The Next Generation: Our Children of Cohousing

A Word from Your Chief Engagement Officer

Part of our work at Coho/US involves building a national cohousing community - towards connecting you with the larger cohousing world, both for support and mentoring, but also to celebrate the innovative movement you are helping grow. Our children of cohousing - those who have grown up in cohousing - are a tangible and priceless feature; below is a call out to bring us together.

Another essential ingredient to connecting our national community are those that give their time and energy in service to cohousing. To name just a few: Joani Blank, co-founder of Swan's Market in Oakland, answers our phone, sharing wisdom with folks looking for resources; Raines Cohen, a Berkeley Cohousing member and cohousing consultant, patiently and resourcefully answers inquiries from our website; and Fred Olson, who volunteers independently of Coho/US in service to our larger community, maintains the cohousing-l discussion list from his Minneapolis home - for over 20 years.

Our recent launch of a new website is largely due to the creativity and countless volunteer hours contributed by Catya Belfer, who serves as Coho/US Technical Director in her spare time. Catya was the tenacious champion of our redesign, leading a group of volunteers who crafted the new site. Given the importance of our website as a connector and clearinghouse, we are mighty proud of our team's accomplishment. Catya is a member of Mosaic Commons, west of Boston, and has been involved in intentional communities for over 20 years. Catya is a talented and experienced project manager and website builder. Coho/US has benefited enormously from her contributions. She's also a parent, practices yoga, reads a lot of books, and even bakes cookies. Visit Catya's website for more goodies.

Want to get more engaged in growing the cohousing community? Visit Volunteer Opportunities.

Alice Alexander, Executive Director

New on cohousing.org

We now have more than 100 examples of policies & procedures in our Policy Database, courtesy of Daniel Lindenberger and Laura Fitch et al, and we would love more! (Someone just asked for examples of CA group CCRs on cohousing-L last week.)

We also have some impressively persistent and aggressive spammers. If YOU get a message that says you have been blocked as spam, I apologize for catching you in my net & please let me know.

- cat

Catya Belfer, Technical Director & Volunteer Website Builder

Tours & Events

Regional Cohousing Conference in Boulder, Colorado
September 26-28, 2014
There will be a Regional Cohousing Conference in Boulder, Colorado, on the weekend of Sept 26-28, 2014. All cohousers, wanna-be cohousers and anyone else interested are invited. There will be topics of interest to both established cohousing communities, and those just starting out. More information on the program, registration procedures, volunteer opportunities, etc. will be coming; visit the Coho/US Tours and Events website for more details as they develop. We hope you can join us!

National Conference: The Next Generation and Our Children Of Cohousing
With cohousing communities taking hold in the early 1990's, we have produced a generation of "children of cohousing." These now-young adults benefited greatly from growing up in a cohousing community. We are looking for their stories, their experiences; how they have applied "cohousing lessons" in their 20's and 30's. Is there anything profoundly different about their networking and other skills, world views or approaches to life than others of their generation who did not grow up in cohousing? Ideally we could benefit from their participation in the 2015 National Cohousing Conference: The Next Generation.

We would like to connect with the children of cohousing: can you share this request with this younger generation, and have them contact us or email? We invite their participation as they are willing and able in gathering - in person or via skype - at the national conference, or in sharing experiences through blogs and videos.

Although these young people value cohousing, they are likely not living within a traditional cohousing community, given issues of affordability, and the transient nature of early careers and lives. So along with discussions we plan surrounding the conference about how this generation is using cohousing experience to "get ahead" or find satisfaction in life, school and work, we also invite conversations about alternative communities they have built that could serve as models. We also seek their advice about what Coho/US can offer to them and to our evolving movement, and what they can offer to us.

We believe the issues surrounding "children of cohousing" provides a potent focal point in our conversations about the evolution of cohousing, and your participation and ideas are welcome.

Senior Cohousing Forum
A Senior Cohousing Forum will be offered July 12th in San Rafael, just north of San Francisco. Co-sponsored by Coho/US, this is a collaboration between two cohousing groups (Wolf Creek Lodge and Phoenix Commons) as well as forming groups in Marin County, and McCamant & Durrett Architects and CoHousing Partners. Hosted by the UU Congregation of Marin. Email info@wolfcreeklodge.org.

Interests Rather Than Positions
From The Wisdom of Group Decisions copyright © 2006 Craig Freshley

In principle, when someone comes into a meeting or a negotiation with an already-established position, it limits prospects for creative, innovative, win-win solutions. When I state my position on an issue early in the discussion, my focus thereafter becomes defending my position and trying to persuade others to agree with it. I might even get side-tracked into defending my pride rather than considering what is best for the group. On the other hand, if I am able to speak clearly about my interests (what I would like to get out of the issue without attachment to a particular way of getting it), and I am able to listen openly to others' interests, we have a much better chance of all getting what we want.

Practical Tip: Focus first on what you really want rather than how to get it. If you are leaning toward a particular solution, peel back a layer, dig a bit deeper, and ask, "What desire in me does this solution attempt to satisfy?" Ask yourself, "What is my fundamental interest here?" Identify what you are really interested in, give it words, and speak the words to others. Listen carefully to their words about their interests. As a group, hear and understand all interests before crafting solutions.

Cohousing Blogs
What Should We Be Afraid Of?

By Sharon Villines
On Cohousing-L, a member of a forming group asked a smart question: "What SHOULD we be worried about?" Philip Dowds, an architect living in Cornerstone Cohousing in Cambridge Cohousing replied: Plan on delay. Plan on surprising cost increases. Plan on flogging your way past disappointments. Your group may have to deal one or more of ...read more

What should a forming group get a good plan for NOW?" 

by grace h. kim | schemata workshop inc
I'll preface my advice with the fact that I am an architect, but also a founding member of an urban cohousing group in Seattle that will break ground later this summer. Even though my husband and I are architects and purchased the land more than 4 years ago, it has taken us this long to get to construction (recession was not in our timeline, and bank attitudes towards lending during the recovery also hit us hard). read more
Why Starting with a Proposal is Usually a Bad Idea

by Laird Schaub

As a process consultant for cooperative groups one of the most common things I'm asked to address is why it's such a slog to solve problems in plenary. While there are number of things that may be in play, I want to focus here on one particular culprit that's a frequent contributor: expecting that topics come to plenary in the form of a proposal.
Connecting with Cohousing Professionals is easy with our Cohousing Professionals Directory webpage. Interested in getting listed below? Contact our Marketing Manager to find out more.

- Bryan Bowen Architects, p.c.
- The Cohousing Company: McCamant & Durrett Architects
- Cohousing Partners, LLC & Wonderland Hill Development Company
- Kraus Fitch Architects, Inc.

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