National Cohousing Open House Day - Opening Our Doors and Hearts on Sat, April 30, 2016

Whatever these words may bring up for you, one thing is certain - just as cohousing is a collaborative process, so to it will be with this event. We invite your community, whether you are a new seedling, actively building, or an established forest, to open your doors, welcome public visitors and showcase your community - on the same day as others across the country. Coho/US is offering a national platform for communities to create an inviting, educational and fun event within your community (or for those without land, at a suitable location).

A visit is worth a thousand words! An open house provides a great opportunity to attract the public to get a taste for themselves, and help you build a robust waiting list. When we started forming our communities, this goal was on our minds daily. For those living in mature communities, it may be just as important, to attract people that can carry on your community's vision.

Visit the National Cohousing Open House Day webpage, and complete the Community Sign Up. Later this year, we will promote your community as "open for visitors" with links to your event details. There is no cost to communities to participate, nor will there be a cost to the public. Coho/US is providing the national framework, publicity and marketing for your event to be a success. Funding for this event and other services are made possible by annual community donations - please consider!

Many of you already hold such events - open houses, educational talks, pot lucks for friends and family, and other creative ways for outsiders to experience the joy of living in community. Or maybe you use to and haven't for a while. Perhaps you have been wanting to but haven't quite gotten up the momentum yet. Whatever stage you are in, here is the perfect opportunity to get the ball rolling with full force!

Mark your calendars now - Saturday April 30, 2016. Right as spring is unfolding, with the sun lingering longer in the sky and its warmth drawing people to explore new things, we will be opening our doors - and our hearts.

Conferences & Events

Liberty Village Cohousing "Village Fest!"  
Sat, Oct 3, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, Union Bridge, Maryland

Sacramento Cohousing Forum: Oct 10th - featuring both established communities and cohousing groups-in-formation

West Coast Communities Conference Oct 9-11, Mendocino, CA
Join other community explorers in the splendor of nature for a weekend of skill-building, networking, and celebration that promises to inspire and educate. Whether you are brand spanking new to intentional communities or have been living in them for years, plentiful opportunities for all.

Discover Cohousing, Art Works (320 Hull St, Richmond, VA), Oct 18, 2:00-4:00 pm  Future residents of 5 cohousing neighborhoods in Virginia, are sponsoring a public presentation on the cohousing trend taking root across the region and the country.

Aging in Community: Senior Cohousing Presentation  
Friday, 6:00-8:00 pm, Nov 13 at Eno River Unitarian in Durham, NC, hosted by CoHousing Solutions & Village Hearth Cohousing

Regional Cohousing Conference Opportunity
Interested in partnering with CoHOUS to produce a regional conference? Share your creative ideas with us!
We love our property rights in the United States. The first English settlers on the North American continent left their homeland, in part, to escape an archaic and feudal land holding system. Every aspiring intentional community confronts this maze of laws, including communities that strategically evade these laws by settling in spare rural regions. Below, I discuss some of the most important tools that planners and municipal governments use to both restrict and enable development, and the obstacles that these tools might pose to aspiring or existing intentional communities.

Organizing Low-Income Cohousing
Sharon Villines, Sociocracy.info “A Deeper Democracy”
What are some ways to encourage people to create low-income cohousing? Suggestions:
1. Define “low income”
2. Get organized and empower leadership
3. Find a financial consultant and professional advice
4. Do research and price alternatives
5. Expect a long timeline

Why is there a Lack of Affordable Cohousing?
Ty Albright - Dallas, TX
I am often asked about “affordable housing.” People want “affordable cohousing.” I want to share with you what this is all about and why I believe this country lacks “affordable cohousing.” I also want to tell you about a good book by Andrew Heben “Tent City Urbanism (from self-organized Camps to Tiny House Villages)” which documents some solutions. I’d also like to share some ideas for solutions I have...Change is needed and awareness is the first step toward achieving desired change.

Cohousing! What is it? The Process of Defining
R Philip Dowds, Cornerstone Village Cohousing
Like all of you, I am regularly confronted with “Cohousing, what's that?” Despite my architectural background, I am very slow to bring up anything along the lines of the development program or design features. I describe it as a social contract for a lifestyle and a culture. Informally and shorthand, I say that we agree to get to know each other, and learn something about our backgrounds and desires; to help each other out; and to practice sharing and collaboration in decisions and activities small and large. That's the lowbrow version.

Living in Community
Thoughts on Crossroads
Doris Bedinger, Burlington Cohousing East Village
I lived in Salina, Kansas for 31 years. Every time I left the house I ran into someone I knew, and often, knew well. Newly arrived in Burlington, I knew only my daughters and a couple of their friends. The first time I was out and saw someone I had met recently, I went over and hugged her......I began to
Could Living in Cohousing Save your Family $100,000? Jon Ippolito, Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage (Maine)

While many intuitively understand the benefits of living in a close-knit neighborhood, some people need numbers to convince them. That's why members of Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage on the Maine coast conducted their own study to find out how much money typical residents will save in energy costs and in-kind goods and services. The result? Over twenty years, a family of four would save between $80,000 and $130,000. Read more

End Notes

Dallas Visit: Encouraging Cohousing in the Big State of Texas

I enjoyed a visit to Dallas recently, at the invitation of entrepreneurs Angela Alston and Hugh Resnick, who are spearheading Dallas Cohousing. About 35 folks from various networks joined us, with enthusiasm and curiosity. With no established cohousing in Texas to provide a model, it's a challenge to get traction! Two folks from Denton, 40 miles northeast of Dallas via a rail line, are on a mission to create cohousing there. Wildflower EcoVillage was also present - a forming group in rural Greenville, 50 miles northwest, focused on permaculture and off-grid possibilities. We are fortunate to have Ty Albright joining the CoHo/US Board to help support these initiatives. Ty lives in Carrollton, 20 miles from downtown - another area ripe for cohousing, particularly among his current neighbors of empty nesters. Stay tuned!

Cohousing Directory Metrics

Established Communities = 155
Completed = 131
Building* = 24

Welcome to Wendy Wiesner, PFAC Executive Director

We're pleased our sister organization PFAC (Partnerships for Affordable Cohousing) has made the leap in appointing a first Executive Director. Wendy Wiesner is an excellent choice, having served on the board for many years to help shape and grow the organization's important mission of promoting and establishing affordable cohousing. CoHo/US is proud to be collaborating with PFAC. Visit PFAC's Website

Resources

Guidelines for Visiting A Cohousing Community - New!

MidAtlantic Cohousing - new website designed by Ann Zabaldo (nice job!)
Many building communities have residents but continue to add members and build homes.

Do you like receiving this eNews? Please consider supporting Coho/US, serving as a clearinghouse and connector to grow and nurture cohousing across the country.

Thanks for reading

Cohousing Now! provides news and events on Cohousing... Now! From Coho/US, the Cohousing Association of the United States, Cohousing Now! is emailed monthly. Please forward to your friends, communities, and other lists to spread the word about cohousing!