

About Mercy Conference and Retreat Center (MCRC)

Mission

To provide a tranquil environment of hospitality and healing in the Mercy Tradition, where groups and individuals of all faiths can engage in prayer, reflection and dialogue for personal, communal and global transformation.

Vision

To be a thriving oasis of vibrant spirituality which is expansive, integrative, inclusive and responsive to the needs of seekers of peace, personal growth, and development. We are a Catholic Conference/Retreat Center sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy and a member of Midwest Retreat Ministries.

About Us

We welcome people of all faiths, congregations and parishes, health care organizations, social service agencies, school staffs, religious communities and clergy, university groups, as well as national and international conferences. Mercy Conference and Retreat Center's beautifully wooded 70+ acre campus, situated in west St. Louis County, offers a spacious setting and supportive atmosphere for professional, educational and spiritual activities.

MCRC has 54 rooms and can house up to 92 people. Meeting spaces range from intimate parlors for small groups to meeting rooms that hold 25-150, and the chapel in the round which can seat up to 300. The campus has been designated as a Certified Wildlife Habitat, and includes an outdoor labyrinth, walking trail, and inspirational areas for meditation, prayer, and reflection.

Our Services

- **Hospitality Services** – We serve groups by providing a sacred environment that promotes deeper reflection, greater collaboration and community, enhanced creativity, and the opportunity to expand the possibilities for positive impact in their respective fields of influence. MCRC hosts faith communities from diverse spiritual traditions, health and social service organizations, and schools and universities. Hosted groups use the space for retreats, educational programs, strategic planning workshops, and operational meetings. Many of our groups have been using our facility and services year after year and we are booked far into the future. MCRC focuses its hospitality on the needs of each group in the arrangement of meeting and gathering spaces, dietary requirements of guests, and overnight accommodations.
- **Spirituality Programs** – MCRC offers programs that encourage and empower individuals to greater depth and breadth in their spiritual journeys. Retreats, days of reflection, book studies, and shorter programs offer a wide array of presenters and topics to meet the needs of participants. Art, music, and movement are often included as part of a holistic approach. Reverence for the earth and environmental /ecological awareness and education are elements of many offerings. MCRC collaborates with individuals and organizations to ensure that programming remains relevant and responsive to an ever-changing population.
- **Individualized Spiritual Companionship and Mind/Body Wellness** – The center serves as a place to follow the Gospel call to come away for a while, to find a place apart in

which to connect more deeply with God, nature and community. Many guests say that they sense the shift in atmosphere even as they come up the front drive. They soon encounter a warm welcome from the staff. This spirit of hospitality extends to all faiths – Christian and Jewish, Buddhist and Hindi, Catholic and Protestant, and to seekers of all sorts. It takes a Mercy village to provide this place of welcome with beautifully maintained grounds and buildings, polished floors, inviting rooms with all that a traveler needs, and delicious meals.

Leadership and Staffing

Our board of directors includes 10 committed members with experience in nonprofits, health care, conference and retreat ministries, interfaith and parish work, pastoral care, social work, marketing and media, finance, and law. The board meets quarterly and the standing working committees of the board (board development, development and marketing, finance, and programs) meet every six weeks.

Dawn Stringfield, Executive Director of MCRC, is in her fourth year and is the first lay person to lead the organization after 23 years under a Sister of Mercy. She has 20 years of experience in business and technology and 13 years in nonprofit leadership. Prior to coming to MCRC, she worked in nonprofits focused on ending domestic violence, leadership development, and empowering individuals in recovery through education.

MCRC employs seven full-time and seven part-time staff. Three of the full-time employees are certified spiritual directors. Adjunct professionals supplement these full-time employees for the spirituality programming, individual spiritual companionship, and mind/body wellness. Administrative staff provide service to guests and groups from their first call to MCRC through their final day on the campus. Maintenance, housekeeping and dietary services are provided through a contract arrangement.

History

Mercy Conference and Retreat Center began our work in 1975 as a ministry of the former St. Louis Regional Community of the Sisters of Mercy. Housed in what had been the community's motherhouse, novitiate, and junior college, the ministry focused on providing space and services for groups like Marriage Encounter.

Since 2008, Mercy Conference and Retreat Center has been an independent non-profit designated as a sponsored ministry by the Sisters of Mercy. In 2015, we celebrate 40 years of providing a tranquil environment of hospitality and healing in the tradition of Sisters of Mercy. In that time, hundreds of thousands of individuals have experienced God in this sacred space. They have found here a holy ground rich with the presence of all the Sisters of Mercy and brother and sister retreatants before them.