

Cohousing Now! Growth in Cohousing



Growing up in Community

When growing up in community, you have instant playmates available at any moment as mentioned in this article by Kathryn McCamant ([full article](#))

"When 'our kids' get home, all they have to do to find entertainment is walk around the community. Who's out? Any kids playing on the central walkway? Anyone in the common house? No kids, but neighbor Joannie asks me to help her set the tables for the community meal. She generally has good cookies at her house; good to keep her happy. Then back to the central walkway where now a kickball game is starting..."

Also described is a community family as in this article A Big Family: Growing Up in a Cooperative Community published by Hudson Valley One ([full article](#))

"When Martina Compain moved to Cantine's Island Cohousing in Saugerties with her parents, she was eight years old. She missed her friends in New Paltz. She continued to attend her old school, and had some play dates with friends. But it wasn't the same. After a fairly short time, Martina found friends in the new community. 'There were a lot of kids living here; Karla, Otto, Amelia, Jasper Eli, Jonah and my brother,' she said. 'Even though my old friends weren't up here, I had my extended family.' In fact, she said, the Cantine's Island family came to be closer to her than her blood relatives. While she saw her neighbors every day, she only rarely saw her aunts, uncles and cousins.

Martina Compain is the first to return to the community after growing up there. She's back with her baby, living in her parents' home for the time being. 'The thing I loved the most about the community is that it was just a big family,' she said."

But what more might there be? I like to think that young people growing up in community are being exposed to some other thoughts and opinions than in their nuclear family. That they are being given the opportunity to try new experiences with neighbors such as eating different cuisines or participating in unique activities. Perhaps they are organically learning communication techniques by being exposed daily to many types of people with a wide variety of personalities.

[Courtney Martin](#) (see her TedTalk ' [The New American Dream](#) '") is writing a piece for [Curbed](#) on the first generation of American kids that have grown up in cohousing. As you all well know, cohousing is about 25 years old in the U.S. so there is a small, but mighty crew of kids now navigating the world with the sensibility of having grown up this way. She'd like to understand how it has affected them. To gather information Courtney has created an evaluation, if you grew up in community and are interested in sharing your experiences visit this [link to evaluation](#). Parents of kids who grew up in cohousing, please feel free to share this link and encourage your 'kids' to participate!

Conferences & Events



September 21-23, 2018

This regional cohousing conference is for :

People that want to learn about cohousing, how to create it or live it

Those that are forming a cohousing community, whether you're just starting or already building

Residents who currently live in a cohousing community

Architects, developers, planners or other professionals interested in creating communities

We will have general sessions for existing communities regarding maintenance and adaption as well as how to have fun and get along! There will be topics for both senior and multigenerational communities. And we are pleased to offer some interesting topics such as farming and aging in relation to cohousing.

Pre-conference intensives offer presentations on governance, communications, marketing, cohousing for seniors and a hands on cooking for community intensive.

The conference weekend will not only be packed with useful information, but have plenty of time to network! Laura Fitch will be offering a public presentation 'Cohousing 101' on Friday night. On Saturday Laura Fitch and Mary Kraus will be welcoming everyone and introducing Storyteller, John Porcino. Pioneer Valley Cohousing is hosting a Saturday night dinner party. And to complete this fantastic weekend, there will be various optional tours on Sunday including these communities :

Cambridge Cohousing, Cambridge, MA
Camelot Cohousing, Berlin MA
Cornerstone Village, Cambridge, MA
Jamaica Plain, Boston, MA
Mosaic Commons, Berlin MA
New View Cohousing, Acton, MA
Nubanusit Neighborhood & Farm, Peterborough, NH
Pathways Cohousing, Florence, MA
Pioneer Valley Cohousing, Amherst, MA
Rocky Hill Cohousing, Florence, MA
Stowe Farm Community (aka Katywil), Colrain, MA
Village Hill (building site), Northampton, MA

Thanks to our sponsors Caddis Architecture, schemata workshop, Fitch Architecture and Community Design, Wonderland Hill Development, Cohousing Solutions Inc., Village Hearth Cohousing, the Fellowship of Intentional Communities and Mary Kraus Architect.

Thank you to host Pioneer Valley Cohousing!

