

## **"Courage To Teach" Program Helps K-12 Teachers Retreat**

In a time when stress and pressure on elementary, middle and high school teachers in public, private and charter schools continues to rise because of internal and external demands, Courage To Teach provides educators an opportunity for rest, renewal, and re-engagement with their identity and integrity as teachers.

Margaret Golden, a professor in [Dominican's School of Education and Counseling Psychology](#), directs Courage to Teach, the only retreat series of its kind in Northern California which focuses on renewing the inner lives of professionals in education.

"When we provide teachers with opportunities for becoming more mindful about their own practice, amazing things can occur," Golden says. "Through participation in a Circle of Trust®, personal transformation can lead to the transformation of schools and institutions."

In July, Golden hosted a Courage To Teach retreat at Santa Sabina Center in San Rafael for 23 teachers from all around Bay Area and California, and as far away as British Columbia. As many as 150 teachers from public, private and charter schools have successfully completed the program.

The next retreat series is scheduled for February 14-16, 2014 at Santa Sabina Center. A summer, stand-alone retreat is also slated for July 29-31, 2014.

[Register or learn more about this program.](#)

The retreats, made possible through a grant from the Kalliopeia Foundation, consist of 20-30 educators exploring "the heart of a teacher" through personal stories, reflections on classroom practice, and insights from poets, storytellers, and various wisdom traditions. Each retreat follows a seasonal theme, using the rich metaphors of the seasons as a way of exploring vocational and life questions.

"Many teachers view the program as an antidote to the increasingly narrow focus on standardized testing in schools today," Golden says. "That's compelling for teachers right now."

On top of that, Courage to Teach helps teachers deal with the burnout and stress brought on internally by cutbacks and looming teacher layoffs, increased class sizes, decreased learning time, student behavioral issues and fewer counselors in addition to external pressure caused by increased poverty, high unemployment and rising expectations among parents.

All Courage to Teach facilitators are prepared by the Center for Courage and Renewal, founded by esteemed educator, Parker J. Palmer.

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