



## SERENITY RIDGE SERVICE-BASED RESIDENCY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Serenity Ridge Retreat Center (“Serenity Ridge” or “Center”), thirty minutes south of Charlottesville, Virginia, offers virtual and in-person retreats throughout the year. The Center is a part of, and the headquarters of, Ligmincha International, a non-profit organization dedicated to sharing meditation and spiritual practices from the Bön Buddhist tradition of Tibet.

Serenity Ridge supports meditators and spiritual seekers through group and individual retreats, day-long activities, online programs and opportunities for service. The center can house up to 70 people in dormitories, guest rooms and campsites, and seat as many as one hundred and fifty people per event. Our kitchen provides up to three vegetarian, vegan and gluten free meals per day during retreats. The center consists of 75 acres of forest and 18 acres of mostly cleared land on a ridgeline. Our five buildings include a total of almost 35,000 square feet of space.

We are committed to providing a welcoming atmosphere for all guests to explore the teachings of Bön and other spiritual traditions, cultivate self-knowledge, and discover their own true nature. As a community we value diversity and inclusiveness and the potential of all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment.

### Serenity Ridge’s Residency Program

Service as a sacred act can be a powerful tool for self-transformation. At the center, our Residency Program emphasizes service as a spiritual practice in its own right. A limited number of positions are open to those with a sincere interest in the Bön Buddhist tradition as well as a desire to do service work on behalf of our community and as an expression of their own practice for a period of one to six months. Serenity Ridge and its staff will do their very best to provide Residents a safe and supportive environment for both selfless service, study, and practice of Bön.

### Residency Benefits

The benefits of the program to the Resident generally consist of the following:

- Opportunity for service to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, and our community of practitioners

- A safe and supportive space and community for spiritual practice
- Dedicated time for daily practice
- Opportunity for support from Lamas and Senior Instructors (seasonally available)
- Free participation in at Serenity Ridge hosted retreats that do not have unmet prerequisites
- Use of sacred spaces for meditation when not in use by programs: the gumpa (main meditation hall) and Garuda House shrine room
- Access to nature trails
- Onsite housing
- 20 percent discount at the bookstore
- Meals provided during retreats (see food options below during non-retreat times)

Laundry machines are available for use.

Please note that a Resident Lama is not available at all times throughout the year. If this aspect of the program is important to you, please check with us to determine the availability of a Resident Lama on site prior to submitting your application.

## Prerequisites

All Residents are required to have some prior experience with the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the Bön tradition. To be considered for the Residency Program, an applicant should have the following qualifications:

- Have participated in at least one retreat at Serenity Ridge with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche or a Ligmincha teacher (3 or more days in length). For those outside the United States, attendance at at least one three-day retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at any location is required.
- A strong desire to deepen one's personal connection to the teachings of Bön.
- At least 6 months of experience with a regular daily practice following the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, from material learned in retreats, online courses, or through the use of his books and videos.
- Applicants should be self-motivated and with a strong self-directed practice for times when there is not a Lama in residence.
- Provide at least three references who can speak to practice experience and/or character, including at least one person with whom you have worked..
- Review and agree to abide by Ligmincha's Code of Conduct. *Please note that the Code of Conduct states that residents may not bring non-prescription/recreational drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products on campus in any shape or form.. This includes THC based products and its derivatives.*
- Covid-19 precautions: Must follow Serenity Ridge protocols for staff and retreat participants regarding covid. Residents must present a negative covid test taken no more than 24 hours prior to arrival. In addition, as of April 2023, Serenity Ridge's the current guidelines are that a negative test result must be provided at the start of retreats, a second test must be provided on the 3rd day for longer retreats, mask wearing is optional, and isolating from others if one tests positive for covid is required.
- Agree to a background check before the start of a residency at Serenity Ridge if staying for a period of one month or longer..

On a practical level, Residents must be able to:

- Live and work with others in either close quarters or in solitude
- Work in a variety of environments (outdoors, kitchen, light building maintenance and housekeeping), both independently and with others
- Lift up to 30 pounds
- Maintain clear communication with their supervisor and other residents. WhatsApp is the program most often used, and so a cell phone is necessary during one's residency
- Follow instructions
- Provide their own means of transportation to and from the center as needed

Applicants for the Residency Program who lack one or more of the above qualities may still be considered for the program, but only with the expressed consent of Serenity Ridge administration. We try to accommodate and meet the needs of those with disabilities or health issues that may prohibit certain forms of work and service.

## Program Structure and Costs

Residencies are generally from one to six months, though it is possible to arrange for a stay of up to one year in some circumstances. All residencies will be reviewed after the first month (see Provisional Residency Period, below) prior to continuance. (For those wishing to participate for less than one month please see our [Individual Service Retreat](#) program.)

### Residency Options

Residents have several options to choose from with respect to the amount of time they wish to devote to practice or service:

1. *20 hours per week* (4 hours per day, 5 days per week). In exchange, they participate in the program at no cost and receive a \$300 per month food allowance, or less on a prorated basis for days when meals are available at retreats.
2. *15 hours per week* (3 hours per day, 5 days per week). In exchange, they participate in the program. Meals are available during retreats. At non-retreat times, residents need to provide for their own food. A kitchen is made available for use during non-retreat times.
3. Offered on a limited basis: *10 hours per week* (2 hours per day, 5 days per week). The cost to the Resident is \$750 per month. Meals are available during retreats. At non-retreat times, residents need to provide for their own food. A kitchen is made available for use during non-retreat times.

