Located on 26 acres along the banks of the San Ysidro Creek, La Casa de Maria is nestled between mountain and ocean. Now an interfaith retreat and conference center, it was founded in 1955 by the then Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Today, the ecumenical community of men and women steward this land.

The land was originally a part of an extensive oak woodland tended by the Chumash to produce their staple food, acorn meal. In the Franciscan era, tradition has it, the padres built a small way-station for missionaries traveling up and down the coast. During the Spanish land grant era, the land became a part of the San Ysidro Ranch, a 260-acre property that included a large citrus orchard. Two historic structures from that era remain today on the property: a cottage and a barn.

Since 1955, the purpose of La Casa has expanded from being a spiritual center devoted to a single religious tradition into an interfaith center open to all faith traditions and diverse spiritualities. La Casa de Maria now serves 12,000 persons each year, offering retreats in an interfaith environment that provides a nourishing and healing place of peace where persons of all faiths come for refreshment and renewal.

The life-affirming spirituality promoted at La Casa is made visible in its efforts to be a model "green" retreat center. The original orchard is farmed with organic methods, and a multi-acre area is dedicated to a market garden that supplies fresh produce for the dining rooms. Close by the entrance stands the lovely Sadako Peace Garden, one of the International Gardens for Peace, and an outdoor labyrinth. The grounds offer sanctuary and healing to all who come to enjoy them.
The 2018 UC Student Veterans Summer Writing Workshop will be held June 17-22, 2018. Participants attend free of charge and are provided meals, lodging, and a travel allowance.

If you are a UC student veteran interested in exploring what your service has meant to you, developing your writing skills, and strengthening your ability to communicate with others about your military experiences, we invite you to apply to the 2018 UC Student Veterans Summer Writing Workshop.

Space is limited. Admission is on a rolling basis and will begin on January 15, 2018 and close when the workshop is filled.

To apply now, visit: http://www.lhc.ucsb.edu/public-humanities/uc-vww/

“The workshop was an excellent opportunity both to develop a narrative about my service and to hear the stories of other service members. These new perspectives had a profound effect on my understanding of what it meant to have served.”

- WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT