



Top 10 Things To Do To Reach your New Neighbors¹

“The People You Want As Your Neighbors ... Are Out There Looking For You!”

How will they find you?

The answer to that question lies in the outreach strategies you craft to help them discover who you are, what your vision is and how you invite them to be part of your cohousing community.

First and foremost ... cohousing is the most wonderful way to live we have designed to date.

Living in cohousing supports our deepest yearnings for connectedness, for contribution, participation, creativity and to know and be known by those around us. It's a lifestyle choice unparalleled in today's housing. Through cohousing we are transforming the very notion of what it means to be a community and a neighbor in a community.

Oh, my.

Who wouldn't want to know about this?

While the community may be organized as a condominium, Homeowner's Association or a Co-op we have some things they don't have: Vision, Mission and Values statements. We see each other every day, we work toward a common interest of having the community thrive. Community-wide common dinners, or regularly “breaking bread” together, offers us a sacred social contract found only intermittently in potlucks or picnics of most typical communities. Or more likely ... not found at all.

How you are being will convey more than “selling.” What excites you about this extraordinary opportunity to create your very own community? What one or two things do you look forward to in cohousing that will make living there the ultimate living experience for you?

¹ This Top List is about “carrying the message.” There are other Top Lists such as working w/ the Media.

People are choosing a lifestyle not just deciding which house to buy.

If you are excited about cohousing, if you are clear on your vision for your community those you talk to will be excited and enrolled in your vision as well.

Now ... how to find these new neighbors ...

1. Way more than half the people who come to cohousing come because someone they know shared their excitement and their vision and brought them into the process. This is the absolute Number One way new members join. Tell EVERYONE you know what you are up to. You don't know who is looking for you!
2. "Saturation marketing" is a key element in getting the word out. People have to see something multiple times before inquiring. More so w/ cohousing which is not easily translatable. Falls Church Cohousing has to be EVERYWHERE. Website, T-shirts, flyers, brochures, ads, articles, alumni news, blogs, Meet Ups (there are a zillion boomer Meet Ups in the DC area), Red Hats, Op-eds, email lists, all electronic media, club news, air waves, announcements at churches, fairs, festivals, civic associations, on bulletin boards, bumper stickers, displays, notes and cards, stickies, bookmarks, book covers, carry bags. You name it. If it has a surface -- digital, virtual or physical -- Falls Church Cohousing should be on it.
3. Attend cohousing events such as regional and national conferences. Get on the various mailing lists for cohousing. Learn as much as you can about the field.
4. Attend events related to cohousing such as events on sustainability, community issues, political events, etc.
5. Organize talks, slide shows, book discussions, orientations specific to Falls Church Cohousing. Offer to speak about cohousing to other groups such as local environmental groups e.g. Sierra Club, Simple Living, church groups, etc.
6. Every situation is an opportunity to tell people about cohousing. "What are you doing these days?" or "How have you been?" are perfect openings for letting others know about this fantastic community lifestyle!
7. A very personal approach. Putting a flyer into a person's hand and establishing even for just a few seconds a personal relationship. "Do you know anyone who would be interested in this new kind of community we're building?" Start a conversation ... find a future neighbor.
8. Develop a Core Message, Elevator Drop Speech -- everyone should be speaking the same message but characterized by your personality and comfort level.

9. Create an Outreach Team that oversees the outreach effort.² However ... in cohousing EVERYONE is responsible for carrying the message about the community.
10. Develop and carry out a strategic media campaign -- this means knowing what media is available and interested in the project.³

² The Outreach Team will take on the “nuts n’ bolts” tasks of Outreach such as tracking “prospects,” placing ads, working w/ the media, etc.

³ Once an Outreach Team is organized we will look at steps for “Cultivating a Relationship with the Media”

