



# A Wellness Community

Recipes Included

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# Introduction

## Vision Statement

*There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.* - Victor Hugo

In light of the rising physical, mental, and spiritual maladies, increasing loneliness and separation, the proliferation of industrialized and fractured foods, and the harm being done to the microbiome, Casa de Luz Villages will provide a walkable way for families to come together and eat truly whole plant fare. This approach to life is both humble, simple, and effective. This is an idea whose time has come.

## Mission Statement

Our mission is to establish wellness community centers worldwide that promote holistic well-being, foster community connections, and provide access to whole plant-based nutrition.

## Guiding Principles

### 1. **Whole Plant Organic Meals:**

- Casa de Luz serves whole plant-based organic meals that act as "slow medicine," promoting long-term health and well-being. This dietary approach is both preventive and therapeutic, addressing the root causes of many health issues.

### 2. **Cost-Effective Health Plan:**

- The holistic health approach at Casa de Luz is much less expensive than traditional healthcare systems that focus on treating illness rather than preventing it. By emphasizing nutrition and wellness, it reduces the need for costly medical interventions.

### 3. **Vibrant Gathering Place:**

- Casa de Luz provides a welcoming and vibrant environment where people can gather, socialize, and support each other in making positive lifestyle changes. This sense of community is crucial for maintaining motivation and achieving long-term health goals.

### 4. **Comprehensive Wellness Services:**

- In addition to serving healthy meals, Casa de Luz offers a variety of wellness services, including yoga, massage, holistic health consultations, and spiritual guidance. These services address the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of health.

**5. Inclusive and Accessible:**

- The center is designed to be inclusive and accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. It provides a safe space where individuals can learn, grow, and thrive together.

**6. Educational Opportunities:**

- Casa de Luz offers workshops, lectures, and events that educate the community about holistic health, sustainable living, and personal development. This empowers individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to take control of their health and well-being.

**7. Children's Playground and Family-Friendly Environment:**

- The large children's playground and family-friendly atmosphere make Casa de Luz an ideal place for families to spend time together. It fosters a sense of community and connection among families and encourages healthy habits from a young age.

**8. Sustainable Practices:**

- Casa de Luz is committed to sustainability. The center uses eco-friendly practices in its operations, including sourcing local and organic ingredients, minimizing waste, and promoting environmentally responsible behaviors.

**9. Focus on Connection:**

- Known as "the church of connection," Casa de Luz emphasizes the importance of connecting with others and with nature. This holistic approach to community building enhances overall well-being and fosters a sense of belonging.

**10. Mental and Emotional Support:**

- The supportive community and the availability of mental and emotional health resources create a nurturing environment where individuals can seek help and find support in their wellness journey.

**11. Replication and Scalability:**

- The model of Casa de Luz Village is designed to be replicable and scalable, making it possible to establish similar centers in neighborhoods and communities worldwide. This ensures that more people can benefit from its unique approach to wellness.



# Principles

Introducing a Casa de Luz Village, centered around wellness and a whole plant-based meal service, into discussions of best practices and good urbanism is a forward-thinking approach that aligns with several key principles:

1. **Public Health and Well-being**: Emphasizing wellness within urban development is essential for fostering healthier communities. A whole plant-based diet has been linked to numerous health benefits, including reduced risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. By providing access to nutritious, plant-based meals, a Casa de Luz Village can contribute to improving the overall health and well-being of its residents.
2. **Environmental Sustainability**: Plant-based diets have a lower environmental footprint compared to diets high in animal products. Producing plant-based foods typically requires fewer natural resources, produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and has less impact on land and water resources. Incorporating a whole plant-based meal service into the fabric of urban communities supports sustainability goals by promoting more eco-friendly food choices.
3. **Community Building and Social Equity**: Meal-sharing fosters a sense of community and social connection. By offering fixed, communal meals, a Casa de Luz Village creates opportunities for residents to come together, share experiences, and build relationships. This sense of belonging and social support is integral to creating vibrant, resilient communities.
4. **Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity**: Whole plant-based meals can be culturally diverse and inclusive, accommodating various dietary preferences and restrictions. By celebrating diverse culinary traditions and offering plant-based alternatives to traditional dishes, a Casa de Luz Village promotes inclusivity and cultural exchange within the community.
5. **Economic Viability and Local Food Systems**: Supporting local farmers and producers of plant-based foods contributes to a more resilient and sustainable food system. By sourcing ingredients locally and promoting small-scale agriculture, a Casa de Luz Village can stimulate economic growth, create job opportunities, and strengthen local food networks.
6. **Urban Design and Planning**: Integrating wellness-focused amenities, such as communal dining spaces and gardens, into urban design enhances the livability and

attractiveness of neighborhoods. A Casa de Luz Village can serve as a model for innovative urban planning strategies that prioritize human health, environmental sustainability, and social well-being.

