



2023 - 2024 Annual Report



SINCE 1966
Siena
Retreat Center
Come to the Water



Thank you for reading our 2023–2024 Annual Report. There's something special on every page that describes Siena Retreat Center: our natural beauty, spiritual resources, staff dedication, volunteer willingness, presenter talent, and donor generosity.

The Board of Directors had a productive year as we undertook new responsibilities for the long-term sustainability and flourishing of the retreat center.

- With the help of a volunteer consultant, we developed a strategic plan to consider new possibilities, while continuing to support our current solid program offerings.
- We re-energized our Building and Grounds Committee to address matters of maintenance in a prudent and forward-looking way.
- We expanded our budget to take over some operational costs from the Racine Dominican Sisters.
- We named diversity and greater community engagement as goals – strategies to meet these goals have been part of our Development, Marketing, and Ministry efforts.

As a Board we look at these activities with pride, and we pledge to remain committed to wise yet innovative governance. We have beautiful memories of the past, solid strengths in the present, and wonderful dreams for the future!

With Appreciation for the Siena Community and Friends,

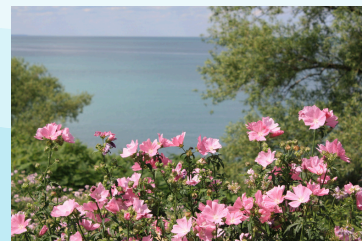
Gloria Alt
Board President

“There is such a feeling of peace, contentment, and calm the minute I see the sign and start to turn onto the driveway”



“A wonderful place to visit, where the hospitality is also warm and loving.”

“I’m grateful for having this center available for us to come to and be nourished in body, mind, and soul.”



“The retreat center was so peaceful and serene and it allowed me the opportunity to relax and decompress after a recent loss.”

“Thank you for this ministry. It is life-saving. It is life-giving.”





Who We Are

Corporate Member

M.B. Bauer Group, Inc	Pat Mapes, OP
Chris Broslavick, OP	Maryann McMahon, OP
Shari Geertsen	Kathy Slesar, OP
Lisa Kane, OP	Jane Weiss, OP

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Susan Arvai, Registrar
Vicky Curtiss, Program Director
Carmen Doubek, Housekeeper
Debbie Giese, Director of Hospitality
Larry Haas, Accountant
Christine Houdek, Business Manager
Sue McGregor, Receptionist
Christine Noelle, Director of Donor &
Community Engagement
Jane Reilly, Housekeeper
Nichole Stewart, Arrangements
Coordinator

Board of Directors

Gloria Alt, Board President
David Stack
Deb Kilgore Ford
Julie Larsen
Judy Melaro-Gavigan
Rev. Sue Ott-Holland
Wayne J. Marik

Mission: The welcoming community of Siena Retreat Center provides retreats and programs that renew lives and deepen holistic spirituality in an environment of peace, joy, and beauty. In the spirit of the Racine Dominicans, we seek to be a catalyst for a more just and compassionate world.

The seeds of Siena Retreat Center were sown in 1966, when several area women gathered to discuss the societal shifts of the 1960s and the ideas initiated by the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council. Today, the Center serves over 6,000 people annually through sponsored, hosted, and private retreats, as well as spiritual direction.

**“All you who are thirsty, come
Come - where the Spirit stirs the waters
to reveal the place where you stand
as holy ground.”
- Rita M. Martin, OP**

Welcoming New Staff

Christine Noelle joined Siena Retreat Center in October 2023 as the Director of Donor & Community Engagement. With over ten years of experience in nonprofit program leadership and administration throughout Southeast Wisconsin, she brings a strong commitment to advancing Siena's fundraising, marketing, and community outreach efforts.

Originally from Central Wisconsin, Christine has a background in environmental education and sustainable food systems from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. She is also an enrolled member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, and her spirituality is deeply rooted in the Earth and her Native heritage.

