



La Casa de Maria and Center for Spiritual Renewal selects RCH Studios for sustainable master plan and rebuild

(Montecito, CA, March 6) -- The Immaculate Heart Community (IHC) has selected [RCH Studios](#) as the master architect to lead the sustainable redesign and rebuilding of the La Casa de Maria and Center for Spiritual Renewal (LCDM-CSR) retreat center located in Montecito, California.

"How blessed we are to be partnering with RCH Studios to restore the land and the buildings of our retreat center," said IHC President Karol Schulkin, IHM. "We look forward to discovering new ways that IHC can be of service to the world and anticipate with great joy the time when we can again share our retreat center with all those seeking a quiet place of beauty, peace and spiritual renewal."

Located on 26 semi-rural acres of orange groves and native gardens, LCDM-CSR has been a sanctuary of peace where thousands of guests have come to center themselves and renew their sense of purpose. The Montecito center was the one-time novitiate for the Sisters of the California Institute of the Most Holy and Blessed Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) and first opened to the public as a Catholic couples retreat in 1955.

President Schulkin helped to found the Center for Spiritual Renewal in 1974, at which time the La Casa de Maria retreat center was growing into an inclusive and welcoming center for contemplation, interfaith dialogue, and transformational growth. In 2018, LCDM-CSR sustained substantial damage in the severe mud and debris flow that followed the Thomas Fire. The rebuild will be informed by IHC partnerships across California, with best practices shared by the foremost regenerative and resilient environmental organizations.

"We are excited and honored to collaborate with the Immaculate Heart Community on the rebuilding of La Casa de Maria," stated Greg Kochanowski, Studio Director at RCH Studios. "We have always felt a connection with this community, and we are thrilled to be involved with the masterplan efforts. After disasters such as this, we often speak of resilience in terms of systems that can be implemented to mitigate the effects of future events. But the most powerful, and enduring type of resilience is created through strong social bonds, in which we all support one another. We look forward to forming those bonds in the months ahead."

For more information visit: www.lacasademaria.org

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About the Immaculate Heart Community

Founded in 1970, the Immaculate Heart Community (IHC) is a non-profit organization that works toward peace and justice for all peoples, with a focus on women, immigration and the environment. IHC administers multiple non-profit programs in the arts, education, spirituality and social services, including La Casa de Maria and its Center for Spiritual Renewal (LCDM-CSR). Through its programs, seeks to build a society which fosters access of all persons to truth, dignity, and full human development. In 2020, IHC is proud to celebrate 50 years of faith, hope and action. For more information visit: www.immaculateheartcommunity.org

RCH STUDIOS

About RCH Studios

RCH Studios has earned an international reputation for its collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach, establishing an award-winning tradition across an unprecedented range of design disciplines. Since 1985, the architects, landscape architects, planners, and urban, interior, exhibit, graphic, and product designers at RCH Studios have been creating and telling stories through buildings, places, and products that are thoughtful, effective, and beautiful. In 2017, RCH Studios released its first book entitled *Not Neutral: For Every Place, Its Story*, a robust visual collection of the studios' multi-disciplinary work, published by AMMO Books. For more information visit: www.rchstudios.com