

Lillian E. Smith Center of Piedmont College Artist Residency Program



Welcome to the Lillian E. Smith Center of Piedmont College. Founded in 1897, Piedmont College is a comprehensive liberal arts institution. The LES Center supports Piedmont College and the transformative power of education through reciprocal learning, the development of compassionate leaders, and the stewardship of local and global communities. Recognizing the principles that guided Lillian Smith throughout her life and in her work, the LES Center provides opportunities for discovery, personal growth, and ethical reasoning in action. The Artist Residency Program at the LES Center offers a retreat for individuals who pursue varied forms of artistic expression, critical inquiry, and social justice.

Admission to the Residency Program at the LES Center is selective, based on a review of applications by a panel of scholars from various disciplines at Piedmont College. The review panel seeks a breadth of participation in the program based on interests, talents, accomplishments, and diversity. The basis for admission is professional achievement or promise of achievement, and we strongly encourage first-time applicants. Full residencies are generally scheduled March through November, with occasional exceptions. Weekend retreats for artists (Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon) are available throughout the year but must be scheduled at least one month in advance.

Lillian Smith



Lillian Eugenia Smith was born in Jasper, Florida in 1897. When her father's Florida businesses failed in 1915, the Smith family came to Clayton, Georgia, where her family had recently acquired property on Screamer Mountain and where they opened a summer camp for girls. Lillian Smith attended Piedmont College in Demorest, Georgia, for one year (1915-16) before going on to study music at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore (1917-1921). She accepted an invitation in 1922 to teach music at a Methodist girls' school in Huchow, China. Over the next three years, Smith would witness disturbing examples of human rights violations in China's deeply segregated society formed in the wake of European colonialism and the Chinese Revolution. What she witnessed there had a profound effect on her attitudes about all human relations for the rest of her life. Upon returning to Georgia in 1925 with her family's blessing, she became the director, and later the owner, of Laurel Falls Camp for Girls. Assisted by her lifelong-partner, Paula Snelling, Lillian Smith continued operating the camp through 1948.

Beginning in 1936, Lillian Smith and Paula Snelling launched the publication of a small magazine, *Pseudopodia*, which served as an examination and review of Southern culture and writing. The magazine went through two title changes – *The North Georgia Review* and *South Today* – before the two women decided to end the venture in 1945. Smith emerged in the 1940s at the forefront of the Southern debate on segregation, where she was at least a decade ahead of other white liberals and stood virtually alone in calling for an immediate end to segregation laws and practices. Meanwhile, she was developing her talents as a fiction-writer. Her 1944 debut novel, *Strange Fruit*, was about a secret interracial love affair in a small Georgia town. In 1949 she published *Killers of the Dream*, a brilliant psychological and autobiographical work warning against the evils of segregation. Before her death in 1966, Smith published several more books, fiction and nonfiction, and numerous articles and essays on social justice and racial equality, all of which she wrote from her home on Screamer Mountain.

For a more information about the life and work of Lillian Smith, please visit the New Georgia Encyclopedia at <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/lillian-smith-1897-1966>.

The LES Center

In 2000, Nancy Smith Fichter and Laurie Peeler (nieces of Lillian Smith), with the supportive assistance of Robert W. Fichter, established The Lillian E. Smith Foundation. The primary activity of the Foundation was the operation of an artist retreat on the site of the Laurel Falls Camp. In September, 2013, the Foundation donated the LES Center to Piedmont College, which is now responsible for its stewardship and activities, including the Artist Residency Program.

Clayton (Rabun County), Georgia is located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, an area of the state characterized by hilly terrain, lush forests, waterfalls, and lakes. The LES Center is thirty-three miles northeast from the Demorest campus of Piedmont College. The property is located approximately one mile from the Highway 76/441 intersection in Clayton, Georgia. The entrance to the property from Highway 76 East is via Old Chechero Road to Hershey Lane (.10 mile). The core of the 130-acre property, where the extant structures and ruins of earlier buildings are located, is on the western slope of Screamer Mountain. Hershey Lane creates a one-way loop that provides access to the main structures of the LES Center. Lillian Smith is buried at the LES Center next to a large stone chimney, the only feature left standing from “The Playhouse” of Laurel Falls Camp. Her grave is situated next to a lovely garden and marked by a plaque inscribed with a quote from her book *The Journey*.



Esther Cottage

There are three furnished spaces available for residents. Esther Cottage and Peeler Cottage are similar in design and are located just a few yards from each other. Wiggie Cottage is located on Highway 76 East near the intersection with Old Chechero Road. All three of these studios are charmingly rustic and contain their own kitchen and bath facilities. They are also equipped with heating and cooling units and wireless Internet service. Residents are expected to bring all materials and accessories necessary for their work. The cottages are designed to provide plenty of natural light and normal indoor light from lamps and overhead fixtures.



