

10 year Anniversary of Inspiration Wood Cottage Inn & Conference Center

The name Inspiration Wood was inspired by a simple elementary school devotion about the legend of the Christmas Tree. Each cottage was inspired by a different tree legend. The idea of Inspiration Wood evolved and grew over the years to become a place of peace and tranquility, a time where families, businesses and churches can come together in unity to reach common goals. The natural serene environment consists of indoor and outdoor meeting areas and gardens surrounded by 60 acres of fields and woods. The mission of Inspiration Wood is to create an environment that inspires others to reach their greatest potential, Spiritually, Personally and Professionally.

Signature, personalized meetings are what Inspiration Wood was built for. The beauty of nature, the elegance of what God has made & comfortable modern amenities come together at Inspiration Wood perfectly for a formal gathering, family reunion, or inspirational activity provided by Ron and Kim VanSessen. As you enter Inspiration Road, you will find The Gathering Space, overlooking Prophet's Pond and Grace Garden & Meadow. The Gathering Space is a conference center equipped with the latest in multimedia and internet connectivity. Grace Garden & Meadow are blissfully joined with the Gathering Space so you and your guests can delight in the formal gardens during your gathering. Across the Meadow is the Greeting Barn where you will find Wildflower Sundries, handmade home and health sprays, The Essential Ideas Lab and the Inspiration Room for handmade cards, jewelry and gifts.

The Gathering Space can accommodate as few as 12 guests in an executive roundtable configuration or up to 60 guests in tables of 8 with room for a guest speaker and mediators. A team building U-shape configuration for up to 24 can also be arranged for interactive style teaching and training. Catering in the Gathering Space is provided by award winning caterers: Lemon Tree Mediterranean Grill, Third Coast Spice Cafe, and Albanos Villa. Please consult Kim VanSessen for arranging meals for specialized dietary restrictions. We can accommodate any food sensitivity, allergy, religious or spiritual preference. All food must be provided by our caterers. Please interview your guests for dietary restrictions when planning your meals. Consultation appointments must be made in advance. All tours must be arranged in advance to allow for privacy for any groups onsite. We can give tours between retreats and gatherings by appointment only.

Classes and workshops are available to learn more about healthcare and integrative medicine using essential oils. Private consultations for integrating essential oils into your life are by appointment. Our first Wellness Gathering will be held this January in the Gathering Space featuring activities for Reflection, Intention and Direction in your wellness journey. Each activity will incorporate the use of essential oils for of spritual, personal and professional inspiration. The purpose of each session will be to create a thoughtful tool for use during the gathering and to take home for future inspiration. Lunch will be provided by LemonTree Mediterranean Grill. Reservations can be made on (our event facebook page).

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As you walk along the trails at Inspiration Wood, you can almost hear the history of the property speaking to you in hushed whispers. Behind Acorn Cabin along the Tranquil Trail, you will find a rare paw paw patch that was perhaps planted by the Sauk Indians thought to live near the creek. Paw paw is known as the Indiana Banana and has healing properties that can help heal cancers of the stomach. The varied vegetation helped feed the Indians and the native wildlife that inhabit the woods still-there are wild mink, wild turkey, pheasant, blue heron (we call our resident Blue heron, "Bob") a large family of deer and raccoon. Many birds and reptiles live here. We have an abundance of turtles especially and many frogs you can hear singing at night.

Different pieces of the property were named for family. Beyond the Tranquil Trail, deep into the wood is the Warriors Walk. Named for the Indians that lived here and our son, Mark Elliott: "Warrior of God". The trails wind around the upland of the back 40 acres which was used as cattle pasture for many years. You can still see some of the old fence around the edge of the property. The big old sycamore tree is still there in the middle of the trail. If you keep very still, you can imagine the Indian warriors walking in the woods behind the creek and hunting deer or fishing for salmon as they run in the spring. You may even see a rainbow trout swimming by.

At the end of the trail is a fork in the path. If you go to the left you will find the Council Clearing where we plan to build a large bonfire pit and chapel in the wood. It reminded us of a great council meeting place in the forest. If you instead head to the right, you will find the Princess Path named for our daughter Sarah Margaret and the Indian princesses that surely walked here. You will cross a bridge to the lavender house where relaxing breakfasts are served in the summer months.

Seventeen Pines is the original homestead with 100 acres. It was split into two parcels in the early 1970's. Previous to that, it was only occupied by two other families since the late 1800's. The original house on Inspiration Wood's 60 acres is the Sunflower House. It was built in the early 1970's by the McMillin family. The children are now grown and have visited Inspiration Wood and remember the big old Sycamore tree in the woods and the home they grew up in. Ron and Kim VanSessen and their children Mark and Sarah have enjoyed learning the history of the property and becoming the new caretakers of the legacy of this beautiful land. We hope to honor those who worked and loved the land before us and build a legacy of love for future generations.

For more information on their story and amenities visit them on the web at www.inspirationwood.com. Tours and consultations by appointment. Please call 219-983-9922 and ask for Ron or Kim.