Overall, the concept of a Casa de Luz Village represents a holistic approach to urbanism that considers the interconnectedness of health, environment, community, and economy. By embracing wellness principles and whole plant-based nutrition, urban planners and policymakers can create more resilient, equitable, and thriving cities for generations to come.

# Understanding the Need

## Current Global Health Challenges

In the modern food industry, natural flavors derived from plants can be replicated in laboratories. By analyzing a plant's flavor profile with spectrography and manipulating chemicals to match it, the industry creates synthetic tastes that mimic nature. Similarly, the processing of natural foods like oats into commercial oatmeal involves cooking, flaking, and dehydrating, which strips away much of the food's life force, yet it's still touted as a health food.

Moreover, traditional restaurant environments often use aromatic cues like frying oil to stimulate the pleasure sensors in the brain, convincing diners of the meal's deliciousness—despite potential discomforts like indigestion or sleepless nights that may follow.

## Importance of Community and Connection

Community plays a vital role in enhancing overall well-being by fostering a sense of belonging, purpose, and emotional support. Social interactions, whether through shared meals, conversations, or collaborative activities, help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation, which are increasingly recognized as major contributors to mental and physical health problems. In today's fast-paced world, many people experience disconnection due to busy schedules and digital communication, but genuine human connection can alleviate stress, boost mood, and even improve immune function. Building strong, supportive communities encourages personal growth, emotional resilience, and a shared sense of responsibility toward collective well-being. This communal aspect is especially powerful in wellness settings, where people come together to nurture their health in a holistic, interconnected way.

## Benefits of Whole Plant-Based Nutrition

A whole plant-based diet offers numerous advantages for both personal health and the environment. Rich in essential nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants, plant-based foods can lower the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. They also promote better digestion, maintain healthy blood sugar levels, and support a strong immune system. Beyond individual health,

plant-based nutrition has a significantly smaller ecological footprint compared to animal-based diets. By reducing the demand for meat, dairy, and eggs we can decrease greenhouse gas emissions, conserve water, and reduce deforestation, contributing to a more sustainable and compassionate food system. Embracing whole, unprocessed plant foods allows individuals to not only improve their well-being but also contribute positively to global environmental efforts.

# Founding Principles

## Core Values

Casa de Luz Villages deems our connection to our mother earth as a foundation for creating the next evolution of humanity and how we affect all other resident species that share our beautifully fragile planet.

**We stand** for creating forums to explore best life practices. i.e. Villages, Community Centers, Events, Intensives, Spas, Lectures, camps etc. Nota bene: A forum has many truths where opposites are not contradictory but complementary.

**We advocate** embracing our antagonists, for they are our best teachers. It is in diversity of thought that we can truly know the whole. We hold the value of gestalt . . . where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts

**We support** opening doors, building bridges, enhancing connection. We understand that it is through disconnection that gives rise to ills, and it is through connection that the ills are remedied.

**We honor** nature as the best teacher who does not speak in words that do not have the ability to convey the immutable truths. What is truly important cannot be spoken but rather, we can only point in the direction. In the spirit of the field of all possibilities and that being the source for all solutions.

**We experience** that humanity survives as a tribe. Humanity is gregarious and through open and democratic discussion we can evolve

**We yearn** for the acceleration of evolving towards a more peaceful, harmonious, healthy future.

**We have a bias for action.** We value dialogue as a tool for action.

**We are collaborative** and we will look for alliances with other organized disciplines I.e CNU, Permaculture, Landmark Forum, all of which do not include food as a fundamental first step towards critical thinking. We need our body and minds to be free of the weight of disease in order to be at our best if we are to evolve toward overall health and happiness.

**We practice** for it is through the incorporation of better habits that we support evolution

**We are grateful** as a choice. In gratitude we can learn from our mistakes. Gratitude reverberates through our being as an essential component to our overall health.

**We are Respectful** of all living things and avoidance of violence toward others (Ahimsa)

**We are Pro Bono** non profit organizations. It could be said that we are The Church of Connection . . . connecting to the microbiome through pristine plants, connecting with other humans by sharing meals at community tables.



The Charter of the New Macrobiotics is a living one. Imperfection is only the opportunity to find “better.” Everything changes and so will our charter.

## Essential Components of a Casa de Luz Village

Casa de Luz Villages are holistic wellness centers designed to nourish the body, mind, and spirit while fostering a strong sense of community. Rooted in the wisdom of macrobiotic practices—habits that lead to “the great life” (macro=great, bio=life)—each village comprises several key components:

### 1. **Community Dining Room:**

- Serves a full-spectrum, whole-plant, fixed-menu meal.
- Ingredients are free from industrial processing, ensuring natural and nutritious food.
- Features open community tables to encourage social interaction and connection among diners.

