FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BOOMERS DEMAND A BETTER WAY TO LIVE OUT THEIR LIVES
*Aging Better Together: The Power of Community*

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, February 16, 2016 – There is a quiet grassroots movement, among Boomers, to reject the current options for housing older people – managed-care facilities, retirement homes, nursing homes, and so on. This group, who began turning 60 in 2006, does not want to retire or grow older in the same kind of aging institutions in which they placed their own parents. So it should come as no surprise that Boomers are embracing cohousing as a tool for maintaining their independence, building community, living light on the planet and caring about each other.

In answer to this demand for empowerment and community the Cohousing Association of the US (Coho/US) and SageHill Cohousing Partners have partnered to present the 2016 Aging Better Together (ABT) Conference to be held at the University of Utah Guest House and Conference Center, May 20-21, 2016 in Salt Lake City, Utah. This conference holds the keys to creating a high-functioning Senior-Friendly Cohousing Community. Join us! Meet the change makers, hear their stories and realize that, if they can do it, so can you.

“This conference could not be more timely,” said conference Chair Charles (Chuck) Durrett, principle at McCamant & Durrett Architects/The Cohousing Company, often referred to as the father of cohousing in the U.S. He stresses the importance of honoring the participatory process when building a new cohousing community – a process where future owners become co-developers in their own neighborhood. According to Durrett, “To create a non-institutional solution for independent living, no one is going to do it better than the residents themselves.”

Featured Keynote speakers include, conference Chair Charles Durrett, along with Richard Leider, founder of Inventure – The Power Company and chief curator of AARP’s Life Reimagined, and Ron Pevny, Founder of the Center for Conscious Eldering.

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Conference attendees can choose from over 30 educational/hands-on sessions covering two separate tracks. S Track – “Let’s Get Started” is where you will learn how to get started, meet the people who can help make it happen, and discover best practices from others who have already made the journey. A Track – “Aging In Community” addresses the social side of cohousing and will help you prepare your community to enable older, less mobile members to continue to live in community with you. This track is as important for existing communities as it is for newly forming communities.

**Conference Organizers:**

The Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US)
[www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org)

SageHill Cohousing Partners
[www.sagehillcohousing.com](http://www.sagehillcohousing.com)

**Conference Sponsors:**

*Our Catalyst sponsors:*
Caddis PC, McCamant & Durrett Architects/The Cohousing Company, Schemata Workshop, Urban Development & Partners

*Our Supporting Sponsors:*
CoHousing Solutions, The Fellowship for Intentional Community, Kraus Fitch Architects, National Cooperative Bank

*Our Community Sponsors:*
Village Hearth Cohousing, Wasatch Commons Cohousing

**Event Details:**

**Cost:**
- Early: $350 (2/1 - 4/1)
- Regular: $390 (4/2 - 5/19)
- Student: $220

**Where:**
The University Guest House & Conference Center
110 South Fort Douglas Blvd.
Salt Lake City, UT 84113

**When:**
May 20-21, 2016

For more information and to register visit [www.cohousing.org/2016aging](http://www.cohousing.org/2016aging)
Join the conversation on [Facebook](http://Facebook) and [Twitter](http://Twitter)
Cohousing is uniquely positioned to address the senior housing crisis growing in the U.S. Those seniors now living in cohousing were fortunate to move into a state-of-the-art community. But otherwise, too many seniors are living in single-family houses where they raised their family, but which are not fit for a successful aging scenario, nor for a sustainable future. Too many seniors are left with no other alternative than assisted living. A recent national study contends that 40% of the seniors in assisted care today are prematurely institutionalized. That’s what happens when you don’t live in a supportive community — you have to be close to services in case you need someone.

**What is Cohousing?**

- A community where neighbors share conversations, meals and milestones;
- A fun, safe, and healthy environment where you live more lightly on the planet;
- A home where you enjoy privacy, within a life enhancing neighborhood.

Cohousing communities are intentional, collaborative neighborhoods that combine extensive common facilities with private homes to create strong and successful housing developments. Most of these communities are organized as townhouse or condominium developments with a homeowners association; a few are organized as cooperatives. Cohousing is a descriptive term that shows the intent of these developments to cultivate a strong sense of community through extensive common facilities and active collaboration of the residents.

Cohousing communities are part of the new cooperative economy and are predicted to expand rapidly in the next few decades as individuals and families seek to live more sustainably, and in community with neighbors. Since the first cohousing community was completed in the U.S. – Muir Commons in Davis, California, now celebrating 25 years – more than 160 communities have been established, with more than a hundred in process. Most cohousing communities are intergenerational with both children and elders; in recent years, senior cohousing focused on older adult needs have grown. Small and large, urban and rural, newly built and retrofits, these communities have consistently been at the forefront of environmental and socially sustainable neighborhoods.