Wiggie Cottage

The Director's Cottage houses Lillian Smith's library. With shelves constructed of well-seasoned poplar trunks and branches, the library contains Smith's personal collection, which was also a resource for the campers at the Laurel Falls Camp. The collection is maintained much the same as it was during the writer's lifetime. Scholars and artists must make special arrangements with the Director in advance to work with the collection for specific projects.



The Common Room Cottage has a full kitchen with some recent appliance upgrades and modest renovations and is suitable for preparing meals for small groups. The Common Room has been a traditional gathering place for residents and also a place for public events, such as small programs and receptions. The Lillian E. Smith House Museum, in the Common Room Cottage, has its own separate entrance. This small apartment served as Smith's final living and

work space. It contains her desk and typewriter, various memorabilia, and copies of foreign translations of her works.

The facilities at the LES Center may not be accessible to all guests. Please contact us for more information at LESCenter@piedmont.edu.

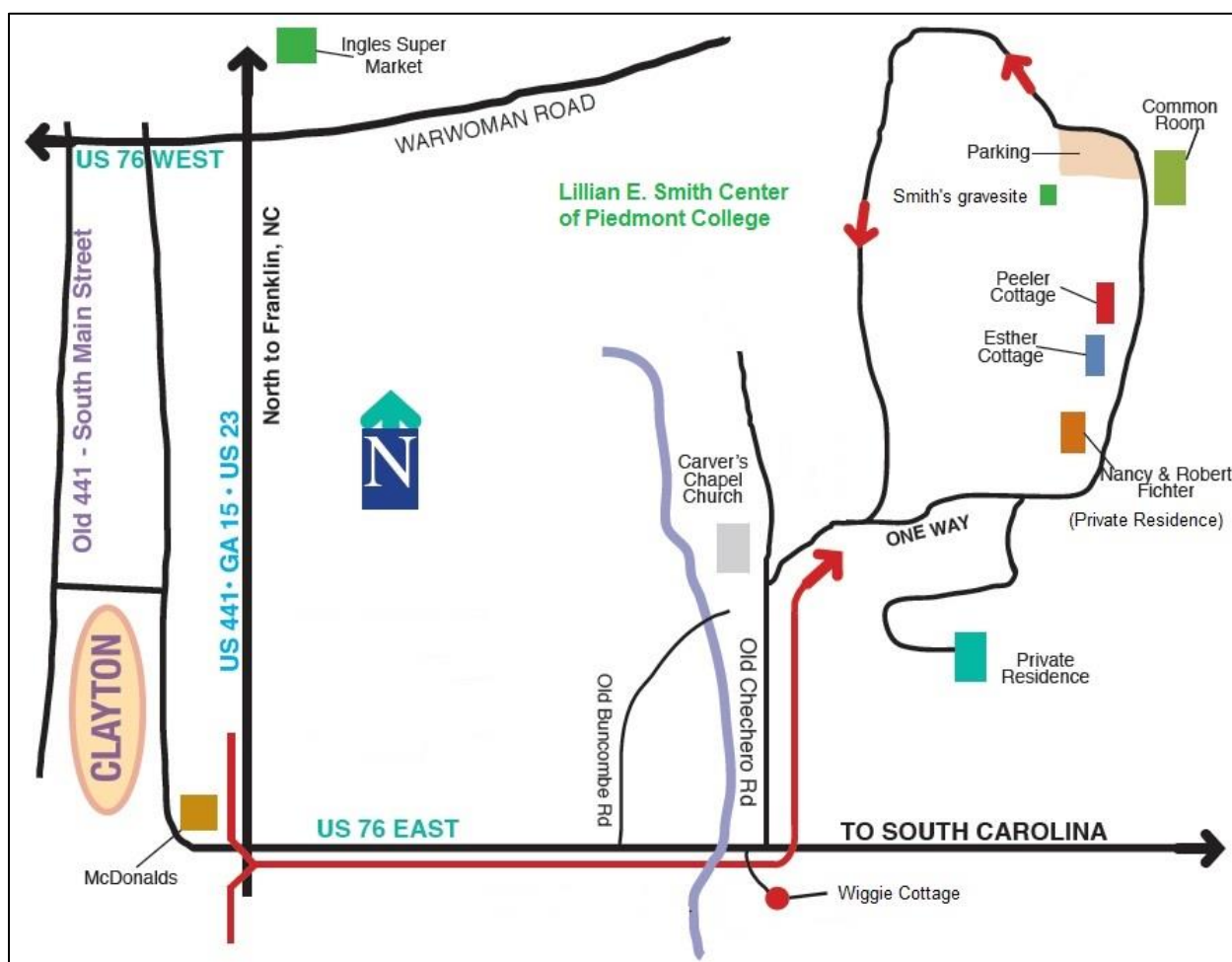


View of Screamer Mountain from the Common Room window

Staying at the LES Center

Transportation

The LES Center is located within a few miles of the intersection of U.S. Highways 23/441 and 76 in Clayton, Georgia. The closest airports are in Greenville, SC (GSP); Asheville, NC (AVL); and Atlanta, GA (ATL). The drive from all three airports is approximately 2 to 2.5 hours. Car rentals are available at the airports. Residents must arrange for their own transportation to and from the LES Center. No public transportation or taxi service is available in Clayton. A one-way gravel road called Hershey Lane climbs the ridge up to the cottages and loops back down to Old Chechero Road, just off of Highway 76 East. Residents should use caution on Hershey Lane when driving vehicles with low ground clearance.



Parking

Residents may park vehicles in the gravel lot located just beyond the Common Room Cottage next to the stone chimney garden. Overflow parking is available further down Hershey Lane through the gate at the cut-outs off to the right of the lane. Hershey Lane is narrow as it winds

through the cottages, so please use caution, keep the road clear, and park only in designated areas. Parking is available adjacent to Wiggie Cottage for residents staying there.

Fire precautions

On more than one occasion Lillian Smith suffered from devastating fires on Screamer Mountain, so fire safety is a priority at the LES Center. Please be careful when using the kitchens. Do not leave the stove unattended. Make sure to maintain safe clearance around all heating units. If you are unsure about how to operate any of the equipment, call the maintenance manager. The use of incense, candles, or any type of open flame other than the cottage appliances is prohibited. Summer droughts are common, and wooded areas like the LES Center become dangerously dry and extremely vulnerable to brush or even forest fires. Incendiaries such as sparklers and fireworks are strictly prohibited. Report any problems with electrical or propane units to the maintenance manager. If you smell propane gas, extinguish any open flame immediately, leave the cottage at once, and contact the maintenance manager as soon as possible.

Smoking