[Click Here To Register!](#)

Early Bird Discount available until Aug 20th
See more conference [details here](#)

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Classified Ads

Homes for Sale



**NEW LUXURY COHOUSING
RESIDENCES IN THE HEART
OF BOULDER!**



**Santa Fe, NM - Sand River
Cohousing - Customized One
Bedroom**



**ACCESSIBLE CONDO IN
MADISON CO-HOUSING
COMMUNITY**



**Beautiful Home In Stunning
Prescott Arizona**



[click here](#) for more conference info

The 2019 National Cohousing Conference Committee has been hard at work planning next year's event. To that end we've put together a survey and hope to get input from those just starting out as well as those who've been in cohousing for many years. Everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate to the FIC Bookstore. To link to the survey, [click here](#).

And here's what we already know... so SAVE THE DATE!

National Cohousing Conference
May 30-June 2, 2019
Hilton Downtown, Portland, Oregon
Community for the Health of It



Keynote: Courtney Martin author of The New Better Off: Reinventing the American Dream

There'll be something for everyone - those exploring the idea, newly forming groups or existing communities.

- * Cohousing Bus Tours & Open Houses
- * 2-days of Pre-Conference Intensives
- * Multiple Tracks of Workshops for Building It - Living It - Sustaining It
 - * Facilitated Discussions
 - * Networking Opportunities

Remember to [complete the survey now](#) to be entered into the \$100 drawing. Please respond by **August 15th** to be entered in the prize drawing.

Conference Co-chairs: Ann Lehman, PDX Commons, Grace Kim & Sheila Hoffman, Capitol Hill Urban Cohousing



Stylish Urban Townhouse Condominium



Beautiful Home Abutting Woods



Wolf Creek Lodge, CA - two bedroom home now available - now in escrow



Exceptional find: \$380,000, 1800 sq. ft. timber-frame cottage

Coho/US Notes



We are sad to say goodbye to Cindy Turnquist as she completes her CohoUS BOD term. While serving on the BOD she was the vice-chair and co-host of the very successful Aging Better Together Cohousing Conference held in Salt Lake City. Her passion for seniors in cohousing began several years ago and continues strong!

Cindy founded SageHill Partners, a small development company, in 2014 to bring a new model of senior housing, inspired by senior cohousing principles, to Utah. She is passionate about the benefits of aging in community and measures her success by her ability to



Bright and Spacious! Offered for Sale at \$499,000

provide a meaningful and positive impact on Utah's aging population; including, innovative housing solutions, promoting purposeful living, and fostering community-based services. In addition to leading the Coho/US Aging-In-Community Initiative Cindy was also a founding member of SAGE Cohousing International. She holds a degree in Architecture Technology and Construction Management, with an emphasis on green building and universal design.

Cindy has recently directed her attention to rural living in Utah. As a member of the Utah Commission on Aging she understand the challenges ahead with our growing rural senior population. Rural and small-town seniors have fewer housing options than their urban and suburban counterparts. SageHill is currently leading an effort to start an interdependent senior village in Cindy's home town of Kanab. Nestled amidst an array of state parks, national parks, and national monuments, Kanab and surrounding Kane County is a magical land filled with world-famous landmarks and stunning spaces that are still largely unexplored. And the best part? It's spectacular any time of the year.

check her out at www.sagehillpartners.com



Re-introducing Karen Gimnig. She joined the BOD beginning November 2017, then accepted a VP position in February but is temporarily stepping down from BOD into an Associate Director position for CohoUS. Karen's primary responsibility will be managing a website project by collecting, organizing and drafting content resulting in a dramatic overhaul of our cohousing.org website.

The new site, which we expect to roll out in 2019, will be more modern and mobile friendly. We're also adding many more pages with updated information and making the information easier to find. We'll be keeping (and upgrading) favorite features like the directory and the classified ads.

Karen will be sharing our progress along the way and she appreciates your feedback. She has reviewed your answers to the survey we sent out in October 2017. She has some new questions this time and is hoping to get some different folks responding as well. We want to know what you want to see in the new site and how you might be able to help us make it great. So please take a moment to visit and complete this [Survey Link Here](#)



To acquaint yourselves with who is currently serving the association, please click [here](#) for BOD and [here](#) for staff.

