

**Camphill Village**  
Copake, New York  
<http://www.camphillvillage.org>

Camphill Village USA, Inc.  
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Camphill Village in Copake, New York is the oldest and largest of ten independent Camphill communities in North America. The North American region in turn is part of the international Camphill Movement: 100 independent communities, schools and training centers in 20 countries in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa working with children, youth and adults with developmental, social, emotional and mental disabilities.

The Camphill Movement was founded in 1939 by Austrian pediatrician Dr. Karl König (1902-1966) in Scotland. He and his colleagues established the first Camphill school for children with special needs, basing their work on the insights of anthroposophy—the philosophy and spiritual world view given by philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925).

The Camphill Movement is based on the recognition of the spiritual integrity of each human individuality, regardless of disability. Camphill places welcome people of any religious, ethnic or racial background.

**Meaningful Work**

Camphill Village offers a variety of meaningful work and training options. “Meaningful work” is work that meets real needs and—equally important—offers both the challenge of acquiring new skills and the satisfaction of a job well done.

We practice respect for the workplace, our tools and materials, and for the work itself. Even the smallest task has dignity and value, and contributes to the well-being of others.

**Agriculture and Land Work**



In Camphill Village we practice sustainable agriculture through biodynamic and organic methods to help bring healing to the earth.

In common with organic methods, biodynamics avoids the use of pesticides, chemicals or

hormones and uses such techniques as crop rotation and green manuring. In addition, biodynamics actively seeks to restore vitality to the soil through the use of special compost preparations and timing of sowing and harvesting to planetary rhythms.

The principles and practice of biodynamic agriculture recognize the earth as a living organism in which each farm has its own identity. A biodynamic farm works towards the ideal of becoming a self-sustaining organism, with a balance of plants and animals, of pasture, woodlands and tilled fields. These elements work together to nourish and build the soil. Compost is made and nutrients circulate. Wildlife and native landscape are essential elements. All these together build up a farm with individuality and character, a place with a special atmosphere and quality. Incorporated as a prominent, essential part of Village life, biodynamic agriculture has become more than a method of farming. It has provided a pathway of service to care for and heal the earth.



### **The Farm**

The Camphill Village farm provides a healing landscape and therapeutic work. The rhythm of work, the cycles of the seasons, the care and attention given the plants and animals, the daily encounter with the wisdom and beauty of nature—all these are healing for body, soul and spirit.

Villagers who have worked on the farm crew for many years have become responsible, dependable farmers. They are proud to consider farming their vocation, and they enjoy a well-deserved special status within the Village.

### **Turtle Tree Seed**

The mission of Turtle Tree Seed is to preserve genetic diversity in vegetable, herb, grain and flower seeds by growing and distributing biodynamic seed to customers through catalog sales. The seed is grown in Turtle Tree Seed's gardens in Camphill Village and by 35 other biodynamic growers in the U.S. and Europe. During the winter months a crew of 6 to 8 villagers, co-workers and volunteers from the surrounding community sorts, dries and stores the seed, and then fills orders. You can visit the Turtle Tree Seed website at [www.turtletreeseed.com](http://www.turtletreeseed.com).

### **The Healing Plant**

The mission of The Healing Plant is to bring people and plants closer together. It is a two-acre herb garden and a year-round workshop that provides high quality biodynamically-grown medicinal and culinary herbs and herbal products (teas, ointments, seasonings) to Camphill Village and local customers

### **Craft workshops**

Craft workshops in Camphill Village produce items of value and beauty which are used in the community and sold in the Camphill Village Gift Shop. Villagers and co-workers work side by side making a variety of products including hand-crafted wood toys, trivets and cutting boards; beautiful woven vests, scarves and placemats; 100 percent pure beeswax candles; unique blank books and picture albums. The Bakery produces delicious breads, cookies, pizza and rolls using organic ingredients whenever possible.

### **Bakery**

The ten independent communities in Camphill's North American region are located in New York, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Ontario, California and British Columbia.

Information about Camphill in North America is available from the Camphill Association of North America (CANA) at 518/851-3260 or [www.camphillassociation.org](http://www.camphillassociation.org)

The Camphill Movement came to North America from Great Britain over forty years ago. Its intention and founding ideal: to build communities where the individuality and spiritual integrity of every human being is recognized, upheld and lovingly nourished.