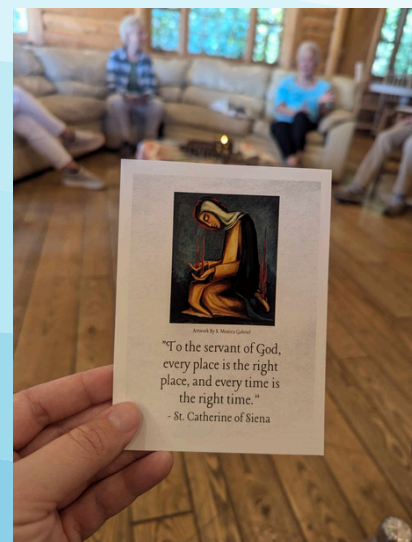


"The connection to nature here speaks to me," Christine shares. "There's a peacefulness here that makes you feel grounded, and I love how Siena fully embraces and nurtures all spiritual paths."



This year we held our Staff Day Away retreat at St. Iakovos Retreat Center, where we were joined by Sisters Kathy Slesar, Ruthanne Reed, and Chris Broslavick. This day allowed us, both personally and as a team, to connect on a deeper level with the Racine Dominican Sisters and the foundational values of Dominican spirituality, deepening our commitment to creating a space where individuals find healing, reflection, and hope.

The sisters shared their personal stories of vocation and commitment, reminding us of the importance of living out our values in service to others. They highlighted the need to support those seeking healing by always welcoming everyone and embracing diversity within our community. They encouraged us to act in solidarity with others, emphasizing our charge to care for the human spirit and soul. As we move forward, we are excited to continue cultivating a welcoming environment that honors the legacy of the Dominican community and supports all who seek solace at Siena Retreat Center. Together, we will carry forth the mission of compassion and understanding that has been at the heart of our work since the center's founding.



What We Do



Last year, 311 people came to Siena Retreat Center for **Private Retreats**. These self-guided retreats offer individuals time for quiet reflection, prayer, and renewal, in a nurturing oasis on the beautiful shoreline of Lake Michigan.

Sponsored Retreats offer opportunities for spiritual growth, reflection, and connection, led by expert facilitators and open to the public. In the past year, 1,920 people attended these enriching events, exploring themes including spirituality, social justice, and personal development.

We welcomed 2,254 people last year for **Hosted Retreats**. These gatherings ranged from church groups to corporate retreats to writing workshops, offering a warm and spacious place for reflection, community building, and creative exploration.

Our **Bookstore** offers a curated selection of spiritual and justice books, journals, and gifts for retreatants and visitors for their growth as spiritual pilgrims and as global activists. It serves as a stimulating space to explore resources that inspire reflection, creativity, and spiritual growth.



Sponsored Retreat Programs

Last year, Siena Retreat Center hosted over 80 sponsored retreats, welcoming 1,920 participants to explore a range of themes, including spirituality, social justice, creativity, and environmental care. In addition to offering both in-person and virtual options, retreats varied in length from evening sessions to daylong programs, weekend retreats to weeklong directed retreats, ensuring accessibility while providing choices for individuals on their level of engagement with a topic.



Highlights from the year included “Thriving in Turbulent Times” with Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III, a grant-funded event which drew 53 participants. This event was sponsored in partnership with Wisconsin Humanities and focused on strengthening spiritual resilience amidst racial and economic injustice. Our “Honoring Native Peoples, Land, and Water” retreat featured 5 Native facilitators and welcomed 24 participants eager to learn about Indigenous wisdom and environmental justice.

Additionally, Paula D’Arcy’s popular retreat, “Setting a New Intention,” drew 54 attendees, offering insights into deepening our purpose and connections. Dr. Reggie Williams’ five-part Zoom series, “The Way of Jesus and Justice,” engaged 103 attendees in exploring the lives of 5 Christians whose work for justice expressed the teachings of Jesus and the imperative to love our neighbor.

Annual Spring Benefit Concert & Retreat with Carrie Newcomer



Siena Retreat Center’s Annual Spring Benefit Concert welcomed over 250 guests for a performance by Grammy-acknowledged songwriter Carrie Newcomer and pianist Gary Walters. Known for her deep connection to spirituality and creativity, Carrie also led a one-day retreat with 44 participants, offering a space for spiritual growth through music, poetry, and reflection.

“It was pure joy to step away from everyday life and dive into creativity,” shared a retreat attendee. “Carrie’s warmth and insight made the experience both grounding and inspiring.”

