

# KEY NOTES

March 2011



## What's in a name? Part 2

The GreenSong cohousing community has a vision. Besides our abiding interest and commitment to environmental issues (that's the GREEN part of our name), the group has a shared passion in the arts and culture (that's the SONG part of our name). We believe that an appreciation of and active participation in the arts is at the very heart of our growth as individuals. We want to make it part of the living core of our community.

What does that mean? We believe that the arts are a way to share and enjoy living together and to establish meaningful relationships with the broader community around us. It could be learning to play a banjo with your next-door neighbour, or the community members staging a Sunday afternoon choral recital for the local seniors' residence.

There is lots of buzz now about the role of creativity in building vibrant societies. One of the biggest proponents of these theories internationally is Richard Florida, an American transplanted to Toronto, who is the director and professor of business and creativity at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.

Let's look at what Mr. Florida has to say about creativity:

At the center of my research is a core principle: "Every single human being is creative." My

research argues that future economic growth will be driven by human creativity and innovation. The basic logic of our economic prosperity dictates that further economic development will be driven by the further development of human creative capability. I see the greatest challenge of the creative age is to find a way to tap and harness everyone's creative potential.

That is exactly what GreenSong members believe: every single human being is creative.

**"It is the simplicity of Being that reveals the door to open. It is the key of Authenticity that allows it to be opened."**

*Kenneth G. Mills*

## Why choose cohousing?

Homeowners usually buy in a neighbourhood where they like the houses, the schools, or nearby amenities such as parks or shopping. GreenSong members want to build their own community for a different reason — they like one another. At least they expect to.

Some of us have known each other for years, some of us are related, while others we have only met recently. There are already a number of similar communities established across

Canada by people who want a stronger connection with their neighbours than a quick "Hello" as they walk from the car to the front door.

As GreenSong member Ross McLean explains, "Instead of saying 'I like the model house and I like the pool,' you say 'I like the people.'"

Cohousing is sometimes confused with living in a commune. Cohousing is very different; it is like living in a small village with an extended group of friends. In a cohousing community no one pools finances, the houses are individually owned, and homeowners can sell their property any time to whomever they please without the group's permission. The layout encourages social contact but also preserves privacy.

That means you don't have to be a gregarious social extrovert to enjoy living in a cohousing community.

In fact, most people who live in cohousing tend to be introverts. It provides the right mix of privacy (you own your own home) and the availability of community (you can have dinner in the common house or garden with a neighbour, or you can choose not to). It provides a comfortable, well-known community where our neighbours won't be invasive but are happy to see us when we want to wander by to have a chat.

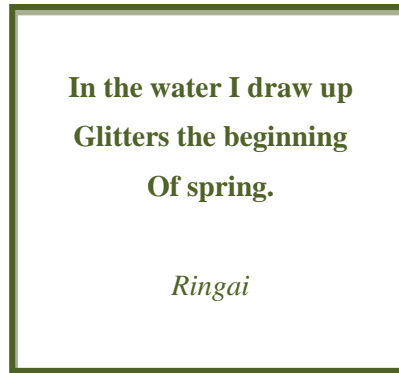
One cohousing community member summed it up best:

In cohousing we'll have the support of our community, the comfort of regular interaction, as well as the ability to close our door and be cocooned in our own cozy little home without worrying we'll be perceived as anti-social or anti-community. Our cohousing community will take us as we are with no judgment - and that's what community should be.

## News update

Now that the Board members have recovered from the hectic holiday season and we are all back after various excursions to warmer climes, GreenSong community members are seriously focused on next steps.

This month our project consultant Ed Starr of SHS Consulting Inc, supported by architect/planner Charles Simon, is leading us through what we are calling a Reality Workshop. By the end of the day, our goal is to have scoped out a plan for moving forward with specific milestones in our journey to finding land and welcoming new community members. So stay tuned!



## Contributors

This newsletter is possible thanks to the work of GreenSong member Peggi Mace.

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