### 2. **Wellness Spaces:**

- Hosts a variety of wellness practitioners, including an apothecary, chiropractor, spiritual lounge, body worker (Mama Strange), and an organic juice bar.
- Offers areas for practitioners to contribute to the overall well-being of the community.

### 3. **Event Spaces:**

- Available for community events, workshops, lectures, and gatherings.
- Supports educational and cultural activities that enhance community life.

### 4. **Large Children's Playground:**

- A safe and engaging space for children to play and interact.
- Encourages physical activity and social development in a natural setting.
- Allows families to experience a village-like atmosphere reminiscent of the past, where everyone is friendly and the environment feels safe and supportive.
- Ensures that children grow up with a fundamental human need: connection. By interacting with their peers and the community, they develop a sense of belonging and trust that is crucial for their emotional and social development.

Casa de Luz Villages aim to be replicated worldwide, addressing the growing need for holistic wellness centers that build community and promote health. By situating these villages within walking distance of residential areas, they become integral parts of everyday life, fostering a sense of belonging and well-being for all members of the community.

Casa de Luz is affectionately known as "the church of connection." It connects people of all ages to each other and to the microbiome (Mother Earth) with plants serving as the medium of connection. This holistic approach not only promotes individual health but also strengthens community bonds and our relationship with the environment.

Families with children, in particular, benefit from this safe, supportive, and friendly environment. Children grow up in a community where they feel connected, valued, and secure, which is essential for their overall development and well-being. The nurturing environment of Casa de Luz Villages provides a foundation for children to thrive, embodying the values of interconnectedness and harmony with nature.

## Securing Funding and Resources

Here are potential Foundations and grant opportunities:-

**1. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

Focus: Health and healthcare improvement, health equity.

Why: Aligns with our goals of holistic health and preventive care.

**2. Kresge Foundation**

Focus: Health, environment, community development.

Why: Supports projects that promote community health and sustainability.

**3. The California Wellness Foundation**

Focus: Health equity, access to healthcare.

Why: Supports initiatives that promote health and wellness in underserved

**4. W.K. Kellogg Foundation**

Focus: Health equity, access to healthcare.

Why: Supports initiatives that promote health and wellness in underserved

**5. Annie E. Casey Foundation**

Focus: Community development, child and family well-being.

Why: Supports projects that enhance community support systems and overall

**6. Ford Foundation**

Focus: Thriving children, equitable communities, health equity.

Why: Aligns with our holistic approach to health and community well-being.

**7. Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation**

Focus: Health, community health initiatives.

Why: Supports projects aimed at improving health and wellness at the community

**8. Surdna Foundation**

Focus: Sustainable communities, inclusive economies.

Why: Supports projects that integrate health, sustainability, and community development.

**9. Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**

Focus: Health, homelessness, sustainable development.

Why: Funds initiatives that promote health and sustainable community development.

**10. Wellcome Trust**

Focus: Health research, innovation.

Why: Supports innovative approaches to health and well-being, aligning with our empirical model.

### Why Casa de Luz Village Should Be Replicated:

1. **Promotes Preventive Health:** By focusing on preventive health through diet and lifestyle, Casa de Luz reduces the incidence of chronic diseases and improves overall health outcomes.
2. **Builds Stronger Communities:** The emphasis on connection and community building creates stronger, more resilient communities that support each other in achieving health and wellness goals.
3. **Reduces Healthcare Costs:** Preventive health measures and holistic wellness services can significantly reduce healthcare costs for individuals and society as a whole.
4. **Supports Sustainable Living:** Replicating Casa de Luz Villages promotes sustainable living practices, benefiting both the environment and the community.
5. **Empowers Individuals:** Educational programs and workshops empower individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to take charge of their health and make informed decisions.
6. **Provides a Blueprint for Holistic Health:** Casa de Luz serves as a model for how communities can integrate holistic health practices into everyday life, providing a blueprint for others to follow.

By replicating Casa de Luz Villages, we can create a network of wellness communities that promote health, connection, and sustainability, transforming the way we approach health and well-being on a global scale.

## Program and Services

### Community Kitchen

The contents of the meal are created moment to moment dependent on availability and circumstances therefore no posting of menu which shifts the perception of Casa away from being a restaurant to being a wellness community center similar to eating at home.

Here are the principles on which the kitchen is based on:-

The practice of stoking love

Open kitchen - Completely open where everyone can see the chopping

Meals cover all the bases - legumes, vegetables, grains, dark leafy greens, nut sauces, something pickled

High mood in the kitchen

Cooks dine with the community

Teas are free

Self bussing of tables

Gift card to get away from using cash and the feeling that you don't do a financial transaction

One conversation at a time at a table

Table tents with inspiration for changing your life.

