National Cohousing Open House Day is Back, Better than Ever.
Raines Cohen, Cohousing Coach, East Bay Cohousing / Cohousing CA

Is it that time of year again? After its incredible debut last year, National Cohousing Open House Day is back, better than ever, this year on Sat, April 29. We're again joining several other places where you'll find "cohousing clusters" in doing regional organizing, so people can visit several communities and make the most of the day.

Living in cohousing for the past 17 years, it's easy to take this way of life for granted, with all its charms and challenges. But I do find it helpful to meet new community seekers and experience our community through their "fresh eyes" and questions that can revive a sense of what's possible.

The list of participating communities is ever growing, but places you can find more than one cohousing neighborhood you can visit (without strapping on your jetpack) include:

- Durham-Chapel Hill, NC: Several communities around the region are throwing open their doors; I got to see quite a few after the 2015 National Cohousing Conference there, and was delighted with the variety of approaches to intergenerational and senior living.
- Boulder-Denver, CO: If you'd rather you can see both forming communities and established ones reachable by bus and light rail (perhaps with an assist by bicycle).
- Sacramento Valley & foothills, CA: Explore cohousing at a range of altitudes in the Golden State, from a long-established community near the Capitol building to senior cohousing in Grass Valley, high above the dams.
- Portland, OR: This city may feature the most cohousing neighborhoods in the US in its metro area, so it shouldn't be a surprise to learn that communities here have been co-marketing for decades, and that quite a few are doing complementary activities on this day. You can even dip south to Corvallis.
- East San Francisco Bay Area, CA: We're organizing a bus tour and providing self-guided tour maps in the booming East Bay Cohousing region, and Pleasant Hill Cohousing is hosting an afternoon forum that's included.

What are your plans? Visit here and share in the comments.
What's Your Style?

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Join us as we share the joy of our collaborative neighborhoods. The National Cohousing Open House Day inspires individuals and families to consider joining communities and sparks the creation of new groups.

Communities learn more here. We'd love to have you sign up! Click here for a great flyer to post.

Getting it Built Workshop: April 8-9, 2017 near Las Vegas
Southern Nevada Cohousing

Workshop led by Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett. Limited to 30 participants and the slots are filling fast sign up now!

Cohousing Blogs

More than Cohousing - Cohousing Like and other Alternative Housing Solutions - What's the Difference?
Ty Albright, Texas Cohousing
Join us at the Nashville Conference to continue this conversation, with Ty Albright, Is it Cohousing? Group Participation Game; also with Laura Fitch and others: More Than Cohousing.

One emerging goal for cohousing is how cohousing can be used as a model for unique needs. There is often debate or confusion about communities that are "Cohousing-like".

** Cohousing-like takes aspects of cohousing but is not cohousing.
** More-than-cohousing are cohousing-like communities with a social or economic mission.

Senior Cohousing

PDX COMMONS, Portland - Only 2 homes left!

Phoenix Commons a Cohousing Community on Oakland Waterfront --- 1 & 2 bdrm Condos

Wolf Creek Lodge, California - Home Available

Cohousing Professionals

Cohousing Consortium - Join Us at the Nashville Conference
Caddis Architecture
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It is difficult to talk about "More than cohousing" without touching on the topic of "cohousing-like" communities and asking "is it cohousing"? When is something cohousing, when is it something else, and when is it more than cohousing? Cohousing values and characteristics improve any community and aspects of cohousing can benefit people with unique needs. We need all sorts of cooperative, collaborative, community-oriented housing of which cohousing is one type. Read more

Community as Economic Engine  Laird Schaub  
Laird Schaub and Terry O'Keefe and will be presenting "Community as Economic Engine" at the 2017 National Cohousing Conference. Laird offered a version to a packed audience at the 2015 National Cohousing Conference in Durham.

