

Introduction

In *Creating a Life Together*, Diana Leafe Christian estimates that 90 percent of attempts to start an intentional community do not survive past the initial stages.

Similarly, many personal searches for intentional community fizzle out due to lack of adequate information, guidance, or exposure to fellow travelers' stories.

In both cases, ignorance of the wide array of options possible, and of the breadth of resources and support available through the Fellowship for Intentional Community and allied groups, undoubtedly contributes to the "failure" rate.

This volume on "Starting a Community" and the next volume in this series, on "Finding a Community," address the need for one-stop collections of stories to help founders and seekers. They are meant to complement the *Communities Directory* (available in print and online: ic.org/directory), *COMMUNITIES* magazine, a quarterly publication focused on Life in Cooperative Culture, and educational resources available through Community Bookstore (ic.org/bookstore).

These books should broaden anyone's outlook on what is possible and how to pursue their dreams of community. Within each section we hear from a range of voices spanning a great diversity of perspectives and experiences. In this volume, following more general "overview" articles, we dive into on-the-ground stories from founders, arranged roughly chronologically, followed by a separate roughly chronological flow about experiences of community that don't fit the classic intentional community definition but are nonetheless powerful for their creators and participants.

Most articles are drawn from the past decade of *COMMUNITIES* magazine, with several excerpted from the *Communities Directory* and a few from older issues of *COMMUNITIES* that were also excerpted in our *Best of* collections, Volumes I and II. Every issue of *COMMUNITIES* contains further treatments of these same themes, so we hope that you'll not only learn from these past stories, but also keep up with new ones by subscribing to the magazine (ic.org/subscribe).

Thanks for making use of these resources, and good luck on your community journey!

Chris Roth
Editor, *COMMUNITIES*
March 2018

STARTING A COMMUNITY

(Wisdom of Communities, Volume 1)

CONTENTS

Introduction 1

I. INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY ESSENTIALS

Six Ingredients for Forming Communities (That Help Reduce Conflict Down the Road) 5

Directory 2000, 76–83 Diana Leafe Christian

Among other things, forming communities need enough time, money, and “community glue” to pull off their project successfully.

Tracking the Communities Movement: 70 Years of History and the Modern FIC 13

Communities 176, 15–19 Sky Blue and Betsy Morris

For decades the Fellowship for Intentional Community has been an essential resource for documentation, support, and networking. Here are some definitions, community types, and organizing principles.

Happy, Healthy, Functional, Fit: What Works Best in Present-Day Intentional Communities ... 19

Communities 176, 42–46 Zach Rubin, Ma’ikwe Ludwig, and Don Willis

In a survey of nearly 300 contemporary communities, increased egalitarian practice, stronger commitment mechanisms, and outside assistance in conflict resolution all correlate with greater group cohesion and effectiveness.

A Useful Tool for Founders and Seekers: Spectrums 24

Communities 170, 10–11 Ma’ikwe Ludwig

Whether starting a community or looking for one to join, identifying your priorities, your approaches to life, and your ranges of tolerance can be essential to successful community living.

Common Fire’s Top Ten Hard-Earned Tips for Community Success 26

Communities 170, 38–43 Jeff Golden

The sometimes triumphant, sometimes traumatic experiences of the three Common Fire communities yield wisdom relevant to anyone working to create a community.

Community Essentials 33

Communities 170, 44, 76 Arty Kopecky

Five crucial ingredients make community work; the lack of any one of them can cause it to falter.

Learning from Our Past 35

Communities 176, 20–21 Bill Metcalf

Forty-five years of researching, writing and teaching about, and living within intentional communities yield personal lessons with global implications.

Life Lessons for Community Longevity 37

Communities 176, 33–38 Graham Ellis

The founder of Bellyacres Artistic Ecovillage proffers advice inspired by the nearly three decades he was immersed in the experiment.

My Advice to Others Planning to Start an Ecovillage, Revisited 43

Communities 176, 40–41 Lois Arkin

Nearly two-and-a-half decades of urban community experience yield 10 key ecovillage founding guidelines, thrice refined.

