



## PREPARING FOR A RETREAT AT THE GARRISON INSTITUTE

We have prepared this information to help you plan for a successful retreat at the Garrison Institute. We look forward to welcoming you in the near future. More specific information on our policies will be given to you on your arrival here.

### FACILITIES

The home of the Garrison Institute is a former Capuchin Franciscan monastery of 77,000 square feet that was restored and renovated in 2002. Originally built in 1932, it overlooks the Hudson River just over an hour north of New York City.

The Institute offers many communal spaces: a large, beautifully lit meditation hall (the former chapel); a meditation annex (for smaller groups or individual practice); a dining hall seating up to 200 for buffet-style meals; a lower level auditorium; and three classrooms for break-out space, lectures or discussions.

### FOOD

We serve a variety of healthy and tasty homemade food. If you have special dietary needs we encourage you to bring any supplemental items you may need. We have a refrigerator and storage space, along with a microwave oven, that you may use in the service kitchen located at the end of the dining hall.

No food is permitted in the bedrooms. There are tea and coffee stations in the dining room and the lounges on the second and third floors; most are available 24 hours a day. Drinks may be brought to bedrooms but cups and glasses should be returned to the service kitchen when done. We have a small housekeeping staff so your assistance

is most appreciated. No food is permitted in the Meditation Hall.

## BEDROOMS

With a total of 90 bedrooms accommodating 165 people, we provide single and double rooms, and a limited number of triples and quads (four-person rooms). All rooms are located on the second, third or fourth floors. On our ground floor are two handicapped-accessible bedrooms that share a bath. All rooms have windows, and many face out on the Hudson River. The bedrooms are not air-conditioned but high ceilings, thick masonry walls, tall windows, and transoms ensure comfortable temperatures. Fourth floor bedrooms have ceiling fans. All rooms are provided with sheets, a pillow, a blanket, a bedspread, and a bath towel for each guest.

There are towel bars located inside the closet doors — please refrain from hanging towels on the radiators. You may bring anything else that you need for your comfort.

## BATHROOMS

There are two communal bathrooms (one male, one female) on each floor. The second and third floors (one on each) also have a hot tub for guest use. Please be sure to read the instructions and notices posted on the wall near the hot tub before using.

## LOUNGES

On each residential floor is a comfortable lounge where tea and (instant) coffee are available 24 hours a day. We also offer wireless, high speed internet connection for computer users. Please note: you must bring your own computer/laptop and be able to configure it to work on a wireless or a DHCP network — we can supply the Ethernet cable.

## GROUNDS

We encourage you to enjoy our beautiful outdoor environment. We have two enclosed courtyards for use as meditation gardens and a large walled rear garden. Located in the rear garden we have a beautiful labyrinth available for walking meditation, which was built in the summer of 2010.

## POLICIES

### SILENCE

Garrison Institute seeks to be a place of refuge, reflection, and peace. Each group at Garrison Institute will have its own discipline, which will include varying levels of silence. Whatever the practice of your group, we ask that guests be respectful of the contemplative atmosphere of the Institute and any other groups that may be present. Please do not bring or use portable radios, CD, or tape players without earphones, and be mindful of cell phone use and the potential for disturbing others.

### COMMUNICATION

There are no phones in guest bedrooms. You can give out our main telephone number to those who may need to reach you: 845.424.4800. If you get a non-emergency phone call, we will post the message on the guest message board. If you get an emergency message, we will find you and deliver it promptly. To make a phone call, there is a pay phone on the 1st floor. Our guest services department has phone cards for sale — please bring your own coins for making local calls. Cell phone service is somewhat erratic in our building but usually okay outside.

### SMOKING

There is one designated smoking area out-

side the building behind the garage next to the loading dock. No smoking is permitted in the building (NYS law mandated) or anywhere outside other than in the designated area.

## DRESS

Dress at Garrison Institute is relaxed and informal. Guests should bring clothes (and shoes) that are comfortable and modest. Shorts and tee shirts are fine. Be sure to bring clothes that are appropriate for hiking so you can enjoy the trails.

## PETS

In the tradition of the Franciscans who lived here, we love animals but cannot accommodate pets. We permit certified companion dogs for seeing-impaired guests — please notify the Institute before you arrive so we can accommodate you.

