

Wisdom House is an interfaith retreat and conference center presenting programs in spirituality, education and the arts. The center provides hospitality for the not-for-profit community. Wisdom House's mission is rooted in the Judaeo-Christian Wisdom tradition which supports the center's commitment to sustainability and concern for contemporary issues. The center is a ministry of the Daughters of Wisdom.



WISDOM HOUSE
Retreat and Conference Center

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**Supporting
Sustainable
Environments**

Supporting Sustainable Environments

The ancients knew that Wisdom was found in nature and creation. Reverence and care for nature and the cosmos are core to living spiritually, humanly and in respectful relationship to the community of all creation.

Since Colonial times, all who have lived here were dependent on the land. In 1949 with the arrival of the Daughters of Wisdom, the commitment to simple living furthered the ancient tradition of caring for the land and its natural resources. Since 1990, several contemporary environmental initiatives have taken place at Wisdom House. These give expression to our belief that Wisdom permeates all reality. (Book of Wisdom 7, 13-30)

In Wisdom is a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique... Wisdom penetrates all reality... She is found in the design of the universe and cosmos. Wisdom is the Artisan of all.

Renewable Energy Generation

▲ Solar photovoltaic panels (80) installed in 2011 are a 15.2 kilowatt system which generates approximately 15,500 kilowatt hours of clean, renewable energy annually. This will displace the production of 10.7 metric tons of CO₂, the amount that is sequestered annually by 2.3 acres of pine forest. This, along with other conservation measures will offset almost 25% of the electrical use of the Wisdom House campus.

▲ Wisdom House participates in the Clean Energy Program with Connecticut Light & Power.





Energy Conservation

- ▲ Compact fluorescent bulbs are used in 98% of the center.
- ▲ Electric light fixtures and kitchen coolers have been retrofitted for energy efficiency.
- ▲ Energy Efficiency Rated / Energy Star appliances are replacing older appliances.
- ▲ Natural ventilation with ceiling fans exists in most rooms in the center.
- ▲ Programmable thermostats, computerized heat controls and heat zoning regulate the interior climate.
- ▲ Cast iron boilers/furnaces (c.1950) were replaced with energy efficient Buderus furnaces.
- ▲ All 380 windows in the Main House, Chapel, Farm House, Marie Louise Carriage House and Spruce Brook Barn meeting space have been replaced with thermal windows. Seven doors were also replaced.
- ▲ Motion sensors regulate lights in halls, washrooms, some meeting rooms and outdoor areas.



Water

- ▲ Artesian wells at Wisdom House provide all the water for the center.
- ▲ Signs and information in our literature advise guests to use our well water rather than commercially bottled water.
- ▲ Reusable drinking water bottles (BPA free) are available at our book center.
- ▲ The Casagrande Interfaith Institute focused on “Water” in 2006 and on “Climate Change” in 2009.
- ▲ Toilets are gradually being replaced with low water use models.
- ▲ Low flow shower heads are in use.
- ▲ Drought resistant plants and grass require no watering of the landscape.

Reduction of waste and recycling

- ▲ 50% recycled trash liners are used where possible.
- ▲ Single stream recycling is used.
- ▲ Paper is reused on reverse side in copiers/faxes and envelopes are recycled and used for interoffice communications.
- ▲ The center’s paper newsletter has been replaced with electronically transmitted communications, news, program updates, social media and the blog, “At Wisdom’s Table”.
- ▲ Bubble wrap and packaging are reused/ recycled.
- ▲ Biodegradable, recycled natural paper napkins and towels are used.

Environmental care

- ▲ Toxic pesticides are not used on our grounds.
- ▲ 14 acres of Grassland and 7 acres of Wildlife Habitation for nesting of native wildlife are registered with the US Dept. of Agriculture.



- ▲ Plants native to Northwest Connecticut are predominantly used and efforts are ongoing to remove invasive plants.
- ▲ Most plants are deer resistant to minimize the presence of Lyme disease ticks.

Historic preservation

- ▲ The 70 acre campus is bordered by stone walls from New England’s “Golden Age of Stone Walls” (1775-1825). The stone walls closest to the main center were restored in 2010.
- ▲ The exterior of the 1770 Farm House has been preserved, and a list of owners appears next to the front and rear doors.

Community emergency preparedness

- ▲ Wisdom House can operate self-sufficiently with water, heat, electricity and communications due to its generator which operates in emergencies.
- ▲ The center serves the Town of Litchfield as an emergency shelter, approved in 1985 by the American Red Cross.

Nutrition

- ▲ Guidelines of the American Heart Association are the norm for meals, with consideration for gluten and dairy free, vegetarian, vegan and nut-free diets.
- ▲ Pork and beef are not usually served as an entrée; pork, for interfaith sensitivity and beef for the amount of water and grain needed to produce 1 pound (2500 gallons of water and 12 pounds of grain to produce 1 pound of beef).
- ▲ Fair Trade coffee is served.



Other

- ▲ A Sustainability Award was given in October 2011 to the Wisdom House Community by the Northwest Conservation District of Connecticut for its energy projects and installations.
- ▲ Public information about the renewable energy production of the photovoltaic panels is available at www.datareadings.com. User name: info@wisdomhouse.org. Password: welcome.