Cohousing was pioneered in Denmark, and has caught on in Europe, where somewhere between 1 and 8 percent of Danes live in a form of cohousing. In the U.S., that figure is less than one hundredth of one percent of total housing units, but is slowly gaining momentum.

Visit the [Cohousing Directory](https://www.cohousingdirectory.com) for a list of communities.

**Aging in Cohousing – Why is this a Good Choice?**

- Cohousing provides a sense of belonging – of caring and being cared about – which is life enhancing, for seniors in particular, since our culture tends to marginalize aging adults.

- Cohousing provides a sense of purpose and meaning in collaboratively managing a community. While continuing care retirement communities can be a good choice for some, others resist following rules and being managed. Seniors who have raised families, achieved

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successful careers, and been involved in civic affairs may want to continue to take charge of their remaining years with the highest quality of life possible.

- Cohousing allows seniors to attend to their emotional well-being, especially when their children have moved away, their partners have passed on, and friends have died.
- Cohousing allows seniors not to be a burden to their children, especially in today’s world where family members may live far away, and there are fewer children to share caring.
- Cohousing can provide economic advantages over other retirement care. Smaller, more energy-efficient, well-designed homes translate to lower cost of living expenses. So does sharing resources. A strong social environment may contribute to better health and lower medical costs. And cooperatively hiring outside caregivers may be far more cost efficient.
- Cohousing allows seniors to help create their own community to meet their own needs, with other generations who appreciate their circumstances, or in senior cohousing, to live with others who share a common bond of age and experience.
- Cohousing provides a vastly more sustainable model than many current options for retirement living, which often are socially inadequate, not health supporting, and a financial drain.
- Cohousing provides an excellent choice for seniors to house themselves with dignity, independence, safety, mutual concern – and fun!

Why are People Choosing Cohousing?

Interest in cohousing has surged in recent years, a trend driven by baby boomers seeking a downsized, community-oriented and environmentally-friendly lifestyle. Cohousing is also gaining traction among millennials as they search for a better way to raise their children.

- **Community** - As social scientists confirm, we’re happier, healthier, longer living people with daily social interactions and connections. A recent UCLA study suggests that loneliness is a health hazard. “A wonderful aspect of cohousing is that you can enjoy your privacy and individuality, but you can simply walk outside to enjoy the connections all around you” explains Peter Lazar, a member of Shadowlake Village Cohousing in Blacksburg, Virginia. “It’s nice not feeling like another face behind a door backing out of the carport, but a person who’s relied upon, and who can rely upon others nearby when necessary,” shares Carolyn Kroll, a member of Durham Cohousing in North Carolina.

- **Sustainable** - Cohousing allows residents to pool efforts and resources for occasional shared meals and child and elder care. Shared gardens, and environmentally-friendly structures contribute to lower carbon footprints. “The intention is for communities to come together and share resources rather than pulling into your garage and closing the doors and never knowing your neighbors,” says Shawn Mulligan, who lives at Stone Curves in Tucson, a community that recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. Sharon Cluster-Boggess, a member of Jubilee Cohousing shares, "I really do believe the ability to work together in a community is what is going to save the planet."

- **Life Enhancing** - Cohousing offers a feeling of security, both physical and financially. Common values usually encompass living a healthy lifestyle, respect for the environment, lifelong learning, personal growth and positive contributions to society. Steve Chiasson, a member of Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage in Maine, said the experience of helping create
the community he lives in, the responsibility of shaping it going forward in the company of thoughtful, values-driven neighbors "helps me feel more relevant and engaged," he said. "And we all know that staying active, physically and mentally, keeps us healthier as we age."

Cohousing a Successful Model

Research conducted by Coho/US in 2011 confirms that cohousing is good for children, parents, singles, seniors, the neighborhoods around them, and the environment. Cohousing as a model has been highly success in terms of member happiness and life satisfaction, and reduced energy use and resource conservation. This success has given rise to some interesting spin-offs in affordable and supportive housing projects for veterans, special need groups, and others, that physically look and act like cohousing – evidence that others have learned and benefited from the pioneering work of cohousing.

The loss of neighborliness and social connection over past decades and the resulting negative psychological and physical health impacts have been extensively profiled in recent years. Cohousing communities are an innovative and sustainable response to today’s challenge of social connection.

Conference Organizers

The Cohousing Association of the United States (Coho/US)
130 Hunt Street #405
Durham, NC 27701
(812) 618-2646

The Cohousing Association of the United States advances cohousing by assisting communities through a robust network of resources and access to technical assistance; and educating the public about the benefits of cohousing, from resource conservation and sustainability to resilient communities and healthy families. www.cohousing.org

SageHill Cohousing Partners
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385-236-3356

SageHill Cohousing Partners (est. 2013), Utah’s first professional cohousing firm, is committed to building a new model for aging in Utah – vibrant sustainable places to live out our lives among friends, with purpose, and in complete control. www.sagehillcohousing.com