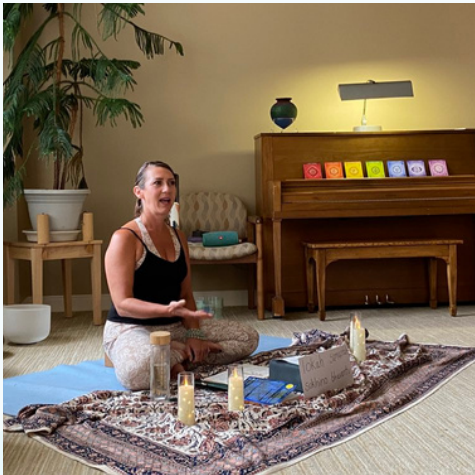


Hosted Groups at Siena Retreat Center

In the past year, Siena Retreat Center proudly hosted over 90 groups, offering a serene environment for community-building and shared experiences. Our beautiful facilities on Lake Michigan provide an ideal setting for groups seeking reflection, creativity, and community. Whether for a corporate retreat, a wellness workshop, or a time of stillness and renewal, our center caters to diverse needs.

Types of groups we host: church groups, ministry events, corporate retreats, book clubs, women's circles, days of reflection, yoga groups, meditation groups and so much more!

These retreats vary in length, from half-day meetings to weeklong events, accommodating groups of all sizes. Our dedicated staff provides comprehensive support, including gathering spaces, meals, and overnight accommodations, ensuring that every group can focus on their goals while enjoying the lakeside setting. As a nonprofit, we are committed to fostering an atmosphere of hospitality and care, allowing guests to feel truly welcome and at home.



Soulshine Yoga

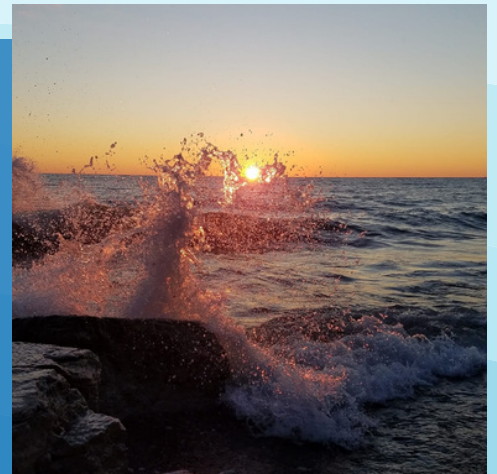
Soulshine Yoga hosts transformative retreats around the world, including with us at Siena Retreat Center, emphasizing serenity and self-discovery for both new and experienced practitioners. Participants engage in intentional experiences that foster personal growth and mindfulness.

"The energy here is amazing," says Founder Emily McDoniels. "When you drive up, you can feel it. What an incredible opportunity to be right on Lake Michigan, and my participants often come to cherish the silence on the bedroom floors."

Chicago Weekly Sitting Meditation Group

Chicago Meditates is a diverse community of meditators who gather for special retreats at Siena Retreat Center. Welcoming individuals from all backgrounds, the group focuses on deepening wisdom and compassion through meditation practice.

"Siena's setting is ideal for spiritual work," says group co-leader Steve Starr. "The staff's attention to detail, from the bookstore offerings to the invitation to the Sisters' chapel, creates a truly nurturing and supportive space."





Volunteering

Volunteers at Siena Retreat Center play a vital role in creating a welcoming, peaceful environment for all who visit. Last year, 35 volunteers contributed an incredible 2,928 hours of service, greeting guests, staffing the front desk, serving meals, and supporting our bookstore and special projects. "I believe hospitality is helping people feel that they're in the right place at the right time," says Debbie Giese, Director of Hospitality. Volunteers embody