Establishing a Community: Perspectives from the FEC	45
<i>Communities</i> 168, 80, 78–79	Matthew Cullen
These key lessons from others’ experience can make starting a new community easier.	
Legal Structures for Intentional Communities in the US	48
<i>Communities</i> 173, 46–55	Diana Leafe Christian, Dave Henson, Allen Butcher, and Albert Bates
Among the decisions every group needs to make as it relates to the wider public is how to define itself in legal terms.	
Buying Your Community Property	59
<i>Directory</i> 1995, 150–154	Frances Forster and Byron Sandford
Important criteria in evaluating property for intentional community development include these how-tos and how-comes of financing, insurance, and legal considerations.	
Exit Dynamics in Community	64
<i>Communities</i> 170, 80, 79	Laird Schaub
People don’t just start or join communities—they also leave, or at least announce that they intend to leave. Groups can handle this process more successfully with greater attention.	

II. CREATING INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY

Throwing in the Founder’s Towel	69
<i>Communities</i> 144, 40–41, 78	Ma’ikwe Schaub Ludwig
After many years of dealing with the unique struggles inherent in starting a community, a community founder discovers her vision manifested elsewhere, and becomes a community joiner.	
Establishing Community in Hard Times: A Swedish Case	72
<i>Communities</i> 144, 42–45	Robert Hall
Along with logistical hurdles and fluctuating commitments, the global financial crisis takes its toll on a developing ecovillage, but also offers opportunities as sustainability becomes a global imperative.	
Somerville Ecovillage: Culture and Creating Spaces	76
<i>Communities</i> 144, 46–47	Vida Carlino
A group of Australians invests in its vision for the long haul, confronting obstacles, encouraging participation, and finding accord on cats, dogs, and The Somerville Way.	
Somerville Ecovillage: Statutory Approvals and Finance	78
<i>Communities</i> 144, 48–50	Karen Moore
Nine years after its conception, Somerville Ecovillage has acquired land, financing, and rezoning and subdivision approvals, but remains unbuilt (though not ungardened), thanks to the world credit crisis.	
Moon Valley: A Community on the Horizon?	81
<i>Communities</i> 148, 62–63	Bob Glotzbach
Members of a mobile home park explore how they might become a more intentional community.	
Affording a New Community: a Story of Persistence	83
<i>Communities</i> 148, 64, 78	Merry Hall
A group with big dreams has its hopes raised then deflated repeatedly, and struggles to realize its visions.	
Going from Vision to Culture	85
<i>Communities</i> 156, 49	Daniel Weddle
Dandelion Village’s cofounder traces his journey from initiator to “regular community member.”	