The Lantern - Newsletter

Community Book

Inspiration/Educational art on walls

Environment - Serenity Acoustics - Using Tectum on ceiling to keep the environment quiet. Slow tempo piano music

100% organic and non-processed. Outstandingly oils! Nothing goes through a factory

Desserts are sweetened with whole figs or other fruits. Whole as in non-fractured or industrialized

## Wellness Programs (Physical, Mental, Spiritual)

Currently at Casa De Luz Village, we have various wellness Programs, like yoga, organic juice bar, cacao coffee bar, astrologers, and healers who practice bio magnetism and other modalities.

## Nutrition and Cooking Classes

The core of the Casa model is whole food plant based nutrition. If our bodies are well-nourished our minds are active and with our community connections human beings can focus on doing good for themselves, their community, their country and the whole planet.

## Community Events and Gatherings

Regular events are organized at Casa De Luz Villages, these events are geared towards nutrition, mental wellness and spirituality.



# All about the Casa De Luz Kitchen

What tools do I need for a working Kitchen?

For a kitchen that serves plant-based food, here's what we use —

## Major Appliances

1. **Commercial Oven and Stove:** For cooking and baking.







2. **Refrigerators and Freezer:** For storing food and frozen fruits







3. **Dishwasher:** For efficient cleaning of utensils and equipment.







## Cooking Equipment

1. **Pots and Pans:** Stainless steel
2. **Baking Sheets and Trays:** For baking and roasting nuts
3. **Mixing Bowls:** Different sizes
4. **Measuring Cups and Spoons:** Mainly for desserts
5. **Knives:** Macrobiotic special knives
6. **Utensils:** Spoons, spatulas, tongs, whisks, ladles, and peelers.
7. **Colanders and Strainers:**
8. **Can Openers:** Manual or electric.

## Storage Solutions

1. **Shelving Units:** For dry goods and equipment storage.



2. Containers and Bins: For storing ingredients and leftovers.







3. **Labeling System:** To keep track of contents and expiration dates.

## **Serving Equipment**

1. **Plates and Bowls:** Melanin
2. **Cutlery:** Forks, knives, spoons, chopsticks
3. **Glasses and Cups:** 12oz Glass cups and tea cups can be donated by community members.









## Cleaning and Safety Supplies

1. **Cleaning Supplies:** Branch Basics products
2. **Trash Cans and Recycling Bins, Compost bins**
3. **First Aid Kit:** For handling minor injuries.
4. **Mops and Brooms:** For keeping the kitchen clean.
5. **Gloves:**

## Water

Water or drinking and kitchen is cleaned using Reverse Osmosis and each kitchen should have at least 3 different water sinks. One for the kitchen, one in the dishwasher and one for the stove.

## Kitchen Staff

**Host:** They greet and welcome in community members. They will also have other duties such as : Cleaning tables inside and outside, and cutting desserts. Refilling any drinks, wash napkins.

**Lead Cook:** Person who sets the menu for the day.

**Prep team:** Help with chopping, cleaning , making sauces , collaborative

**Dishwasher:** Washing dishes, cleaning bathrooms, chop lettuce and kale for the day. Make teas and fill it.

**Pastry Chef:** Dessert is made on particular days. Usually on Mondays and Fridays or as per the churnover. One person makes the desserts. Depending on the amount of desserts that are used.

## Things to watch out for food prep

1. Watch out for too much salt, vinegar or lemon.
2. Coconut milk goes bad very fast, use as little as possible.
3. Soup should be small.
4. Have 3+ water basin
5. Taste before you serve.

## Everyday menu items

**Kale Prep:-** Kale is washed, cleaned, cut and stored in the refrigerator, they are blanched as needed for a minute or two.

**Lettuce/Salad** is cut using Robot Coupe and stored in the refrigerator.

Vegetables like carrots, onions, and cabbage used in the soups, are prepped daily and stored in the refrigerators.

## A Day in the Casa De Luz Kitchen:-

Menus are usually set more or less for the week. Prep-work (cutting and chopping of vegetables) is done in the morning. Rice and beans are soaked overnight and then cooked the next day.

Teas are made in 24 quart buckets. With 2 quarts of tea concentrate and rest of water, usually it is mixed in the night and kept overnight,

Lead Chef comes in at 8:00 and writes what needs to be cut on the board like how many onions etc.

They start cooking rice and beans as soon as they come.

Staff comes in at 9:00 and then works off the board. Around 10:45 lunch is setup on the counter, staff eats and then customers are served. Any morning dishes are cleaned.

After lunch around 3:00 , shift changes. Handover is done to communicate if anything is needed. Next team comes and preps for dinner. Dinner is served around 5:30 pm. After dinner, dishes are all cleaned up and everything is ready for next week.

All left-over food is stored and served for breakfast.

## Costs to Run a Kitchen

Contact us and we can provide an excel sheet of our current list of suppliers and their cost.

Cost for major appliances will be coming soon.