



The Burton Kimble Farms Education Center.
Photo by Martin Boling

Ivy Tech Offers Unique Classes for Lifelong Learners at Burton Kimble Farms

A refurbished mid-1800s Orange County farmhouse, surrounded by holly bushes, flower gardens, and acres of farmland, provides a picturesque setting for those interested in learning to raise chickens, start an heirloom garden, or try their hand at watercolors. These and other unique classes are offered at the Burton Kimble Farms Education Center, located two miles east of downtown Orleans, Indiana, and hosted by the Ivy Tech Community College Center for Lifelong Learning.

“It’s warm and conducive to a friendly exchange with other people,” says Judith Burton, who owns the 90-acre property. She has been coordinating Ivy Tech classes here and at Bedford and French Lick sites for six years. The Burton Kimble Farms Retreat Series, offered in the spring and fall semesters, has one-time or multiple-session classes, and summer programs for youth.

“I view classes here as not just classes but an experience,” says Burton. “That’s what I want it to be for each person who comes here. I want them to feel very welcome and

that they are surrounded with energy and inspiration and love. I want them to be so comfortable that they feel like they’ve been here before.”

Classes, limited to 12 people, are conducted in the gathering room, on porches, or the west deck of the farmhouse, located at 2058 E. County Road 800 N. “We have wonderful exchanges of ideas and experiences and backgrounds related to so many different topics,” says Burton, who teaches some classes. “It is not a sterile classroom here.”

This semester, classes include a course in fine dining

with a focus on the “foods of love” for Valentine’s Day, a watercolor class and lunch on the farm in March, an April daytrip to James Whitcomb Riley Museum Home in Indianapolis, a barn dance and Chickens 101 in May, and a Farm to Fork series in June. Burton says classes attract people from Bloomington, Martinsville, Ellettsville, and Indianapolis, as well as those from Orange County.

Burton became familiar with the property while growing up in Mitchell, Indiana. Her grandparents lived next to the farmhouse, owned by family friend Rosie Kimble.

Burton moved away and lived in Michigan for 30 years, working as a corporate trainer. After Kimble’s death, Burton’s family acquired the farmhouse. She moved here in 2000, renovated the property, and later approached Ivy Tech about offering educational programs there. She started offering cooking classes beginning in 2009. They were so popular, Burton says, she began developing the retreat series and found local instructors to teach other classes.

One of those instructors, Jeanne Ellen Dutton, a Bloomington watercolorist, started teaching at the Ivy

BURTON KIMBLE FARMS RETREAT SERIES

Take in the beauty of southern Indiana at Rosie Kimble's homestead, a country escape from the hustle and bustle. Burton Kimble Farms is a cozy gathering place for enrichment, relaxation, learning and fun, located just 2 miles east of downtown Orleans in Orange County.

SPRING CLASSES:

Fine Dining...Foods of Love for Valentine's Day | Saturday, February 11

Watercolor Spring Flowers & Lunch on the Farm | Saturday, March 18

Put Spring in Your Porch | Thursday, April 6

Day Trip to James Whitcomb Riley Museum Home, Indianapolis | Saturday, April 8

Heirloom Gardening | Thursday, April 27

Poetry and Tea with James Whitcomb Riley
Saturday, May 6

Barn Dance | Friday, May 12

Containers, Pots, and Planters
Thursday, May 18

Chickens 101 | Tuesday, May 23

Farm to Fork Series | June 10, 15, 19



(top) The kitchen at the farmhouse. (above, left) Pat Hutchinson and Judith Burton. (above, right) Jeanne Ellen Dutton.
Photos by Martin Boling

Tech John Waldron Arts Center when the Center for Lifelong Learning began 10 years ago. She was first introduced to the Burton Kimble Farmhouse as a student taking cooking classes. She began teaching classes at the farmhouse three years ago.

"I think the atmosphere allows people to learn in a very comfortable setting," says Dutton, who specializes in floral painting. "The farmhouse is just charming. We have a big cozy classroom and it's a very welcoming environment. People shouldn't be intimidated at all."

She teaches a spring one-session class focusing on spring flowers, scheduled for March 18, and a fall one-session class featuring autumn colors. Dutton says her classes can be taken by those with little or no experience in watercolors because she covers all the basics, including brushes, paints, and paper. "I like to see people start and grow in their watercolors experience," she adds. "It's really very rewarding."

Pat Hutchinson, owner of The Twelve Months of Christmas shop in Bedford, also first experienced the farmhouse as a student five years ago. She took a class about getting clutter out of her life and other classes. "I love Judith's farm," she says. "It's almost like another world. Just the sight of her place makes me relax."

Soon afterward, Burton asked her to teach a class in calligraphy, which she has taught at the farmhouse and at Ivy Tech's Bedford site. Hutchinson has always loved handwriting. She took a class in calligraphy in the 1970s, fell in love with it, and says she likes passing along this art of beautiful handwriting.

"I enjoy seeing other people learn to do it," says Hutchinson, 70. "It's very relaxing when you practice letter forms. It takes your mind off of everything except that pen on the paper. You get lost in time."

For more information, a full schedule of classes, and complete class descriptions, visit ivytech.edu/cll and click "Burton Kimble Farms Retreat Series." •

 THE CENTER FOR
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