The Making of Senior Cohousing: The Story of Wolf Creek Lodge	86
<i>Communities</i> 149, 46–51	Suzanne Marriott
A senior cohousing group progresses from idea to reality, with a full range of setbacks, successes, and lessons along the way.	
Tasman Village, Australia	92
<i>Communities</i> 153, 58–59	Bill Metcalf
A developing cohousing/ecovillage hybrid starts to grapple with the eternal questions, like “What about cats and dogs?”	
Living the Questions	94
<i>Communities</i> 156, 52–54	Coleen O’Connell
Belfast Cohousing & Ecovillage grapples with obstacles to create a visionary housing project in rural Maine.	
Dandelion Village: Building an Ecovillage in Town	97
<i>Communities</i> 156, 47–48, 77	Maggie Sullivan
Aspiring communitarians rally support and navigate the legal hoops to establish an ecovillage in Bloomington, Indiana.	
Nashira: An Ecovillage from the Grassroots	100
<i>Communities</i> 156, 56–57	Giovanni Ciarlo
Founded and run by low-income women heads of households, an urban ecovillage in Colombia shows the promise of cooperative local self-empowerment.	
The Adventure of Starting Over	102
<i>Communities</i> 157, 24–25	Kim Scheidt
Having lost its other adult member, Dandelion looks forward to expanding again with a revitalized focus.	
Greening Your ‘Hood	104
<i>Communities</i> 157, 51–53	David Leach
Kibbutzes, ecovillages, cohousing communities, and pocket neighborhoods offer us opportunities to make a new start.	
New Beginnings at Oakleigh Meadow Cohousing	107
<i>Communities</i> 157, 54–56	Pat Bryan
A forming cohousing group experiences its share of bumps, but comes together to move forward.	
Creating a Community of Homesteaders	110
<i>Communities</i> 158, 22–24	Kim Scheidt
A land trust with leaseholds keeps members’ costs down while allowing a combination of autonomy and connection.	
Yes, Wealthy People Want to Live in Community in Sustainable Ways Too!	113
<i>Communities</i> 159, 36–39	Jennifer Ladd
The facilitator of a telephone support group offers 14 suggestions from current or aspiring communitarians with significant financial resources.	
Narara Ecovillage, Australia	117
<i>Communities</i> 161, 58–60	Bill Metcalf
Fifteen years after it was first conceived, an ecovillage acquires land and begins further development.	
Opportunity Village Eugene: Pioneering New Solutions for the (Formerly) Homeless	120
<i>Communities</i> 162, 58–61	Alex Daniell
In less than three months, for less than \$60,000, an empty public works parking lot becomes a village housing 30 people.	

Starting a Community: With or Without a Recipe?	125
<i>Communities</i> 163, 54–56	Paul Brooks
A communitarian discovers that, whether it is clearly articulated or invisible, groups are always going to have some sort of structure.	
The Community We Built.	128
<i>Communities</i> 164, 20–21	Carly Fraser
Residents of Guelph, Ontario, build community with intention in an existing suburban neighborhood.	
Sharing Stories and Rituals	130
<i>Communities</i> 164, 24–25	SILC Guelph
By sitting down to talk, a forming intentional community reconnects with its reasons for coming together.	
Conversations Take Wing: The RareBirds Housing Cooperative Story	132
<i>Communities</i> 164, 40–42	Mary Jordan
Friends explore their visions and shared purpose, and an intentional community is born.	
From Conversation to Community: How a Bunch of Mates Bought Some Land Together	135
<i>Communities</i> 164, 43–45	John Hepburn
“Wouldn’t it be great to buy a block of land together in the bush?” Dinner party conversations yield unexpected fruit.	
Oakleigh Meadow Cohousing Hard at Work “Building Community, One Conversation at a Time”	138
<i>Communities</i> 164, 48–49	Cindy Nickles
Members of a forming community learn about empathy, understanding, conflict-handling, and other elements of healthy communication.	
Jewish Intentional Community Building in the US	140
<i>Communities</i> 164, 50–51	Rachael Cohen
Envisioned New Jewish Communities will integrate a supportive social environment with a low-impact way of life.	
Loving Earth Sanctuary: Two Women’s Quest for a Low-Tech Life	142
<i>Communities</i> 165, 38–41	Gloria Wilson
A forming community in the hills of California’s Central Coast encounters both challenges and blessings in the pursuit of radical simplicity.	
The Power of Community	147
<i>Communities</i> 166, 23–26	Charles Durrett
Cohousing can offer a much-improved quality of life to seniors and others; it’s time to break free of the self-inflicted “ <i>Oh, that’s not me!</i> ”	
Off-Grid, and In Community: ‘Tis Easier to Find than to Found.	151
<i>Communities</i> 170, 33	Dan Schultz
The co-director of Maitreya Mountain Village suggests others <i>not</i> follow his example.	
Senior Cohousing in Canada: How Baby Boomers Can Build Social Portfolios for Aging Well. .	152
<i>Communities</i> 166, 28–33	Margaret Critchlow
Aging in a community of relationships, with an emphasis on “co-care,” encourages a more connected, healthy, sustainable, and active life.	
Belfast Ecovillage Produces Farm.	158
<i>Communities</i> 167, 46	Sarah Lozanova
Twenty-two members in a 36-unit ecovillage contribute to maintaining a Community Supported Agriculture farm on land that they own collectively.	