Cohousing Directory Metrics

Established Communities = 166

---Completed = 149

---Building = 17

Forming = 143



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Like receiving eNews? Please support Coho/US, serving as a clearinghouse and connector to grow and nurture cohousing across the country.

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Network for Good

#### **Seeking Members**



[Skagit Cohousing has land in Anacortes, WA and is seeking members](#)



[Cohousing in Spokane WA - We have the land!](#)



[Village Hill Cohousing, Minutes From Downtown Northampton, Mass., Accepting New Member Applications](#)



[Fair Oaks EcoHousing: Intergenerational Cohousing near Sacramento!](#)



[Join us in Harrisonburg, VA for our upcoming site design workshop!](#)



## Oldies but Goodies

### A Tour is Worth a Thousand (or More) Words

by Joani Blank, Swan's Market Cohousing  
March 28, 2014

Many years ago while living at Doyle Street Cohousing in Emeryville, CA, I casually mentioned to a visiting tour group that I planned to offer my unit for sale within eight or nine months because I would be moving to Swan's Market Cohousing in Oakland upon its completion. The next day, a woman who'd flown up from Los Angeles to attend the tour called me up and offered to buy my unit for about \$20,000 more than I was thinking about listing it for. She's happily living there still.

Several years ago, a group of eight tired but happy participants of a tour I had just led in Northern California sat together in Swan's common house while my co-leader and I were tidying up the meeting room. Without any encouragement from us, the tour participants spontaneously formed a new core group. A few weeks later they combined forces with a few members of an inactive group in the area. Around that same time, some short-term renters here at Swan's invited a friend over for an afternoon visit. Later that evening they all shared a common meal with Swan's residents in the common house. The friend hadn't heard of cohousing before her visit that day, but a few weeks later she traveled to Arizona and decided to purchase a unit in a cohousing community there.

Words don't hold a candle to the real thing.

Those involved in cohousing know the difficulty of describing what cohousing is to those who are unfamiliar with it. We're usually busily explaining what cohousing is not. No, cohousing communities are not "new millennium communes." No, we are probably not what you imagine when you hear the phrase "intentional community." No, we do not screen out people who do not share our religious, political or social ideology. No, we don't all live in a shared house. No, we don't share all our meals in a community dining room. No, we're not really like a kibbutz. And on and on. Sure, we'd rather be positive, telling folks how it really is to live in cohousing. If we're lucky we get to explain that unlike some other kinds of collaborative housing, each household in cohousing has a complete residence with its own real kitchen. We tell others that we're heavily involved in planning for the place where we will be living so that it meets our needs and desires. We explain that we self-manage and mostly self-maintain our communities. We talk about how we use consensus as a process to make decisions and nurture our sense of community. And we emphasize that those who want a lot of privacy can have it in cohousing. Those of us who already live in cohousing communities will tell you, however, that these explanations don't hold a candle to the impact of showing friends, relatives and other visitors around our communities. And folks who have visited a friend living in cohousing (especially if they've shared in a common meal) or those who have attended one of the day-long cohousing tours that visit between five and seven communities, universally come away with a good sense of how things really are where we live.

Tours often attract likely buyers

As the tours coordinator for the Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US) for several years, I planned and led or co-led over a dozen cohousing tours in California, Colorado, the Seattle Area and Massachusetts. Most people who participate in these tours are folks who are curious about living in cohousing communities and want to learn more about them. The tours also usually attract a few people who are already members of a forming group or a community being developed, a couple of professionals (developers, planners, builders or architects) who are considering working with a cohousing group, plus a graduate student or two. Some of the participants who are considering living in cohousing are looking far ahead because they don't expect to afford to become homeowners in the near future. Many others, however, say they've been looking for something "just like this" for years, and several report that they would be willing to sell their current residence and move into cohousing "right away" if a unit of the right size and price were to become available in one of the communities on the tour.



