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**Ramapo College Unveils New Salameno Spiritual Center**  
*Non-denominational Sanctuary for Reflection, Meditation, and Dialogue*

(MAHWAH, NJ) – Ramapo College of New Jersey dedicated the \$1.5 million Salameno Spiritual Center today.

Named in honor of Lawrence and Theresa Salameno, of Allendale, the 1,525-square-foot Center was conceived as a sanctuary for meditation, reflection, and celebration. Students and members of the College community can practice their faith, discuss ethical issues, seek refuge, and use it as a place for quiet contemplation.

The Center is the newest addition to the College and occupies a scenic and sheltered, one-half acre on the south shore of Kameron Pond at the center of the campus.

“A campus community provides the means to discuss and debate and to engage and empower,” said President Peter P. Mercer. “The Salameno Spiritual Center will offer opportunities for members of our community to have honest interfaith dialogue, to explore values, and to search for meaning.”

Four structures, two outdoor gathering places, six small woodland gardens, and a deck with views across the pond encompass the Center. The Padovano Peace Pavilion, the largest structure, accommodates up to 80 people as well as a variety of smaller groups. Completing the grouping, the McBride and Marino Meditation Spaces are identical, individual places for contemplation offering single benches that can accommodate one to three people.

“The Center will meet the very important needs of our diverse student organizations such as Hillel, Catholics at Ramapo United, the Campus Crusade for Christ and the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship,” said Patrick Chang, Associate Vice President of Student Affairs. “Many of our students now closely link their religious and spiritual development with voluntary service. I imagine that organizations like the Community Builders Coalition, Ebony Women for Social Change, and Brothers Making a Difference will find the Center a wonderful place in which to conduct some of their activities.”

A short fieldstone wall placed along a major campus walkway leads to the Center. Serving as a portal, a forged aluminum gate created by sculptor Jay Wholley, a professor of Art at Ramapo, marks where the campus is left behind and the Spiritual Center begins. Complimenting the buildings are six woodland gardens featuring distinct groupings of indigenous flowering plant varieties that mark the change of seasons.

The Center was first proposed by Dr. Anthony T. Padovano, a founder of the College and professor of literature and philosophy, and was later approved by the Ramapo College Board of

Trustees. Said Dr. Padovano, “We modeled the Center upon the United Nations Meditation Room, which is open to all cultures for contemplation, with the hope that students and other members of the diverse Ramapo Community will use this Center to meet and to better understand and appreciate each other in the context of a multicultural society.”

Other donors include Pamela and W. Peter McBride of Franklin Lakes and Anthony and Gail Marino of Cedar Grove, after whom the meditation rooms are named, as well as Sam and Emily Mann of Englewood, the Daniell Family Foundation, the Fred J. Brotherton Foundation, Rebecca Kraus of Mahwah, Ralph and Elizabeth Mastrangelo of Franklin Lakes, Carlo and Kathleen Mainardi of NY, NY, the David and Eleanore Rukin Philanthropic Foundation, Cathleen Davey and Raymond Corbett of Mahwah, Andrew and Rose Mainardi of Franklin Lakes, George and Judi Webster of Mahwah, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark, the Family of Bonnie Driskill Franklin, the Schwartz Family Foundation, Tam Metal Products, Inc., Robert T. and Shirlee Caruso of Ho-Ho-Kus, the Rev. George Mader, Ramapo Student Activities, Michael Wilson of Denville, Professor Jay Wholley, and Rolex Watch.

Theologian and religious historian Martin E. Marty delivered the inaugural lecture of the Anthony and Theresa Padovano Endowed Lecture Series. Marty is the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus of the History of Modern Christianity at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.

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