The Balancing Act of Farming in Community	159
<i>Communities</i> 167, 47–51	Coleen O’Connell
Is Cobb Hill a model of how to do community and farming cooperatively, or a case study in their challenges?	
Zoning Nightmare: Hartford’s Scarborough Street House	164
<i>Communities</i> 168, 26–28	Dave Rozza, Hannah Simms, Josh Blanchfield, Julia Rosenblatt, Kevin Lamkins, Laura Rozza, Maureen Welch, and Simon Raahauge DeSantis
An unconventional family fights to stay in their collective house in the face of antiquated local ordinances which suppress community living.	
Neighbor Nightmare in Northern California	168
<i>Communities</i> 168, 30–34	Chris Roth
When the calling to cultivate community is combined with good intentions, what can go wrong? The answer is: a lot.	
The Changing Landscape of the Law: Experiences in Cohousing	173
<i>Communities</i> 168, 47–50	JT Hinds
Asheville’s Westwood CoHousing provides case studies in applying new approaches to old categories when relating to the law.	
Getting to Community and Life <i>after</i> Community: Collectivism vs. Individualism	177
<i>Communities</i> 169, 25–29	Lisa Paulson
Togetherness and solitude, action and reflection—our lives give us times for each.	
Words of Experience: Starting a Community	182
<i>Communities</i> 170, 30–32	Kim Scheidt
A founder shares a well-learned lesson: “It is a LOT of work to start an intentional community. A LOT.”	
Building Community and Learning from Failure	185
<i>Communities</i> 170, 34–36	Jenny Pickerill and Ruth Hayward
Eco-communities in Britain yield valuable lessons about how to improve chances for success.	
Reflections on Setting Up an Intentional Community	188
<i>Communities</i> 170, 37	Arjuna da Silva
An Earthaven founder offers perspectives after 21 years of watching the ecovillage unfold.	
The Rocky Road to Rocky Corner Cohousing	189
<i>Communities</i> 170, 45–46	Marie Pulito
In the face of challenges, key decisions and actions help Connecticut’s first cohousing community to come together.	
Leaps of Faith	191
<i>Communities</i> 170, 47–50	Rebecca Reid
Two families leave a thriving cohousing community to follow their shared dreams as a tight-knit intergenerational group.	
Living in a Multigeneration Household: Haven or Hell?	195
<i>Communities</i> 170, 51, 77	Maril Crabtree
Is it crazy to purchase and move into a new house with your grown children and their children? Actually, no. Living communally with family has some big advantages.	
Reflecting on a Quarter Century of O.U.R. History	197
<i>Communities</i> 170, 59	Brandy Gallagher
As an activist group matures, the circles of collaboration expand.	