[New homes available in Summer 2018](#)



[Village Hearth: LGBTs, Straight Friends & Allies in Durham, NC](#)

## Events



[Study Group 1 Aging Successfully Online Training](#)

## Professional



[Cohousing Architect Internship Available](#)

## 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!

## Cohousing Professionals

[Caddis Architecture](#)

[CoHousing Solutions | Sustainable Neighborhood Consultants](#)

[Fitch Architecture & Community Design | Home - Community - Planet](#)

[Linda Herman Consulting](#)

[Mary Kraus, Architect](#)

Joani Blank has lived in cohousing since 1992, has visited over 70 of our built communities, and has led or co-led ten Coho/US-sponsored cohousing tours in California and eight elsewhere in the US. She was formerly the Association's national tours coordinator. Born: July 4, 1937 - Died: August 6, 2016, Oakland, CA

## Ten Tips for Success in Building a Cohousing Community

by Marty Maskall of Fair Oaks EcoHousing  
December 19, 2016

1. Join if you can! It's much easier to join an existing community than to start a new one.
2. Appreciate the efforts of others who start a community - they need our support.
3. Get good help. We hired Chuck Durrett of McCamant & Durrett Architects and Katie McCamant of CoHousing Solutions, and that has made a world of difference.
4. Learn all you can. Go to every Cohousing Conference. Buy the Cohousing books. Go to events & ask questions. Get leadership training.
5. Sell your vision to get others on board.
6. Get land as soon as possible. Until you get land, nothing is real.
7. Avoid rezones. Rezones are difficult and contentious.
8. NIMBY (not in my backyard) abounds. Recognize that virtually everyone opposes development in their neighborhood. Most are NIMBY neighbors, many are BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything).
9. Persist & avoid getting discouraged. Obstacles are everywhere. Nothing takes the place of persistence.
10. Protect your health. Strive for balance, eat well, have fun, and get enough sleep.

Marty Maskall

is a web designer, author, and publisher. She has published two books of inspiring quotations: *The Attitude Treasury: 101 Inspiring Quotations*, and *The Athena Treasury: 101 Inspiring Quotations by Women*.

## What does "open" mean?

Sharon Villines on February 7, 2016

When lying awake last night reflecting on various decisions made in cohousing and in my neighborhood community, I explored some questions about what is open and transparent in a world where everyone belongs to several organizations and tries to involve and represent a larger community. What is required to truly inform and solicit information about the needs, desires, or preferences of "the community." How does a group know when it is being inclusive and transparent? And accountable?

## OPEN MEETINGS

"The meeting was open to everyone" is a common standard. But when the meeting was announced once on a neighborhood email list, scheduled on a week night at a time when single parents can't attend, some people are not home from work yet, and people also have other meetings is it an open meeting? Or the meeting is held the first Thursday of the month but no agenda announced? Or anyone can attend, call us.

Then the agenda, if published at all, says, "Spring planting." 10 people of the 14,000 that the landscape affects, show up and decide to plant Giant Sycamore trees in the middle of Cozy Lane to resolve water drainage problems. Cozy Lane is lined with small historic one-story bungalows. The Giant Sycamores replace traditional rose bushes because they will absorb more water and provide more shade. They can grow to 90 feet tall. A one story house is closer to 20 feet.

The group, having put much work into researching the water problem and the requirements of Giant Sycamores, moves forward. As representatives of the community, they spend many hours obtaining various permits from the city and funds from foundations. This takes months during which there are no other notices to the community.

Is that an open process? Is it wise? Does it invite people to get involved in local governance? Or contribute to building a stronger community? Or to understand and respect the group's process and decisions?

Another example: everyone in a cohousing community, resident managed, wakes up on Monday morning to find the laundry closed down for two weeks

McCamant & Durrett Architects: The Cohousing Co

schemata workshop | architecture & planning

## In the News

**In Iowa City, a co-housing movement blends living large with living small**



*Christine Hawes, Inside the Bubble: Progressive Views from Iowa City*

For Del Holland, who looks forward to moving in at Prairie Hill later this year, co-housing is nothing short of the most sensible decision he could make, personally and ethically. He describes co-housing as "living large while living small," because it enables everyone in the community to have more resources through sharing. To read more, [click here](#)

**New community caters to cohousing lifestyle**



*Steve Sinovic / Journal Staff  
Writer Albuquerque Journal*

For people who despair of living in a neighborhood where you drive into your garage, retreat into your backyard and generally don't know who your neighbors are, a housing project in its early stages in the Vecinos del Bosque area offers a different way to live....Metodi, who grew up in a cohousing development in her native Austria, said the idea is for people to know, interact and look out for their neighbors in a way not typically found anymore in many residential neighborhoods. To read more, [click here](#)

**CohoUS Strategic  
Partner news:**



with no announcement. When the people are dependent on the laundry say, "What?", they are told that they all consented to the decision to replace the floor 6 months ago. They had to know it was going happen sometime. When a neighborhood street is closed for repairs. Residents wake up to find they can't get out of their driveways. The city says the signs were put up the day before. Does everyone go out everyday to see if there are any signs on the trees? Do they come home earlier enough at night to notice that there are signs? Does this build confidence in the department of transportation? Does it convey the message that the city cares about its residents?

