

A Note of Gratitude to Kevala Retreat from Insight Chicago Meditation Community

There's something special about Kevala Retreat - a wonderful refuge for practice nestled in the rolling wooded hills just outside Norwalk, WI. Although modesty keeps Santikaro and Jo Marie from touting the special treasures of what they have created, those of us who have had the good fortune to experience Kevala first hand wanted to both share our gratitude and spread the word.



Kevala (kay-vah-lah) provides a wonderful setting for deepening practice and contemplation. Retreats are self-guided allowing you to customize your own retreat experience. Many smaller sanghas have visited as groups, or you may choose a solo retreat option. Short or extended stays are both possible. You have the flexibility to choose what will be most supportive for your practice. Depending on his travel schedule, it may also be possible for Santikaro to meet with you/your sangha for a dharma talk.

Kevala offers a variety of accommodation options including a very clean and comfortable guest house with a full kitchen and library, private hermitages and camp sites. The grounds offer walking paths, views of the countryside, and chance encounters with wildlife - including little Dewey the cat, who if you're lucky might accompany you on a walk out in the fields. When clouds are few, the night sky gives way to a carpet of stars that inspire a sense of awe and perspective.





It's location in Southwestern Wisconsin is far enough away to allow you to fully disconnect from city life, yet close enough to do a weekend retreat.

We hope you will take a moment to peruse the ***personal reflections offered below*** by some of the many fellow yogis who have visited Kevala.

Reflections From Past Kevala Retreatants....

Upon arrival at Kevala, there was a visceral expansion and letting go of the constricted self, an awareness of spaciousness was observed.

Leaving Kevala with an open heart filled with gratitude: for Jo Marie and Santikaro's time, care, effort and teachings, the gifts of Nature (flora & fauna), the illuminated sky at night, & finding refuge in Sangha. Carol R.

Wherever you are in your practice, Kevala supports you... The serenity of woods and open fields have offered me a buoyant space for practice. I've had hours of peaceful meditation, walks in the woods and mindful cooking and meals. The woodland hermitage, when available, is a wonderful place to sit. While there the last time, I was lucky to have some bright sunny days and a few cloudless, moonless night skies. All of this is food for heart, soul and practice and makes Kevala a refuge [for me]. Nancy R.

"Gone to a forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, one sits down"Kevala provides this setting (and more) to the city bound practitioner (and others) looking for a secluded place for practice and contemplation. Coming with friends or alone for a weekend or a week

long retreat is a wonderful respite from one's typical busyness. Please visitthe rewards are bountiful, and the teachings from Nature, Jo Marie, and Santikaro are available in myriad ways. The Dhamma has come to us from thousands of years past, through the effort of others. With gratitude, we can continue that effort by supporting Kevala with our presence, and in the process move steadily along our own path to awakening. Scott C.

It's an absolutely beautiful place. The land is beautiful and the facilities are very generous and comfortable. Jo Marie takes incredible care of them. It was my first time doing a mostly unguided retreat, and it was quite enjoyable to be able to adjust the intensity of the retreat. I am aiming to make it a biannual practice. Kayla K.

(We) have done many retreats at Kevala....how wonderful it is from accommodations to contemplative space. Cindy L.

I will always carry with me the beauty, companionship, goodwill, tranquility, and the teaching and learning, of my times at Kevala. Ellen M.

I ..had a magical experience at the retreat center. Barbara F.

....it's beautiful, clean, a library, an incredible kitchen, large fridge. Quiet. Contemplative. Walking meditations are nice here. Beautiful. I try to go once a year. Margo R.

There was an unexpected sense of peace when I arrived at Kevala. Nowhere else to go. Nothing else to do. Joy to be gathering with sangha... and a feeling of connectedness between beings large and small - a beautiful coexistence - all being cultivated in a supportive environment for deepening practice. For all the causes and conditions,

Right Intention and Right Effort that must have come together to create this spiritual place, I am truly grateful. Mary O.

The two months I spent at Kevala were invaluable for my understanding of the Dhamma. The environment itself seems to conspire to awaken one to the natural truths that are to be realized in our practice. Add in the guidance of Santikaro and Jo Marie, a little energy and perseverance, and you have the causes and conditions for a life changing experience. Travis M.