

PEACE, OUT

FIND YOUR INNER PEACE AT A UNIQUE RETREAT

By ALLISON HORNE

With the everyday pressures of work, family and life's expectations, sometimes it's best just to take care of yourself and get away for a bit to realign your priorities. Day and weekend retreats can be the perfect escape and give you the opportunity to relax, recharge and unwind.

Everyone is different, and everyone may relax or find retreat in a different way. From horse therapy and Reiki to the classic massage and spa trip, there are so many unique retreats a short drive away, and just waiting to be enjoyed. Here are just a few:



■ PORTIUNCULA CENTER FOR PRAYER

9263 W. Saint Francis Rd., Frankfort
(815) 464-3880; portforprayer.org

The Portiuncula Center for Prayer is 50 acres located on the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart grounds with grassy knolls, hiking trails and a creek. There are five private hermitages onsite, as well as a holistic center, retreat center, and even an outdoor labyrinth. The center's purpose, like its namesake, is centered on the spiritual dimension of retreating and relaxing.

"Some people will come to just spend time on the grounds and get away from the world for a little bit," says director Mary Lou Nugent. "It really has a wonderful energy."

Guests can stop by for a casual stroll through the grounds, make their own one-night retreat, or even stay for a week or longer. The spiritual aspect of the grounds combined with classic relaxation practices make for a unique stay.

"Mind, body and spirit is kind of our foundation," Nugent says. "That's why we have the whole package of spirituality and the holistic center. Those are the things that keep us grounded."

While the grounds are open to the public, the center itself offers weeklong organized retreats in the summer, or guests can simply make their own based on their own needs. There are spiritual directors available to help



guide and plan a retreat for anyone spending several days there.

"It's not therapy, but it's more of a spiritual direction," Nugent says. "It is kind of design-your own. We can help guide you through whatever you're working through at the moment - it can be grieving or it can be healing."

While the chapels offer the spiritual factor into any retreat, the holistic center allows guests to work in massages, healing touch or reflexology into a retreat.

"I really do think that's the perfect experience," Nugent adds. "That body work helps release the tension and it kind of makes for the perfect retreat - mind, body and spirit."

Upcoming events:

THE LABYRINTH

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Monday, April 9

SACRED SOUNDS GONG BATH

7 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday, April 13

SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS FROM NATURE

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Monday, April 16

La Verna Day of Reflection
9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Friday, May 4

STAYING GROUNDED

9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Monday, May 14

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF CARING FOR THE SELF

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Friday, May 18

TENDING YOUR INNER GARDEN SUMMER RETREAT

5:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 20 through 12 p.m. Sunday, June 24

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