of Siena Retreat Center.

Siena Circle donors contribute at a level of \$500 or more annually. Forty-five supporters have begun, or continued to, donate at this level.

A monthly giving option was also created, and seven contributors selected this option as soon as the option was available.



483

people donated
to our mission



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