### WAYS TO COMMUNICATE

With all the means of communication - digital, print, telephonic, in person - communications seems to be getting worse, not better. People often chose one media and pay little attention to others. Face to Face (F2F) is becoming almost impossible for inclusiveness, but some still believe it is the only way. "The real way". Have a meeting and those who come, decide. Those who do the work decide. If you want to decide, all you have to do is come to the meeting.

Many people commute to work across town, or even in the next town. They belong to 1-2 organizations and work on projects for the common good. Does that mean they have no say in a decision by another organization that directly involves them on a daily basis?

In cohousing there is a tension between those who want to communicate by bulletin board and those who haven't looked at a bulletin board since email lists became almost universal. Yes, email does give advantage to those who write easily. But F2F and bulletin boards give advantage to extroverts who like the "being there together" and thinking in groups - and those who work at home. Extroverts like gathering around or bumping into each other in front of all the notices and sign up lists. Others come home from work late and tired and want to be able to do things online from where ever they are during the day. Or check a forum or a website.

Meetings alone are not, and perhaps never have been, the best and certainly not the only way to communicate with people. Not everyone is on the neighborhood email list, but hundreds out of 14,000 will be. Everyone may be on a much smaller community email list, but not all will read. But they have an easy opportunity, and can go back and read a message they missed. That is more inclusive than 8-10 in a room together and whose conversations can't be heard. Conversations give an indication of direction and reasoning that may never get into the minutes.

### EVIDENCE OF REPRESENTATION

In my neighborhood, creating a dog park required more tangible evidence of support than a decision to bulldoze a stand of beautiful cherry trees in a small neighborhood park.

In my cohousing everyone is on the main email list, or if they aren't have a partner who lets them know what is going on. There are still times when people complain of not being informed, but there is far less exclusion. And far less opportunity for one person or a few people to push their own agenda in the name of the community. Or to be accused of doing so.

There are many online opportunities for F2F now. Zoom allows 30 people to talk together. There are webinars where one or a group of people can give a presentation and others can submit questions and comments real time typing on a chat forum that everyone can see. This allows people to participate from anywhere. In their cars, at work, in the lobby of the daycare center. Will they? Who knows? It is also time limited - it occurs at a set time. With our 24/7, global lives, this is a drawback.

Meetings as the only forum for input and decisions is not inclusive and not as open as possible. There are more flexible and accessible means of informing and participating.

Another bias of meetings is that they favor people with common views who like to work together. Those who disagree are seen as causing dissension and are not really welcome.

Research on groups has found that people who agree with each other like working together, but those who represent diverse points of view make better decisions. One problem with meetings is that they usually confuse the two. Those who like working together (operations) also make the decisions (setting policy or requirements). This means the only options are those the people who like working together believe are viable and to be necessary. When a harmonious group prepares all the material and presents all the options diversity is weeded out before a decision even confronts the group.

### CONCLUSIONS?



**The Fellowship for Intentional Community** - Planet Community Project - A Video Series on Regenerative Communities! Discover intentional communities throughout North America which exemplify values of cooperation, sustainability, and social justice. For more info, [click here](#).

### The Cohousing Directory

[Ankeny Row](#) in Portland, Oregon

[Heights Cohousing](#) in Cleveland, Ohio

[Skagit Cohousing Anacortes](#) in Anacortes, Washington

[Edit your Community Profile here..](#)

### Join Our Mailing List

1. Use an effective means of communicating that is accessible to everyone. Diversity is important to making the best decision possible given all the circumstances. People's varied interests are part of the circumstances.
2. Separate policy decisions, those that organize the community in the future, and operations decisions that organize the day-to-day community living. Everyone can be included in policy decisions so diverse perspectives and knowledge inform decisions. People who like working together are able to do so and are free to make the day-to-day decisions.