Kindling New Community: Village Hearth Cohousing	198
<i>Communities</i> 170, 52–54	Pat McAulay
Two “burning souls” work to bring their dream—a caring community of LGBTs, friends, and allies aging in place as good neighbors—into reality.	
Yarrow Ecovillage: Cohousing as a Building Block to the Ecovillage	201
<i>Communities</i> 171, 41–43, 77	Charles Durrett and Katie McCamant
A Canadian community pioneers ecovillage zoning while incorporating both intergenerational and senior cohousing.	
Cloughjordan Ecovillage: Modeling the Transition to a Low-Carbon Society	205
<i>Communities</i> 171, 49–53	Peadar Kirby
Irish ecovillagers achieve the smallest ecological footprints recorded in their country.	
Roger Ulrich: A Founder Reflects	210
<i>Communities</i> 170, 56–57	Deborah Altus
The octogenarian founder of Lake Village Homestead shares insights from a lifelong community journey.	
Building an Ecovillage in the Friendly Islands	212
<i>Communities</i> 171, 56–60	Philip Mirkin
Fiji Organic Village embodies the challenges and joys of cross-cultural community.	
The First Ecovillage in Palestine	217
<i>Communities</i> 171, 62–63, 78	Frederick Weihe
A West Bank town of about 1500, Farkha predated the term ecovillage, and is now recognized as one.	
Innisfree Village: Lifesharing in a Service Community	220
<i>Communities</i> 172, 12–13	Nancy Chappell
Adults with disabilities and residential caregiver volunteers share the challenges and joys of community life at Innisfree.	
The Gesundheit Institute: A 45 Year-Old Communal Hospital Experiment	222
<i>Communities</i> 172, 14–17	Patch Adams
In a decades-long project with worldwide reach, medicine, humor, and community become vehicles for social change.	
Activism and Service at Black Bulga Community: Inspiring, Nurturing, Challenging, and Not All Hard Work	226
<i>Communities</i> 172, 27–29	Geoff Evans
At Black Bulga, the experience of community provides vital support for members to be effective change agents in the wider world.	
Not the Last of the Mohicans: Honoring Our Native Predecessors on the Land	229
<i>Communities</i> 172, 35–39	Jeff Golden
How can we do right by the native peoples whose ancestral homelands now host our intentional communities?	
Aging in Community: How an Older Couple Helped Launch a New Multi-Generational Ecovillage Neighborhood ..	234
<i>Communities</i> 172, 59–62	Wallace Watson
After lengthy germination, EcoVillage at Ithaca’s TREE grows.	
Affordable, Developer-Driven Ecovillages: Meeting an Unmet Need	239
<i>Communities</i> 174, 54–57	Mac Maguire
A replicable ecovillage model is our best hope for achieving essential, global-scale changes.	

Home Ownership Is Dead! Long Live the Permanent Real Estate Cooperative!	243
<i>Communities</i> 175, 40	Janelle Orsi
Removing houses from the speculative market promises a renewed culture of inclusiveness, mutual aid, self-help, grassroots organizing, and economic revitalization.	
Wurruk'an: An Experimental Intentional Community.	244
<i>Communities</i> 174, 58–62	Bill Metcalf
A book on “life beyond industrial civilisation” inspires the creation of an ecovillage.	
Mobile Home Parks: A Fast and Inexpensive Path to Cohousing	249
<i>Communities</i> 175, 41–43, 74	William Noel
Mobile home and RV parks present an unequalled opportunity to accelerate the transition to more widespread community living.	
Business Co-ops as a Prelude to Intentional Community	253
<i>Communities</i> 175, 44–45	Werner Kontara
Developing a successful business before starting a residential community around it offers distinct advantages.	
Sunflower Cohousing en France	255
<i>Communities</i> 175, 62–63	Martin Prosser
Eight years into the journey, a forming group reflects on lessons learned and looks forward to completion of their first house.	
Why The Farm Collective Failed.	257
<i>Communities</i> 176, 10–11	Melvyn Stiriss
A convergence of causes—from hierarchy (and denial thereof) to ego, mismanagement of money, the “bubble effect,” and more—ended The Farm’s 13-year collective experiment.	
Why The Farm Survived.	259
<i>Communities</i> 176, 12–14	Douglas Stevenson
A long-time member offers his own perspective on what led to “The Changeover” and why The Farm was able to endure, its central vision much greater than any “cult of celebrity.”	
The Start of Ravens’ Roost—Ravens Unite.	262
<i>Communities</i> 176, 57	Mary Miner
Having felt a sense of community in a small town in Arizona, the author reestablishes it many years later in a cohousing project in Alaska.	
Five Things We’ve Learned Before We’ve Ever Built	264
<i>Communities</i> 176, 58–60	Mairéad Cleary
Still in the process of formation, Bruns Eco Village in Australia finds itself on a steep (but welcome) learning curve.	
Back to the City!	267
<i>Communities</i> 177, 10-12	GPaul Blundell
As Compersia and Point A aim to demonstrate, a city can be the perfect place to start an egalitarian, income-sharing community.	
1605 Commune, Washington DC	270
<i>Communities</i> 177, 18-20	Bryan Allen Moore
Not started as an intentional community, a group gradually integrates intentional community concepts into how they live with each other.	
Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage: A 13-Year-Old Retrofit Ecovillage in Cincinnati, Ohio.	274
<i>Communities</i> 177, 26-28	Jim Schenk
While it involves inevitable struggles, this replicable model both forms community and provides an ecological framework for living in the city.	

