



KEY NOTES

January 2009

Moving forward in 2009

At a recent directors' meeting, GreenSong's project consultant, Ed Starr of SHS Consulting, presented some of his findings after searching out and investigating potential sites for our cohousing development in southern Ontario. The parcels, in Barrie, Brampton, Guelph, King and Orangeville, ranged in size and had varying degrees of zoning and infrastructure in place. For some sites Ed also provided a detailed budget analysis, taking into consideration land and construction costs, and municipal fees and charges, and arriving at possible unit development costs and typical operating costs. After his very informative report, the board asked Ed to pursue our prospects for certain attractive sites, and we look forward to bringing you more news as we move ahead in 2009!

The power of attraction

Since GreenSong's web site was launched in November 2008, expressions of interest have been coming in regularly via email. Cohousing is a hot topic, but there are presently only a few such communities in Canada, and only one in Ontario. We have received letters from people in Toronto, Barrie, London, and Dundas, and even the United States, who have followed cohousing for many years and are delighted that a community is being planned nearby. Green living is of prime importance to these singles and families, whose professions include teaching, writing and health care. We look

forward to having "town hall" meetings in the future when we will present specific details of the chosen site and how you can be part of our cohousing community. In the meantime, we recommend that you familiarize yourself with our web site, especially the Steps to Becoming a Member (www.greensong.ca).

"Success in a community, whether it is small in number or millions in number, depends upon agreement with the spiritual ecology underlying the merits of those who would inhabit it."

Kenneth G. Mills

The efficacy of community

Award-winning broadcast journalist and former anchorman Rolland G. Smith shared these considerations in his December 18 blog at www.rollandsmith.blogspot.com:

One of my favorite trees is the redwood. Magnificent standing monuments to the efficacy of family, of community. These trees are often a thousand years old and grow to 300 feet tall. Yet the root system of a single tree rarely extends below eight feet. Hardly enough strength to keep them from falling.

Community keeps them upright.

Their roots intertwine with other redwoods in a community called a grove. The roots of the grove interconnect to other

groves, and an exponential strength evolves as each tree helps the other stand erect against fire and storm.

Our human species is similar to the redwood. Extended families gather in people groves and, like the redwoods, intertwine life with life, hopes with hopes, wishes with wishes.

Shared experience, empathy, and service to others help create a community.

This time of year we call that community the Christmas Spirit.

A hot topic

Cohousing is making the mainstream media, and here are links to a few of the articles that have recently appeared in the United States.

Nov. 28/08, *The New York Times*, "A Village Down the Block" by Vivian S. Toy: Some New Yorkers never get to know their neighbors. They nod hello, but rarely speak, and they certainly don't break bread with them. Even names may remain a mystery, unless an errant letter finds its way into the wrong mailbox. This is precisely the New York that a group of Brooklyn residents hopes to escape. They plan to do so by pooling their resources to build a project that will be not just an apartment building, but a community that more cynical New Yorkers may consider unachievably utopian. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/30/realestate/30cov.html?_r=2

Dec. 1, *Ode Magazine*, editor's blog posted by Jay Walljasper,

“Inventing a New Kind of Family for a New Era”: Here in the United States, we’ve just celebrated Thanksgiving, which is when families gather together for food and kinship. It’s the one day when American domesticity expands beyond the narrow circle of the nuclear family: mom, dad and the kids. http://www.odemagazine.com/blogs/editors_blog/4020/inventing_a_new_kind_of_family_for_a_new_era

Dec. 2, *The Capital Times*, “Despite Slumping Real Estate Market, Madison’s Newest Cohousing Project Nearly Full” by Mike Ivey: Amid the toughest real estate market in a generation, a group of self-described amateurs has pulled off something of a miracle: selling all but three units in the 40-unit Arboretum Cohousing project. <http://www.madison.com/tct/news/stories/316712>

Dec. 7, *The Boston Globe*, “Building Community” by Megan McKee: The idea started small. Kathy Journeay and a few close friends wanted to buy houses together on a cozy street so they could pool resources, raise their children together, and share their lives. More than seven years later, those same friends are about to realize their dream and move into Sawyer Hill EcoVillage, a 68-unit development in Berlin, MA, that is the largest cohousing project in the country. http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2008/12/07/building_community/

Dec. 15, on ABC Channel 7, “Cohousing Catches On”: Many people here in the Bay Area looking for cozier communities and closer neighbors are fueling a boom in what’s known as cohousing. The idea’s been around since the early 1990s, but has taken a while to catch on. However, now a string of successful developments has paved the way for a new style of living. http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=news/assignment_7&id=6557465

**“Forward!
It is the attention given to
the last steps before the summit
which decides the value of all
that went before.”**

Dag Hammarskjöld

Dec. 23, WNYC, *Brian Lehrer Show*, “Living Together”: Most New Yorkers know their neighbors only as well as thin walls permit. But Alex Marshall, a journalist and senior fellow at the Regional Plan Association, wants to change that with Brooklyn Cohousing LLC. He joins us today to talk about the notion of “cohousing,” a movement that encourages community living without eliminating privacy altogether. <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/bl/episodes/2008/12/23/segments/119309>

Many more may be found listed at <https://www.cohousing.org/cm/news/2008press>.

Cohousing blog

Diana Leaf Christian, the author of *Creating a Life Together* and *Finding Community*, two important intentional community/cohousing books, now has a blog on the web site of the Cohousing Association of the United States. You can read her useful contributions at www.cohousing.org/blog/937.

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