



Cohousing in Corvallis

An E Newsletter from CoHo Cohousing
Corvallis, Oregon

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Remember when your best friend lived right next door?

Wellness Retreat Highlights CoHo Transitions

Wellness Retreats held twice a year are a wonderful time for reflection, bonding, and reaffirmation of our shared dreams. This retreat's "transition" theme focused CoHoots on the upcoming changes in our individual and collective lives. Six out-of-town members were able to join in the festivities and give their long-distance CoHo dreams a boost.



To start off the day, folks chatted in pairs, then introduced each other and shared what they were planning to leave behind and what they hoped to gain by living in CoHo.

Surplus possessions, time-consuming routines, and anonymous neighbors were frequently cited on the "let go" list. Gains included an "organic" free-flowing

social life, easier access to friends and neighbors, wisdom of the group, mutual support, playmates outside our front doors, and freedom from cooking every night.

CoHoots explored the transition theme further in small groups, focusing again on what we are letting go of and what we are gaining. Some of the less tangible losses and gains were shared.

To extend the metaphor, Steve gave juggling lessons so we could begin to experience the flow of letting go and then holding on again. "Dropping the ball" during the busy times ahead is a certainty, but we are all getting better at managing multiple priorities.



We're delighted to see that our Project Manager, Bruce (in photo at right), can juggle multiple items at the same time!



(Photo above: Renee tapped the wisdom of the group to get help in shedding her coat while snuggling her sleeping daughter.)



Dennis shared tools for managing our time and our to-do lists so we'll be able to successfully keep the right balls in the air at the right times. To practice prioritizing, small groups took the P&P Committee's current to-do list and placed items in a quadrant with two intersecting variables—urgency and importance. Keeping our focus in the "Important But Not Urgent" quadrant will enable us to effectively accomplish all our tasks and make decisions about where to expend our time and energy so we stay on track.

On a personal level, folks were asked to consider a list of to-do items most CoHoots will face in the next year and see how useful it would be to apply the Pareto Principle (80% of results come from 20% of efforts). CoHoots strategized about the tasks that would net them the greatest return on their time, like selling their home, finding a new job, downsizing, getting a mortgage, collecting packing boxes, AND taking time to have fun.



Continuing our tradition of hearing a community member's story at each retreat, Mike shared tales of his past and present, and hopes for the future. Mike, CoHo's current President, is in a wheelchair and receives daily assistance from an ever-changing cadre of

caregivers. Mike plans on having an "open door" policy at CoHo (open the door and holler "hello!") and is looking forward to having CoHoots drop in often. He also shared a harrowing tale of an unexpected exhilarating trip riding in a driverless van down a hilly street in Portland. Through it all, Mike's infectious smile radiates.



At breaks and lunch, folks also looked at samples of cabinets, flooring and countertops. Decisions on upgrades will be coming up soon. There was also time to mingle, visit, take brisk walks in the chilly January air, and just plain hang out. *(In photo below on right, Alex is showing off her flexibility to Brigid, a Friend of CoHo who helped with childcare.)*



Another element in the transition to CoHo is the changes we anticipate because we will really know our next-door neighbors. The privacy/community balance in cohousing is different from conventional neighborhoods

where people do not even know the names of 34 families that live on the block.



The characteristics of autonomy and interdependence were discussed, along with the needs they meet. CoHoots lined up around the room based on self-ratings of the importance of these dimensions and then checked in with folks at different spots on the continuum. Interestingly, people at both ends of the range expressed similar observations about how they might experience community life.

Downsizing was a frequent theme in discussions about the upcoming transition to living as next-door neighbors at CoHo. To help folks get started on the sorting, recycling, and donating, CoHoots were asked to bring excess clothing to swap. The trick was to go home with fewer items than you brought!



After selections were made, the remaining clothes became props for another episode. CoHoots dressed up eager neighbors in memorable outfits and then "introduced" them to the group

where they were cheerfully interrogated. The only down side to having so many "entertainers" in our group is that we'll have to scour the neighborhood to find enough audience members for future CoHo Talent Shows.



After the retreat, out-of-towners took advantage of the long holiday weekend to attend committee meetings, enjoy meals with their future neighbors and even tackle a challenging puzzle together. Note that these puzzlers were so dedicated they couldn't keep their hands off the puzzle long enough to pose for a photo!

Two Homes Available in CoHo

The two remaining homes will be sold to income-eligible buyers (for some of the loan packages, you DON'T have to be a first-time homebuyer). For more info on income and asset criteria for a variety of loan packages, contact Brigetta at Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services (WNHS) at 541-752-7220 or 800-403-0957.



If you are NOT income-eligible, you are still encouraged to start the membership process and join our Waiting List. CoHo could have additional market-rate homes available prior to move-in.

These homes will be sold to folks who have stepped forward, joined our membership queue, completed the steps in 4 to 6 weeks and then joined our Waiting List. While they wait, folks are strongly encouraged to be active in CoHo, join committees and come to meetings, share social time and plan for CoHo's future.

If you'd like to meet CoHoots and explore the possibility of membership, join us for an orientation on Saturday, February 10th at 5:00pm, followed by a Meet & Greet with vegetarian potluck (with an Italian theme) at 6:00pm at 101 NW 23rd St (corner of Monroe and 23rd across from the OSU campus). **Please RSVP to Anne at 541-974-1739.**

To find out more about CoHo Cohousing

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Email: cohocontact@cohoecovillage.org

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Anne and Juva master the art of juggling.

(That yellow "blur" in Anne's photo is a ball in motion!)

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Share this link with someone who may be interested in CoHo!