### Provisional Residency Period

The Provisional Residency is meant as a time for both the Resident and Serenity Ridge to get to know each other. While applicants may apply for a Residency of up to six months, all Residents must begin with a 30-day provisional period. There will be weekly check-ins to discuss how the Residency is working out from the perspective of both the Center and the Resident. During the provisional period, either party

may terminate the relationship for any reason. The Center will provide at least 48 hours advance notice if a Resident's position is terminated during this time period.

## Termination of Residency

The principles of the Bön tradition include respect, kindness, and civility to all, at all times. Individuals unable to abide by these principles, or who are in violation of Ligmincha International's Code of Conduct or other Serenity Ridge policies (e.g., substance use, will be required to leave.

## General Program Framework

### Sample Daily Schedule of Activities

**7:00 – 8:00 am:** Practice

**8:15 – 9:30 am:** Individual time for Breakfast

**10:00 am:** Start for work for service (may meet with supervisor)

**10:00 am – 12:00 pm:** Work period

**12:00 – 2:00 pm:** Clean-up/Free time for Lunch

**2:00 – 4:00 pm:** Work period

**6:00 – 7:30 pm:** Dinner/clean-up

**7:30 – 10:30 pm:** Practice/study

**10:30 pm – 6:00 am:** Quiet hours

NOTE: This is a sample schedule and may not be the schedule of all Residents. For example, being assigned to the kitchen will require a different work schedule. And during the summer months, groundskeeping may be on a different schedule to reduce exposure to sun and heat. Mealtimes also will be slightly different when Serenity Ridge events are in progress.

### Scope of Work

Residents will be assigned a 5-day work schedule, usually (but not necessarily) with two consecutive days off each week. Generally, this schedule will be Monday through Friday, but during retreat periods or when larger numbers of Residents are onsite, the work week may be changed to expand across weekends or with longer days. For example, one set of Residents might work Sunday through Thursday and a second set might work Tuesday through Saturday. Residents will receive no less than two days off per week, except during Serenity Ridge Retreats or other times of high need, when the schedule may be modified.

Residents will be assigned a "primary" area of work activity every month in one of the following areas: kitchen support, office, housekeeping, grounds, or light maintenance. The primary area will generally occupy more than half of a resident's time in any given week. The remaining time may be allocated to other areas as required. Just before, during, and immediately after Serenity Ridge retreats, Residents also may be asked to participate in event preparation. This may include tasks such as setup and takedown of tables and chairs, preparing the gompa (meditation hall), some groundskeeping and housekeeping, cleaning of all buildings and areas, and the like.

During retreats at Serenity Ridge with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and other Bön Lamas and Ligmincha instructors, every effort is made to lighten the work schedule and ensure that participation is possible. Residents will generally work one hour on retreat days while attending all teachings and at least one practice session each day. In the days immediately before and after retreat, an evening work period may be added so that all obligations can be met and the work reduced during the retreat period.

## Emergency On-Call (EOC)

Each Resident not in their Provisional Period will be scheduled on a rotating basis for this role. This task cannot be replaced with another task. When a Resident is scheduled to be On-Call, they must remain on property during the times of 7 pm the night they are scheduled until 7 am the next morning, and be on the point person for emergencies. The On-Call person is infrequently asked to respond to an emergency. This task is important to the safety of the center. Refusal to accept and perform this task will result in immediate dismissal from the program. Details are outlined in the [Emergency On-Call Policy](#).

## Food

*Please note: Serenity Ridge is an entirely vegetarian eating environment. The cooking of meat is not permitted at any location on premises.*

See Residency Options, above for meal options.

When retreats are not in progress and meals not provided, residents will be provided a kitchen to prepare their own meals, implementing proper and safe preparation, and thorough clean-up of all dish- and kitchenware. Residents will share use of a kitchen on the lower level of the Kunzang Khang building. Time spent on meal preparation is not a part of work hours or service. The allocation of these responsibilities may change based on the number of Residents.

“Borrowing” of another retreatant’s food or unauthorized access to Ligmincha International/Serenity Ridge food inventories is considered theft, and may be subject to immediate dismissal from the program and request to depart Serenity Ridge.

## Housing

Residents will be assigned their own room (or a room per couple, for couples who apply to the program and wish to share a room), if and when sufficient space is available. To accommodate additional Residents around the time of our summer retreat, Residents may need to share a bunk room with another Resident of the same gender..

Resident Room Upgrade: If a resident wishes to upgrade from a bunk bed room to a single room in the south wing of Garuda House, they may:

- Upgrade to a single room IF the room is not reserved for a retreat or rental.
- Pay \$10/day for a room upgrade
- Pay for the upgrade at the beginning of each month
- For days when the single rooms are reserved for retreats/rentals, residents will need to move back to a bunk bed room

Departure: Residents agree to clean their rooms and other spaces they have used prior to their departure. 24 hours prior to departure, the Operations Manager will do a walk through of their room. Residents are responsible for the cost to repair any damage they have done to their room.

## Application Process for the Residency Program

Interested individuals may apply to the Residency Program by clicking [here](#). Please communicate any special requests for participation in the program in the application. And, please note that animals are not allowed on campus. Applicants will be notified upon receipt of application. On acceptance into the program, Serenity Ridge administration will work with you to set a start date, review the specifics of the program, and create a mutually beneficial plan.