



La Casa de Maria Retreat Center

A Work of the Immaculate Heart Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **Media Contact:** Juliana Minsky, (805) 687-3322

Santa Barbara's La Casa de Maria Cited as Top U.S. Retreat

*U.S. News & World Report features local retreat center in special issue:
50 Ways to Improve Your Life in 2006*

Santa Barbara, Calif., April 18, 2006—It is fitting that in its 50th anniversary year, a local treasure is featured as one of 50 Ways to Improve Your Life in top national news magazine U.S. News & World Report. One of the life-changing directives the magazine offers to improve body, mind, home, and finances is to “go for a spiritual retreat”. U.S. News & World Report also cites a description of La Casa de Maria from a popular national guide to retreats.

“We are delighted to be recognized as one of our country’s best retreats in U.S. News & World Report,” said Stephanie Glatt, Director of La Casa de Maria. “La Casa de Maria is a place where the well being of the whole person - mind, body, spirit – is nurtured. It is gratifying to know that the environment for personal and spiritual renewal that we provide to groups and individuals is acknowledged and valued as a vital part of improving our lives today.”

Each year, approximately 12,000 people benefit from a retreat or workshop at La Casa de Maria. Over 400 faith-based, educational and nonprofit groups ranging in size from 10 to 150 people come to learn, reflect and grow. Stays range from one to 14 days. For half a century, the historic twenty-six acre retreat center has preserved a serene rural beauty that suggests timeless peace.

“When you walk through their gates, you [enter] a new and peaceful dimension,” says Marcia Kelly, co-author of Sanctuaries: the Complete United States—A Guide to Lodgings in Monasteries, Abbeys, and Retreats.

La Casa de Maria hosts a wide variety of community groups and organizations focusing on spiritual, educational, community building, peace, social and economic justice, at-risk youth, and the environment. The nonprofit organization also sponsors its own programs focusing on spiritual renewal, personal growth, education, health and healing, arts and civic renewal. The Immaculate Heart Center for Spiritual Renewal, which functions alongside La Casa de Maria under the nonprofit umbrella of the Immaculate Heart Community, serves individuals and couples for non structured, personal retreats. The website is at www.lacasademaria.org.

Note to editors: High resolution photos and b-roll available. To request or to schedule a tour of La Casa de Maria Retreat Center, please contact: Juliana Minsky, (805) 687-3322, jm@surfmedia.com.

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About La Casa de Maria

The mission of La Casa de Maria is to provide, through its programs and its environment a nourishing place of peace where persons of all faiths can search for truth, engage in dialogue, experience personal growth, realize their self-worth, embrace the sacred, and then refreshed and renewed, participate more responsibly in the creation of a just and peaceful world, and a whole and healthful earth.