All buildings on the LES Center property are smoke-free environments, including e-cigarettes and e-cigars. Frequent and persistent drought conditions present a serious fire hazard. If you do smoke anywhere on the property, please do not extinguish products on the ground. Please help us maintain the beauty of the LES Center by properly disposing of all trash.

Energy conservation

Summer temperatures can fluctuate significantly in the mountains of north Georgia. You may find that opening windows and doors supplies the cottages with a comfortable temperature, especially in the evenings and early mornings. Please make sure that screens are fastened securely when windows are open and that screen doors are shut tight to prevent entry by wildlife. Please do not operate the heating and cooling units with doors and windows open, and make sure to turn off lights before you exit the cottage. Unplug all personal electronic devices before leaving cottages or during storms. Lightning strikes are not uncommon, and even a somewhat distant strike can damage sensitive electronic equipment.

Housekeeping

Please do not attach anything to the walls of the cottages that will damage the walls or leave holes when removed. Cottages will be cleaned and linens will be changed once a week after your first week of residence. A clothes washer and a dryer are located on the back porch of the Common Room Cottage and are available for all residents to use. You must supply your own detergent. Please do not use the laundry machines before 7:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m. At the end of your residency, please strip your bed and place all linens, towels, etc. on the floor of the cottage.

Meals

The LES Center does not provide meals for residents. All cottages are equipped with kitchen areas for preparing light meals. There is also a full kitchen in the Common Room Cottage,

which is available for preparing larger meals. Please keep the kitchen and Common Room area clean. There are grocery stores and a respectable range of restaurants within 5-10 minutes of the LES Center in Clayton. You can find more about dining options in the area from the Rabun County tourism site at <http://explorerabun.com/dine-and-wine/>

Privacy

One of the primary objectives of the residency program at the LES Center is to provide conditions of solitude and privacy where artists can pursue their work. Appreciation and respect for this privacy is a top priority. Some of the lodging options at the LES Center are more isolated and private than others, so please inform us of your preferences in this regard when applying for a residency. Harassment of fellow residents, employees, and visitors of the LES Center is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Common Room Cottage is designed as a gathering place, and residents are encouraged to engage one another in conversation, sharing ideas, and even sharing work if they wish; however, there is absolutely no requirement or expectation of interaction with other residents.

As a courtesy to other artists in residence at the LES Center, please use headphones when listening to music or other audio sources. Also, please refrain from congregating or talking loudly around the cottages. Musical composers and performers, or artists whose work will produce elevated sound levels (i.e., motorized equipment, audio-visual equipment, hammering, sawing, etc.) may be housed in Wiggie Cottage located across Highway 76 from the LES Center to accommodate their needs and to avoid disturbing other artists.

