

## A Ceremonial, Sacred Sweat Lodge & Medicine Wheel Gathering to honor the Summer Solstice at Homestead Retreat / June 21st - June 23rd

**Gathering Details:** This special Solstice weekend event, when the energies of life shift, when we celebrate and welcome the return of fire and summer, warmth and growth, is open to both adults and families with children. We will begin our celebrations Friday evening with a delicious, community potluck dinner, followed by drumming, dancing, and singing.



Guests are welcome to arrive anytime Friday, before 5pm. Saturday morning, Hawk and Ayal Hurst will guide participants in building the sweat lodge and sacred fire pit. The sweat lodge ceremony, led by Ayal, will follow upon the completion of the lodge. In the evening, we will partake in a celebratory potluck feast and be enthralled with the delightful storytelling of Hawk. Please know, it is okay for children, ages 12 and up, to participate (or not) in the lodge. Younger children, and those not participating in the sweat lodge, will need to be watched over by a family adult. Following the Sunday morning breakfast, we would invite everyone to help restore the sweat lodge site, and then Ayal will lead participants in a Sacred Medicine Wheel Ceremony to vision and receive information, guidance, and insights. After lunch, Hawk will lead those interested on a short afternoon hike. You are also welcome to relax by the pond or creeks, and enjoy your day in any way you might desire.

### **Facilitator Information:**

**Ayal Hurst**, a Shamanic Practitioner, Holistic Healer, Reiki Master, and Spiritual Counselor, has worked with the healing energy of the Sweat Lodge and the Medicine Wheel for many years. She had the vision for the creation of these sacred ceremonies on our land and enjoys introducing people to and sharing this powerful experience with others.

**Hawk Hurst** is a skilled storyteller, naturalist, primitive earth skills educator, folk musician, and an artist-in residence in schools all across the Southeast. He has participated in numerous Sweat Lodges with elders of the Navajo, Cherokee, and Lakota nations.

**Registration:** Please be sure to reserve your space well in advance - beds are limited to 12 overnight guests. Additional space is available for low-impact, tent camping. Day-trip visitors are welcome, but must pre-register. There is no fee for this weekend, however love offerings are greatly appreciated. Healthy and nutritious potluck meals will be offered, and we appreciate everyone's contribution to the shared meals. Upon registration, further details, will be provided.

**For complete details, please contact Ayal Hurst at: [ayalhurst@bellsouth.net](mailto:ayalhurst@bellsouth.net)**

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## What is a Sweat Lodge Ceremony?

The Sweat Lodge ceremony is one practiced by First Nations people throughout North America. Lodges may be conducted prior to other activities, such as a fast or vision quest. This Ceremony is often offered as a ritual for healing, spiritual cleansing, and reaching higher consciousness. Entering the Sweat Lodge is seen as returning to the womb of Mother Earth and the exit to a symbolic rebirth. While inside the lodge one sits in total darkness. The Lodge is designed to provide a safe, sacred place where participants can concentrate on personal healing, the healing of the earth, and the fulfillment of prayers offered up. In the Lodge, through our songs and prayers, compassionate Spirits are invited in to aid us in our healing. Pouring water onto the rocks, known as 'the grandfathers', creates steam. We then have all four elements present in the lodge: earth below, air all around, fire in the grandfathers and water in the steam.



## What is a Medicine Wheel Ceremony?

The Medicine Wheel, sometimes known as the Sacred Hoop, has been used by generations of various Native American tribes for health and healing. During the summer of 2016, retreat guests built and conducted our first sacred Medicine Wheel ceremony at

Homestead. For centuries, the Medicine Wheel has been honored as a transcendent, ceremonial space - a place to experience our connection to the Great Mysteries of life and all that is. The Wheel embodies the Four Directions, as well as Father Sky, Mother Earth, and Spirit Tree. The Sacred Wheel or circle, throughout time, in all cultures, has always represented a physical embodiment of spiritual energy. It represents the elements of life, the cycles of the cosmos, the phases of our own life's journey, and the lessons we gain as souls as we travel around the wheel. We will connect to the spirit of this beautiful land as together we share in creating harmony and healing on the planet.



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