

## Seagulls Men's Spiritual Retreat

Spend a refreshing escape from the chaos of your day to day with a group of AA Guys for a weekend of spiritual exploration and discovery. The 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Steamboat Springs Seagulls Men's Stag Group Spiritual Retreat is being held September 13 – 15 at Spring Canyon Retreat and Conference Center in Buena Vista Colorado will strengthen your Sobriety like no other experience.

Beyond great food and comfortable accommodations this Men's Spiritual Retreat features seven one hour workshops, two AA meetings, time with sober friends in an amazing Colorado mountain setting with hiking, fishing, bike rides, rest and relaxation. The central focus of this retreat has been to bring professionals in religion, addiction recovery, and science to present their knowledge in the connection between Spirituality and the 12 Step recovery process. Enhance your understanding of how to put these valuable tools to work in your daily life. Over the years we have heard from priests, rabbis, ministers, counselors, teachers, lecturers, authors of the variety of ways the principals of AA's 12 steps give structure to their understanding of Spiritual concepts as informed by the broad highway of faith wisdoms.

The weekend plan has a proven schedule that we follow:

### **Friday afternoon**

Guys start showing up. They find a room/bed and will visit with old friends as they continue to arrive.

5:30 – Supper is served.

7:00 – Introductory Workshop

8:15 – AA Meeting

### **Saturday**

8:30 – Breakfast

9:30 – Workshop

10:50 – Workshop

12:30 – Lunch

### **BREAK**

4:00 - Afternoon Workshop

5:30 - Supper

7:00 - Evening Workshop

8:15 - AA Meeting

### **Sunday**

8:30 - Breakfast

9:30 - Workshop

10:30 - Check Out

11:00 - Closing Workshop

**Steamboat Springs Seagulls Men's Spiritual Retreat**

## A Brief History & Details

This retreat was created by Eph Holmes and Keith Giglio in 2005. We surveyed a number of retreats we could find to discover what they were presenting and what the sources of the shared wisdom were most common. We found that most AA retreats were formatted around presentations of the 12 steps with particular emphasis on Step Four as an annual renewal exercise. A fair number of the retreats were led by Catholic priests often connected with the Franciscan order. The other common models were led by members of the sponsoring AA Group usually “old timers”. Our assessment concluded with the idea that we could provide a retreat model that would be a worthy alternative to these existing formats.

Recognizing the very common comments of AA members regarding *Spirituality*, we began to build on an idea that we could have a retreat that would focus on *Spirituality* from as many different perspectives of spirituality we were able to find.

From this humble beginning, we have generally been successful in meeting our initial goal. We have had retreats led by Catholic priests, Rabbis, Christian ministers, Muslim and Buddhist teachers, addiction counsellors, psychologists, teachers, lecturers, and others. Several of these past retreat leaders have authored books about recovery and in particular, the part spirituality plays in the process. Our basic criteria for selecting retreat leaders is that they have a well-informed, educated, knowledge of their spiritual foundation, and that they are trained and experienced in the presentation of a focused subject, presented in seven, one hour workshop sessions. The expectation is these retreat leaders will be able to maintain the attention and interest of a diverse group of 30 to 40 men over the period of two full days.

Through Eph Holmes and his status as a retired military officer, we were able to get into Spring Canyon Retreat and Conference Center. Spring Canyon is owned and operated by the Christian Officers' Association, a not for profit association of military officers with a Christian faith affiliation. The facility is located about 9 miles west of downtown Buena Vista, Colorado, off CR 344 just after turning south off of CR 306, the road heading to Cottonwood Pass. Spring Canyon is nestled in a valley below several towering peaks that are part of the Collegiate Range. Cottonwood creek passes through the valley providing scenic hiking, mountain bike riding, fishing, and relaxation. A few miles heading back toward Buena Vista from Spring Canyon is the Cottonwood Hot Springs. Spring Canyon has several lodging accommodations located on their property. Most of these accommodations are shared rooms with both single and bunk beds. All the beds have clean linens, and blankets. I am not a fussy sleeper and have generally found the beds quite comfortable. The meals are served in a dining hall in a family style of meal service. The food has always been excellent and plenty of it. We are seldom the only group at Spring Canyon and so our meals are often in the company of other groups.

In addition to the sleeping accommodation, the building(s) we are using serve as our site for workshops and the two AA meetings we hold; Friday and Saturday evenings after the last workshop. This large meeting area also serves as our “hangout” between workshops. Each facility has a small kitchen for our common use. There is a refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, and coffee pot. Guys often bring snacks to be shared with all who show up. The snacks range from cookies and chips, to sodas, fruit, nuts, vegetables, personally preferred coffees, and of course candy.