



Cohousing in Corvallis

An E Newsletter from CoHo Cohousing
Corvallis, Oregon

Issue 26 September 2006



Remember when your best friend lived right next door?

MAJOR Project Update



CoHo's construction loan will be closed this week!!!!
Construction starts this month.



CoHo members and south Corvallis neighbors met on Thursday, September 14th with [Fortis Construction](#) staff who will be overseeing our project. Greg, Matt and Mark (far right in photo) joined us to share news about our project, give a preview of construction activities, and brainstorm ways to keep communication open.



[Four homes](#) are currently available—one 3-bedroom flat, two 2-bedroom flats, and one 1-bedroom townhouse with a loft. As part of CoHo's collaborative efforts to create affordable housing with assistance from the city, county, and our developer, CoHo is seeking income-eligible buyers. To qualify for one of two types of loan packages developed especially for CoHo, your income must be at or under 80% of the median income of Benton County. For one of the loans, you must be a first-time home buyer. There are additional specific criteria regarding assets and your ability to qualify for a loan. Down payment assistance ranges from \$7,500 to \$70,000.

If you think you might qualify for the income-eligible units, contact Brigetta at Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services at 541-752-7220 to determine your eligibility. This would be an important first step if you have a serious interest in CoHo membership.

CoHoots Converge on Consensus

CoHo members recently completed a one-day training session on [consensus](#) with [Tree Bressen](#), a Eugene consultant who has worked with CoHo over the last several years.



All members are required to complete consensus training (and non-violent communication training) so we share a common set of decision-making practices and skills. We are also experimenting with [sociocracy](#), a consent-based system, to create our own unique combination of strategies.

CoHo Family Picnics



A visit from one of our out-of-town families was the catalyst for a CoHo family picnic at Willamette Park on Labor Day.

Jessica visited CoHo last January and Jeremy came in February. In September, we got to reunite with them and meet their daughters, Shoshana and Rachel, in person.



CoHoots enjoyed croquet, volleyball, bubbles, corn-on-the-cob, making new friends, singing happy birthday, home-made ice cream and sorbet, games...



and the teamwork of rescuing a toy from the roof (a stick, a bit of string, a box plus CoHo ingenuity-- a resourceful combination)



After the picnic, folks gathered on the land for a blessing ceremony. Corn and bird seed were scattered. We're ready and so is the land!!



In August, CoHoots had a picnic in Central Park with Rob, Jen, (at left in left photo) and Skya (on right in right photo), who were visiting for a day from New Mexico. Although the weather was a little cool, they received a warm welcome from their future neighbors.

Sustainability—Here and Now

CoHoots who saw the film, [An Inconvenient Truth](#), met twice to share their reactions to the film plus sustainable practices and projects they'd like to pursue. One couple implemented a first step immediately by adjusting their thermostat as soon as they got home from the movie.

There is a growing momentum in CoHo in recent weeks to move ahead on many projects NOW and not wait until we are living next door to each other. These discussions were the impetus for some individual and collective action now in the area of [sustainability](#). Three spin-offs emerged.

A sustainability study group open to the public using the Northwest Earth Institute materials on sustainability (contact Mardi at kate@mardiweb.com for info)

A sustainability section on our website to store and share info and resources we discover, like "green" cleaning materials (contact Mardi at kate@mardiweb.com for info)

A drop-in sustainability support group open to the public (for info, contact Susan at susanhyne@msn.com) At SIMBY (Start in My Back Yard), folks are invited to share their individual and collective sustainability projects and interests and to offer support, ideas, and cheers to each other. Noticeably absent will be shaming, blaming, shoulding, or patrolling by the "green police." The goal is to help everyone build the momentum for sustainable changes in their lives in an atmosphere of enthusiasm, creativity, and optimism. Folks are encouraged to loco mote to the session by carpooling, biking, or walking.

"What Would My CoHo Neighbors Say???"



An out-of-town member shared an experience that made her reflect on life in CoHo.

She decided to lessen the environmental impact of a meeting at her office by hiring a catering company that used organic foods, and selecting recycled and compostable dishes and utensils. Though her co-workers enjoyed the food, most did not readily embrace the sustainability message. Instead, amongst scattered giggles, they expressed amazement at her willingness to take dirty dishes home to

compost. Because such episodes helped spread the word about sustainability, she smiled and accepted her role as the office "eco eccentric."

Then came the "aha!" A thought flashed across her mind—"I bet people at CoHo would not laugh if they saw someone doing this!" She wrote "I appreciate how with CoHo people, you don't have to explain the basic concept of caring about the environment. I have a feeling that after I move in I will no longer be considered an eccentric just for composting food-stained paper plates! CoHo seems to share a basic level of understanding that is already making the community an ecovillage before move-in."

She closed with a green farewell... "kudos to CoHo from a garbage-stained future neighbor."

Food Fun

A spirited discussion (unaided by liquid spirits!) of future CoHo food projects (community meals, gardening, bulk buying, u-picking, community supported agriculture, etc.) led folks to consider steps we could take NOW to explore food options (another example of the emerging "now mentality" in CoHo).

For example, at CoHo potlucks, folks will be asked to give feedback on the various foods prepared by members. Recipes will be gathered for future use so we will have a growing database of vegetarian delights that bring smiles to diners and cooks alike. Cooks can use these recipes to prepare crowd pleasers that have already been awarded the "CoHo seal of approval" (especially helpful to folks who are a bit timid about cooking for a crowd). And diners will know what different dishes taste like. Having recipes in advance will also give CoHoots an opportunity to tweak recipes for special foods needs (such as low salt, dairy-free, wheat-free, etc.).



Blackberries are on [Caleb's](#) list of favorite foods.

October 14th Potluck

Join us for a vegetarian potluck feast on Saturday, October 14th at 6:00pm. Please RSVP to get a food category and directions to the potluck site. Bringing your own plates, glasses, and utensils would save on clean-up. Local and out-of-town visitors of all ages are welcome.



Four Homes Available in CoHo

Check out our website for more details on homes available. Contact our developer, Corvallis Neighborhood Housing Services, at 541-752-7220 for information on eligibility requirements for [special loan packages](#).

To find out more about CoHo Cohousing

Website: <http://www.cohousing-covallis.com/index.shtml>

Email: cohocontact@cohousing-covallis.com

Phone: [Juva DuBoise @ 541-908-5882](tel:541-908-5882)

[Susan Hyne @ 541-753-4453](tel:541-753-4453)

Susan and Shoshana playing one-legged catch at the picnic



Juva and Xochil celebrating at the blessing of the land



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