



The Baby Boomers answer to Nursing Homes: Senior Cohousing

We baby-boomers have watched our parents' generation getting old sitting around watching Jeopardy or hundreds of other endless TV shows. We have seen too many of our parents move into nursing homes and assisted living where the losses mobility, sight and memory eventually turn the facilities more into a prison in their later years. If you want to see loneliness, try delivering Meals on Wheels or visit a nursing home. As a whole the baby boomer generation wants something better! Baby boomers can still go out and make things happen.

For the next 17 years the baby-boomers will be turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 a day! There are not enough nursing homes and assisted living facilities being built to handle this influx. Most people will stay at home as long as they are able but many of these people will be without close friends or family. As a generation the baby boomers are very independent and always say "there's got to be a better way".

Social time is big for baby boomers and many are asking "Where is the party?" They would like to do things on their schedule and not prearranged. They like to be active and healthy although, for many of us, our busy work schedules just seem to get in the way. Our time is important to us and many of us have spent years driving and traveling for our jobs. We don't want to waste time in our cars driving to everything like most people in suburbs do. Communities where things are close and convenient are a big plus.

There are many "retirement options" and one to consider is cohousing. It's likely not what you think.

What is Cohousing?

Cohousing is a type of collaborative housing in which residents actively participate in the design and operation of their own neighborhoods. Cohousing residents are consciously committed to living as a community. The physical design encourages both social contact and individual space. Private homes contain all the features of conventional homes, but residents also have access to extensive common facilities such as open space, courtyards, a playground and a common house.



What is Senior Cohousing?

In senior cohousing groups of people 55+ meet together over a few months and decide what they want for their group's vision, mission and values. They pick the location, architect and builder. Then they decide their own rules as a collaborative group where consensus rules. They decide how often they will have common meals and whatever other groups they would like to form. They are all self-governed and provide mutual support.

The cost is less than conventional senior communities.

Because they are not paying for a corporation to run the community and staff, the overhead is far less Assisted Living and Nursing homes. Many senior cohousing communities have only four or fewer part- or full-time employees. Decisions like where do will they live, what amenities do they want, to who will build the community are all up to the group, so to a great extent the group sets up its own cost basis.



Taking Charge of the Rest of Your Life

The biggest advantage is, months before they ever move in they will come to know who they are moving in with and whether the group's values are very similar. People can decide what groups they would like to join. These could include arts, recreation, health, gardening, respect earth or even chess or reading. Senior cohousing has been around for 35 years and there are currently about 180 existing cohousing communities in the US. Most important the future is all in YOUR hands, not set by someone who you have never met.