Intentional communities sort broadly into two kinds: those where members share income (roughly 10-12%), and those where they don’t (the vast majority). In the case of the former, the community takes primary responsibility for the economic welfare of its members. In consequence, the community rolls up its sleeves and develops community-owned businesses, and takes advantage of collective purchasing power to leverage economies of scale to make ends meet.

In addition to the day-to-day, this kind of community also provides for member vacations, health care, and retirement. It’s cradle to grave coverage. Members put everything they earn (though not necessarily everything they own) into the pot. In return, the group picks up the tab for all expenses—within whatever boundaries the community sets. For non-income-sharing communities, the collective tends to leave the economics of member households untouched. This is a huge difference.... Both because most intentional communities don’t share income and because the potential there is less explored, the primary focus of this examination will be the economic relationship between the collective and the individual in non-income-sharing groups. read more

A Q&A With Eris Weaver About Cohousing And Politics  Saul Of-Hearts, the Fellowship of Intentional Community  
Eris Weaver is presenting at the National Cohousing conference, including Cohousers in Politics and Let's Talk About Money. The FIC will be hosting a bookstore at the conference.

FIC: You’re hosting a pre-conference intensive called Let's Talk About Money. How transparent should intentional communities be about money? Does being able to talk openly about income, debt, and expenses make for stronger communities?

Eris: For most of us, our house is our biggest financial investment. Deciding to live in community is one of our biggest emotional & relational investments (after marriage and parenthood). Decisions and conflicts about money are really decisions and conflicts about values. The more depth we bring to these conversations early in our group's formation, the better decisions we will make and fewer conflicts and greater understanding and connection we will have.

FIC: One of your talks, Cohousers in Politics, sounds particularly timely. Are there any politicians who have been vocal in their support for cohousing communities?

Eris: One of my experiences has been that local officials who are at first dubious (and make our development experience challenging) later become big fans...and court us as voters and community influencers. Read more...

Living in Community  
Great Oak Cohousing in Ann Arbor: Their Work Program  
Nan Fawcett, Prairie Hill Cohousing (Iowa City, Iowa)  
Members of Prairie Hill have been curious about how other communities get their work done. We’re all assuming that we will cooperate in many ways to make our community run well. And we’re also assuming that there will be some things that we just hire out.... when I interviewed Sarah Ross about Great Oak Community, the work program was a big interest. Here's what Sarah told me: At Great Oak,
members are expected to put in 5-10 hours of community work a month. Rather than closely tracking whether this in fact happens, they have an honor system, trusting that members will pitch in to help as much as they can. If someone is sick or under stress, for example, the work from that person may drop down for awhile. And others fill in. On our recent trip to Arboretum Cohousing in Madison, we found that they had a similar system. They recommend members do at least 4 hours of community work per month, but they don't monitor this. Some people end up doing relatively little and others do a lot. This may not be ideal, but they have decided that it works OK and is less stressful than trying to enforce hour commitments....if the community is healthy, with good communication and a caring atmosphere, members can trust each other to do what they can manage. Read more...

Coho/US Notes

Spring is a great time to visit cohousing or show off your community! Laura Fitch, Pioneer Valley (Amherst MA)

New to cohousing? National Cohousing Open House Day April 29th is perfect for getting a real taste for what it would be like to live in a cohousing community...you are sure to come away inspired and wishing for great neighbors like the ones who will host your tours.

Looking to grow your existing group or waiting list? Show off your project, add to your waiting list, educate the public, or just have fun. Consider pairing a tour with a seminar, "spring fling," work day, or kids' activity. Food always attracts people. Learn more here...

Resilient Together Tour: Fellowship for Intentional Community

Once upon a time, the world was infinite. The edges of the map simply defined what was known, not all that was. Then it became common knowledge that the earth was round, and "the world" started to become something finite. When we were able to see the entire planet, from outer space, it really started to set in. This is it. Learn more here...

Cohousing Directory Metrics

Established Communities = 164
---Completed = 148
---Building = 16

Forming** = 135
**Thirty one forming groups have acquired land they plan to develop

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