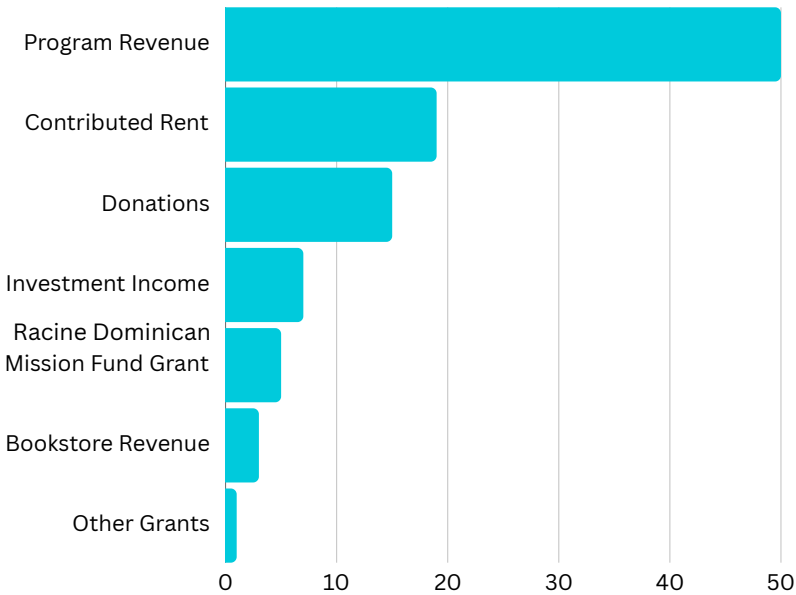
this spirit of hospitality, ensuring that every guest feels seen, supported, and cared for in while at the retreat center. Volunteering at Siena is more than just helping — it's becoming part of a community that nurtures both body and spirit. If you're looking for a meaningful way to give back, consider joining our team of amazing volunteers!



Volunteer Spotlight: Chantal Smith

"When I started looking for a place to volunteer, I had never heard of Siena Retreat Center. As I studied about this retreat center and what it had to offer, I happened to be on a journey of my own, seeking tranquility and peace. It seemed like Siena was exactly where I was supposed to be... and I found out it was! From the beautiful grounds to the lovely people I spend time with here, I always have the opportunity to take a big breath and be thankful for being able to serve!"

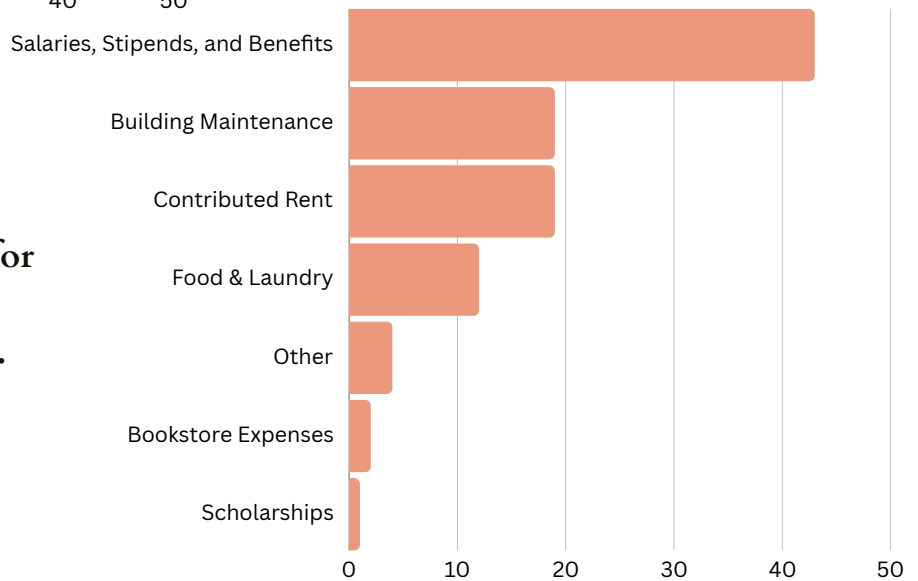
By the Numbers



Income (%)

Expenses (%)

Our overall budget total for fiscal year 2023/2024 was approximately \$1,600,000.



Hosted Retreatants



2,254

Sponsored Retreatants



1,920

Private Retreatants



311

Donors



532

Spiritual Guidance Sessions



322

Volunteer Hours



2,928

Thank You to our Generous Supporters

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Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. If you notice an error, please bring it to our attention. Thank you!

*"This is such a welcoming place,
a place for people to come and be who they are meant to be.
This place helps people come home to themselves."*



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