Phones

Cellular telephone service is not always reliable in the mountains of north Georgia, which also holds true for the LES Center. You should be able to get a sufficient signal for telephone calls most of the time in and around the cottages. The primary cellular providers in the area are Verizon Wireless, AT&T, and Windstream Communications. The LES Center does not provide telephones in the cottages; however, there is a telephone in the Common Room kitchen that residents may use for local calls or calling card calls. To avoid disturbing other residents, please practice courtesy when using telephones.

Internet access

All of the cottages, including the Common Room Cottage, are equipped with wireless Internet service. Residents will also be able to get wireless Internet service in the immediate outdoor areas surrounding the Common Room Cottage, Esther Cottage, and Peeler Cottage.

Outdoors

The LES Center is located on a beautiful wooded tract on a lower ridge of Screamer Mountain. The terrain around the cottages is uneven, with rock pathways connecting the structures. It is wise to wear comfortable shoes that offer support for your feet and ankles. The walk around the Hershey Lane loop is not difficult at all. Hiking through the woods can be enjoyable for some residents, but we recommend keeping the cottages in sight – the property is over 100 acres in size, and it is easy to get lost. We strongly suggest the use of insect repellent for

outside walks to ward off mosquitos and ticks. Always pay special attention to your surroundings when hiking at the LES Center. There are six venomous snake species in Georgia, and while you may not encounter any of them during your visit, it is always best to use common sense and caution when outdoors – enjoy the beauty of nature!



Bears

Black Bear sightings are not uncommon in Rabun County. Bears are naturally attracted to almost any food source and the smells associated with cooking and garbage disposal. They will show up around the cottages at the LES Center on occasion, usually looking for food. Mother bears can become quite aggressive when they are with their cubs; however, there are no recorded bear attacks on humans in Georgia. **DO NOT** feed bears or leave food outside the cottages that may attract them or other wild animals (coyotes, raccoons, etc.).

Emergencies

Clayton and Rabun County are equipped with an Enhanced 911 Center, which means that dispatchers should be able to identify the location from which you are calling on your cellular phone. Even so, it also may be helpful to provide an address for the dispatcher. If while you are on the property and have a medical emergency, need to report a fire, or need to report a crime in progress, dial 911 and inform the dispatcher that you are at the **Lillian Smith Center on Screamer Mountain off Highway 76 East in Clayton** and provide the corresponding address depending on your location, which is posted inside on the door of the cottage.

Guests

Residents may invite guests for visits to the LES Center. Guests are permitted to stay in a resident's cottage but may not stay longer than two nights. No one under the age of eighteen will be allowed to visit residents at the LES Center.

Pets

The LES Center cannot accommodate pets. Service animals are not considered pets and are welcome. The pets you may see at the site belong to permanent residents.

Compliance to local, state, and federal laws

All residents, employees, and visitors of the LES Center are required to adhere to local, state, and federal laws while on the property.

To Apply for a Residency at the LES Center

Admission to the Residency Program at the LES Center is selective, based on a review of applications by a panel of scholars from various disciplines at Piedmont College. The review panel seeks a breadth of participation in the program based on interests, talents, accomplishments, and diversity. The basis for admission is professional achievement or promise of achievement, and we strongly encourage first-time applicants. Full residencies are generally scheduled March through November, with occasional exceptions. Weekend retreats (Friday afternoon through Sunday afternoon) for artists are available throughout the year but must be scheduled at least one month in advance. Check in is from noon until 5:00 p.m. Check out is no later than noon.

To begin the application process, please complete the online form at <http://www.piedmont.edu/residency-application>

After submitting the form, please email the following information to LESCenter@piedmont.edu

- A curriculum vitae (an updated CV for returning residents)
- Names of three individuals familiar with you and your work, with full contact information (telephone, postal address, and email address)*
- A description of your discipline, genre, or field of interest*
- Samples of work, either as pdf attachments or as links to online resources*
- A statement of intent describing what you hope to accomplish during your residency

*Not required for returning residents

The length of each residency period is negotiable between the applicant and the resident managers. The LES Center charges each resident a fee of \$175.00 per week to help defray the basic expenses of maintenance and operation. A \$50.00 non-refundable deposit is required to reserve all residencies and is due when a schedule is confirmed with the resident managers. When arriving at the LES Center, residents are required to sign a Hold Harmless Agreement concerning liability issues. The full residency fee, minus the deposit, must be paid by check (payable to PIEDMONT COLLEGE) or cash to the resident managers upon arriving at the LES Center. Payment of fees may be made by credit card in advance to Piedmont College, but credit cards cannot be accepted at the LES Center.

Program evaluation

All artists will be asked to complete a brief evaluation form at the end of the residency season. Although the evaluation is not mandatory, the information provided helps Piedmont College to improve the residency program.