Camphill Village was started in Copake, New York in 1961 at the urging of a group of concerned people that included parents of young adults with developmental disabilities. They had heard Dr. Karl König, the founder of Camphill, give a lecture in New York City about the growing Camphill Movement in Great Britain. These families wanted to establish a Camphill place in America for their grown children.

A small group of co-workers from Camphill places in Britain responded to this need. In the beginning, a small farm with two houses was donated to the initiative. Over the years other parcels of land were added and new houses and workshops were built. The Village now comprises 600 acres of hills, woods and pastures, 24 houses of different sizes, crafts workshops, farm buildings, a medical care center, culture and arts center, Bakery, Co-op, Café and Gift Shop. A total of 240 people live and work here together in dedication to the founding ideals.

Camphill Village is much more than a provider of basic services for people with developmental disabilities. It offers an environment that is fully integrated — people of all ages and abilities share home, work and social activities. It provides many interesting and challenging work options and a healthy outdoor lifestyle. People in Camphill Village enjoy a rich artistic and cultural life, with opportunities for spiritual expression. The Village also makes possible specialized care, dignified work and creative activities for its elderly residents.

## The Philosophy: Anthroposophy

The source and continuing inspiration for Camphill is anthroposophy—the philosophy, world view and spiritual path given by Austrian scientist and educator Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925).

Anthroposophy embraces a spiritual understanding of the human being and the cosmos, based on knowing rather than faith. The insights of anthroposophy can help lead the modern scientific consciousness toward the rediscovery of the spiritual sources of the material world. Eminently practical, anthroposophy is the wellspring for Waldorf education, biodynamic agriculture, and new frontiers in science, the arts, sociology, medicine and curative work.

As an inner path of self-development anthroposophy is also practical, rather than mystical, emphasizing study, concentration, meditation, the schooling of perception and awakening to fully self-conscious thinking.

Throughout his life, Rudolf Steiner lectured and taught in the major cities of Europe. In 1924 in Switzerland he founded the worldwide Anthroposophical Society for people everywhere who want to “foster the life of the soul, both in the individual and in human society on the basis of a true knowledge of the spiritual world.” His insights are elaborated in some 40 books and over 6,000 lectures on medicine, agriculture, education, the social order, the arts, cosmology, Christology and many other topics.

## Way of Life: Social Therapy

Social therapy is the term we use to describe Camphill’s work with adults with special needs. Social therapy is the continual creation of a healing social and physical environment. A social therapist is a person who aims to discern the right thoughts, words and deeds needed to bring healing to a particular situation. Such discernment can grow through training courses and practical experience, but its true source is an individual’s practice of an inner path of conscious self-development.

A social therapist recognizes that people with special needs are themselves teachers and care-givers. Sharing life with people with special needs offers opportunities for self-knowledge and incremental progress along our individual paths of awakening. Gratitude, respect and reverence for the destiny of the other person are thus appropriate qualities in our relationships with each other.

What does it mean in everyday life in Camphill to recognize the spiritual integrity and unique destiny of each individual? It means thoughtful, loving consideration, in care groups and other special meetings, of deep questions concerning the person's biography and present needs. What is the right work place for him so he can make a meaningful contribution? Which house parents can best accompany her in her next stage of life? What artistic activity or therapy might further his development in a particular direction? And how can I change myself to make my relationship with this person more vital and mutually supportive?

The practice of social therapy stands on the principle, articulated by Rudolf Steiner, that the only authentic and sustainable motivation for work is an interest in meeting the needs of others.

The results of good social therapy are evident to any observer:

*Camphill villagers...appear strikingly capable, socially adept, calm, healthy, and content to the eyes of a first-time community visitor... the picture of disability in Camphill communities that a first-time visitor sees is one of physical and cognitive challenges that have somehow been ameliorated or accommodated so that disability does not set the tone of the community lifestyle.*

—Kay E. Sherwood. "Issues in Translating the Camphill Approach to Care for People with Developmental Disabilities: Observations of a Visitor." February 1999.

