



The theme this month is a common one for cohousing communities: consensus. What is it, and why is it important?



How is life for KIDS in cohousing? We share tidbits we learned from visiting established communities and asking the little ones themselves!



Meet Flagstaff Cohousing member Ted Garland! He tells us all about why he's interested in cohousing, illuminating some of its benefits.

July 2018

No. 5

Flagstaff COHOUSING

CONSENSUS - WHAT'S THAT?

WE'VE BEGUN TO WORK ON CONSENSUS-BASED DECISION MAKING.

Our Members and Explorers met with Dr. Chris Gunn on June 18th for an introduction to consensus-based decision making. Like many cohousing communities, our Flagstaff group plans to make major community decisions using a consensus-based process.

It was illuminating to consider the many things that consensus is NOT -- and then to discuss the REALITY of consensus decisions. So, what is consensus?



- A decision-making process in which an agreement is made by all members of a group, rather than by a majority or a select group of representatives. Essential elements include:
 - a degree of trust among members,
 - a common purpose,
 - time to understand the issues completely
 - a belief that each person has the right to be heard, and
 - attention to the process used for arriving at decisions.
- A consensus decision represents a reasonable decision that all members of the group can accept, though it might not be the optimal decision for every individual every time.

As Flagstaff Cohousing moves forward, all of our members will receive training on consensus-based decision making. This type of group process will take time and experience to learn, but we anticipate that it will result in a stronger community in which we demonstrate respect for every individual. We welcome individuals and families who share our goal.

CHILDREN IN COHOUSING

FIRSTHAND INSIGHTS FROM CHILDREN AND PARENTS LIVING IN ESTABLISHED COHOUSING COMMUNITIES



As we visit established cohousing communities, we often ask children and adults, “What do you like the most about living in cohousing?” Their replies have told us a lot about the difference between cohousing and most neighborhoods. One 12-year-old said, “It’s super-easy to hang out with my friends. I don’t have to call anybody -- I just walk down and knock on their

door.” This young man was chatting while shooting hoops and being coached by a dad whose son was away at college. The dad said he had moved into cohousing with his son when he became a single parent. His concern was finding a safe, connected neighborhood, and found that when they moved into cohousing 8 years ago. He’s staying in the community because he loves the neighborhood, feels good about his neighbors, and he gets to connect with kids who’ve become extended family.

Two young parents at a new cohousing

development in Colorado were wheeling their 5-month-old in her stroller. They told us, “We loved living in community in grad school, and we knew that’s how we wanted to raise our daughter. So we looked for a cohousing community and moved in two months before she was born. It’s been great -- and our neighbors help us with child care, too.”



Upcoming GATHERINGS

We’ve met a lot of interesting new people at our recent gatherings! We hope you can join us in July or August at one of our upcoming get-togethers.

*Global beverages at Nomads Global Lounge, 19 W. Phoenix Ave., on **Wednesday, July 18th at 6 p.m.***

*Coffee and Conversation, Campus Coffee Bean, 1800 S. Milton #24, on **Sunday, August 5th at 2 p.m.***

*Margaritas at MartAnne’s Burrito Palace, 112 Route 66, on **Wednesday, August 22nd at 6 p.m.***

Each time we meet, we share our vision of the Flagstaff Cohousing community and answer questions -- please join us!

A SLIDE SHOW

They say one picture is worth a thousand words. Here’s a link to a slide show that offers photos of many elements of cohousing. The format isn’t great, but the photos are worth a visit.

CHECK IT OUT!

AN INTERVIEW

In this video, parents and kids talk about what they like about living in cohousing. It’s exciting to hear kids say in their own words why THEY like living in a connected, caring community.

WATCH IT HERE!

SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS:

TED GARLAND, COMMUNITY ADVOCATE, TELLS US WHY HE'S INTERESTED IN COHOUSING.



My name is Ted Garland. I am 44 years old. I was born with Cerebral Palsy. Flagstaff has been extremely good to me. My entire education was in Flagstaff. I was in the first class of the Early Intervention Program at the Institute for Human Development where I'm currently employed.

This is not my first experience with a group living situation. I grew up at a small seasonal resort called Garland's Lodge in Oak Creek Canyon. That experience exposed me to many people from varied demographics (Hispanics, LGBTQ, etc). It gave me a good education and helped me in my journey to Independent Living later on.

I became very interested in Cohousing because I discovered that I needed a long-term situation for when my parents are deceased. Flagstaff unfortunately does not offer an abundance of different housing options for people with

disabilities. I wanted to be happy and live in an inclusive setting where people support one another. I wanted to find a housing model where I felt more connected with my neighbors.

I am a person who loves to be active in the community. I served on the City of Flagstaff Disability Awareness Commission because I wanted to give back to the community that helped me so much during my educational career. I am also an AmeriCorps alumnus. Community service comes naturally to me, and the concept of community is in my blood.

There are three reasons why I want to live in Cohousing:

- I. I want the freedom to live in the least restrictive environment possible.
- II. Being part of the Cohousing community allows me to use my Toastmaster skill set in public speaking and leadership. I know consensus is a hard skill to learn. Living at Garland's Lodge taught me that no matter how hard we try, we cannot please everyone in the community. While disagreements and conflict are inevitable, I hope that through Consensus Training and learning to use Compassionate Communication skills, we can learn to disagree respectfully, and in the end, make peace and empathize with people.
- III. All of us need some degree of physical and emotional support in our lives. Social interaction is healthy and human connection is healthy. I have noticed that I'm much happier when I integrate into and am active in the community.

If you'd like to meet Ted and our other members, we hope you'll join us at one of our upcoming gatherings, or learn more about all of us at <https://flagstaffcohousing.org/about-us>.