## FRAGRANCE

For the sake of those who are highly sensitive to fragrance, please do not use any perfume or cologne, and please use only unscented, fragrance-free personal hygiene products. (Note that many products labeled “natural” or “organic” do contain fragrance.)

## MAIL SERVICES

Mail (through the US Postal Service) is picked up/dropped off once per day from the Garrison Institute. We do not have postage stamps or “metered stamps” available for sale so please plan accordingly. We do have UPS pick-up service (and delivery) once a day — you will need to use your own UPS account # or a credit card to use this service as well as your own mailing envelope. An out-going mail basket is located in our front lobby.

## CANCELLATIONS

When Garrison Institute collects registration fees and/or room and board fees directly from guests, we assess a \$60 fee for cancellations. All cancellation fees go to a scholarship fund that helps people with limited income participate in events at Garrison Institute.

## HOUSE JOBS

If your retreat or group includes this option, we offer a daily discount to any guest who agrees to help us maintain the facility and serve the group while here. Jobs normally last one hour per day and are done after breakfast, except those jobs connected with lunch or dinner. None of the jobs involve heavy manual labor and none require special skills. Examples are dish washing, pot washing, meal service, bathroom cleaning, and general cleaning of common rooms. In the warmer months, we often need help with weeding and outside work.

## CHECK-IN

Retreats normally begin with registration on opening day from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. We ask that guests arrive during this time to check in, get their room and job assignments (if applicable), and get oriented to the building and grounds. Dinner is usually served from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. NOTE: There are no locks on the bedroom doors at Garrison Institute, so plan accordingly in terms of bringing valuable items with you.

## CHECK OUT

Retreats end by noon on closing day and usually include breakfast and lunch. We ask that guests check out before 3 p.m. Any unclaimed personal belongings left at Garrison Institute by guests will be given to charity.

## GUEST CHECKLIST

We encourage guests to bring:

- Comfortable shoes and clothing — for sitting, walking, hiking, etc.
- Bathrobe and slippers — for use in our communal bathrooms/hallways
- Extra towels — we provide one bath towel per guest
- Shawl or blanket — for use during meditation or evening walks
- An alarm clock — we cannot provide a “wake-up call”
- Lightweight luggage — all bedrooms are accessible via stairs to upper floors

We ask guests **not** to bring:

- Candles or incense to burn
- Scented products
- Drugs or alcohol
- Pets — unless certified companion dogs for seeing-impaired guests

## FOOD SENSITIVITY INFORMATION

The Garrison Institute serves vegetarian meals through our in-house caterer, Fresh Company. As much as possible, we select local and organic foods that provide a well rounded and nutritious meal. Lunch and dinner have a main entree, two side dishes and salad greens. Each dish on the buffet table has a card which lists all ingredients

in that dish. Many meals have dairy, wheat and/or gluten.

Because we are a retreat center we are set up to provide meals to groups, not to individuals. Menus are based on what is in season and in the market. Because of this, we are not able to accommodate individual needs. But, because there are many people with food restrictions we try to offer a simple substitute during lunch and dinner meals. This substitute always includes rice, a plain, unseasoned steamed vegetable, and hard boiled eggs (sometimes steamed tofu is included as a protein source). These extra items will be in the small kitchen just behind the Dining Hall. Breakfast each day includes the following items: steel-cut oats (cooked in water), plain yogurt, granola, hard boiled eggs, fresh fruit (changes daily and seasonally), and breakfast bread and pastry items.

We invite guests to bring what you think you will need to supplement your diet. We offer you a refrigerator and shelf space to store what you bring. We also have a microwave and toaster for guests to heat food. We do not have a stove or blender for guests.

Even on a limited diet most people find they can eat some of what is offered on the buffet table and, supplemented with what they bring, do fine. So at lunch and dinner you can go through the buffet line taking whatever suits you and then go into the nearby kitchen to supplement your meal with rice, a vegetable, eggs, or other foods that you have brought. Please identify yourself to the chef the first night at dinner and he/she will show you where they will have the extra foods available. At the end of meals (when everyone has been served) you can go back through the line and take more of whatever agrees with you to add to the next meal.