## **House and the Co-op**

### Home Making

We work in our homes every day, cooking nutritious meals, cleaning and bringing order, beauty and comfort to our living spaces.

### Co-op Store

We shop outside the Village and in the Village Co-op, which offers household supplies and a wide variety of wholesome, mostly organic foods.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

In Camphill Village all co-workers (the term we use for staff) are volunteers. Approximately 90 long- and short-term co-workers choose to live and work in the Village, and share responsibility for villagers' well-being, home making, workshop training, caring for the land, administration and finance, and the cultural and spiritual life of the community.

Co-workers work out of a personal commitment to the mission and ideals of Camphill. They receive no salary in the usual sense; rather, they establish a budget that meets everyone's basic needs, including further education and training, vacations and medical insurance.

The foremost prerequisites for any co-worker are interest, enthusiasm and willingness to participate fully in the daily social, work and cultural life of the community.

Working in Camphill is not a job, but a freely chosen way of life. This allows for continuity of care, and creates greater mutuality between villagers and co-workers than is usually possible where there is paid staff on shifts. Rather than "taking care of" people, co-workers and villagers live and work as colleagues in building community together.

Volunteerism is working for love, the only true basis for building a healthy society. Camphill Village was founded by volunteers. Villagers are our most important volunteers. The Village continues to flourish because of volunteers.

## Short-term Co-worker Volunteers

Each year Camphill Village welcomes 40 or more short-term co-workers, mostly young people from the U.S. and abroad, to live and work in the Village as volunteers. Their diversity of cultural backgrounds adds to the rich fabric of community life. They enjoy and benefit from being part of an international group of volunteers working in an international service movement. Living in Camphill can be a life-changing experience. Co-workers are challenged to learn new practical skills, like weaving or milking cows; to help with one-on-one physical and emotional care; to develop greater compassion, patience and self-awareness.

U.S. citizens and green card holders may be eligible to receive an AmeriCorps Education Award of \$4,725 toward education loans upon completion of one year of service in Camphill Village.

In order to apply for a volunteer position, we require the completed Camphill application form and 2 letters of reference from a former employer, teacher or professor.

To apply, please choose one of the following methods:

To request by e-mail a description of current openings, the application form and reference form, click [here](#) or email [volunteer@camphillvillage.org](mailto:volunteer@camphillvillage.org).

For current listings of open co-worker positions and to apply online with our web based application, click [here](#).

### **FAQs**

*How long may I stay?*

We prefer that you come for at least one year, but shorter stays can be arranged.

*What educational opportunities are offered?*

Camphill community life is itself an intensive learning experience. You will learn new skills through your participation in the daily work life. In addition, you may attend orientation courses that introduce basics of care for people with disabilities, first aid, social therapy, Camphill and anthroposophy. Camphill Village in Copake offers a three-year Seminar in Social Therapy, the only such seminar in North America. Seminarists complement their daily life and work in the Village with courses that deepen their understanding of human and social development through art, conversation and study. Anthroposophy provides the foundation for this training course.

*Will I have time for myself??*

You will have your own room and you will have free time arranged with the other people in your house, neighborhood and workplace.

*What kinds of work will I do?*

You will be asked to work where you are needed: one of the craft workshops (wood, candle making, weaving, bookbinding, stained glass), the bakery, the houses, the farm, the vegetable garden, the Turtle Tree Seed or Healing Plant garden and workshop, the estate. You will also be an active member of your house community, and will help with personal care of villagers, as needed.

## Long-term Co-worker Volunteers

Most long-term co-workers began as short-term co-workers in one of the over 100 Camphill communities worldwide. The decision to make a longer commitment comes about individually through the development of a deeper personal and spiritual connection with the mission and ideals of Camphill.

Many long-term co-workers have experience in related human services fields, like special education, or in the liberal or fine arts. Many have training or experience in practical areas like home making, crafts, farming or gardening. Others have worked in the fields of administration, business or finance.

Click [HERE](#) for a current listing of open co-worker volunteer positions.

To inquire about becoming a long-term co-worker, please write to Elvira Neal, Camphill Village, 84 Camphill Road, Copake, New York 12516