



Senior Cohousing - a great place for Baby Boomers to live mindfully My Observations and Experience Living at Silver Sage Village

By Jim Leach - October 5, 2009

Senior Cohousing is based on the successful cooperative senior housing models in Denmark, and was introduced to the United States by Charles Durrett in his recent book "The Senior Cohousing Handbook. He is an architect who has designed dozens of intergenerational cohousing communities in the country.

Silver Sage Village in Boulder, Colorado is one of the first three Senior Cohousing communities in the US. It was completed in 2007 by Wonderland Hill Development Company with design by Charles Durrett.

Most of us aging Boomers want to have maximum control over our lives, and we want to be smart about getting the most out of life as we age. We want to efficiently live healthy, engaged, and creative lives. We also want to continue to build on relationships, ideas, and places and things that have special meaning to us. At the same time we want to simplify our lives and try and get rid of some of the clutter that distracts us from living a more fulfilled life.

Cohousing is an intentionally cooperative neighborhood where common facilities are creatively shared yet where each household owns their home and has ample privacy and maximum control over their involvement. The close knit design and self management of cohousing communities, where neighbors see each other more often in the coming and going of their daily lives, provides economic, social, health, and security benefits creating real social capital important to seniors. Senior cohousing is really retirement housing for those that don't want to ever retire from living a proactive, meaningful and mindful life.

At Silver Sage we share really good dinners with our neighbors twice a week in our beautiful common house. On a mostly impromptu basis we frequently go to events together, share rides and shop for each other. We share our collective wisdom in everything from gardening and crafts to health and mindful well being. We govern the community ourselves with monthly community meetings and team meetings where we share responsibility for managing and maintaining our community. Individual neighbors also do many things that add value based on their interest and skills things like gardening, arts and crafts, and gourmet cooking for the community. This all makes us a closer connected group of neighbors. The diversity of interests, expertise, and energy makes it easier and more enjoyable to do more of the things that enrich our lives.

Being closer to neighbors generates an enriched life that is especially important to us in later life. This social enrichment promotes a healthier lifestyle as we age together. Being able to walk out your door and see friendly neighbors, and in a few steps to be in the common grounds and the common house all add convenience and a certain social satisfaction and benefit.

"The next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of a community; a community practicing understanding and loving kindness, a community practicing mindful living. This may be the most important thing we can do for the survival of the Earth." - by Thich Nhat Hanh

Web sites for more information on Senior Cohousing: www.whdc.com; www.cohousing.org; www.cohousingpartners.com;