The Dolphin House, Looking Forward	277
<i>Communities</i> 177, 37-39	Brittney Love
A group of friends coalesces around a friend's death and prepares for next steps in their community evolution, balancing urban and rural impulses.	
Compact Community at Maitreya EcoVillage in Eugene, Oregon	280
<i>Communities</i> 177, 47-48	Robert Bolman
Urban development needs sufficient density to support functional public transit, bicycling, and walking—while also staying beautiful, fun, green, and rich with community.	
Making a Case for Urban Cohousing	282
<i>Communities</i> 177, 55-57	Grace H. Kim
Urban cohousing offers a unique alternative that still allows access to the amenities, conveniences, and vibrancy of city life.	
Community-Building in the City	285
<i>Communities</i> 177, 58-59	Sheila Hoffman and Spencer Beard
In its formative and early stages, Capitol Hill Urban Cohousing in Seattle encounters both challenges and successes.	
III. CULTIVATING NON-RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY	
Chicken à la West Birch Avenue	291
<i>Communities</i> 142, 52–53	Hilary Giovale
Neighbors hatch the idea for a shared chicken coop, producing not just food and fertility but also neighborhood cohesion.	
Nine Traditions that Draw Us Together: How a Small Town Nurtures Community	294
<i>Communities</i> 173, 56–57	Murphy Robinson
The art of creating community spirit within mainstream towns and neighborhoods has much potential to change the world for the better.	
A Virtual Retirement Village: Combining Independent Living with Community	296
<i>Communities</i> 142, 54–56	Rudy Yandrick
The Lancaster Downtowners stay electronically connected to optimize the benefits of small-city life.	
What Are the Boundaries of an Intentional Community?:	
An Experiment in Geographically-Dispersed Community-Building	299
<i>Communities</i> 143, 60–62	Don Schneider and Elin England
The Pleasant Hill Progressives gather together to talk, share, cooperate, and eat—and learn about the benefits and pitfalls of their experiment.	
G8	302
<i>Communities</i> 146, 44–45	Lawrence Siskind
They don't represent any governments, they don't live together, and there are nine of them, not eight, but these polyamorous friends still feel empowered to love each other, addressing one another with the f-word: family.	
Lessons in Building Resilient Neighborhoods:	
Reflections on the PROUT Institute Community SEED Program	304
<i>Communities</i> 153, 17–19	Ryan Dubas
Thanks to cooperation among neighbors, a quiet neighborhood in Eugene, Oregon becomes a hub of permaculture activity and education.	

Creating Family Where We Are Now	308
<i>Communities</i> 153, 60-61, 77	Zane Hamm
A mother shares the challenges and lessons learned in creating childcare exchange—and a new form of community—with another mother and her son.	
Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood—Rebuilding Community within the City	311
<i>Communities</i> 156, 44-46	Robin Allison
In a neighborhood outside Auckland, Australia, community and eco-living prove mutually reinforcing.	
Kawsmos: The Unintentional Community	314
<i>Communities</i> 164, 26-28	Mary Wharff, Elizabeth Schultz, and Deborah Altus
After 11 years of gathering, a group of Kaw Valley’s cosmic explorers realizes that community has happened to them.	
Kindista: Technology for Living More Freely	317
<i>Communities</i> 165, 42-43	Benjamin Crandall
Born of collaboration, an innovative technology helps build community by encouraging trust, appreciation, and giving from the heart.	
The Community We Built	320
<i>Communities</i> 164, 20-21	Carly Fraser
Residents of Guelph, Ontario, build community with intention in an existing suburban neighborhood.	
Time for Tribe: Boomers Get Connected	322
<i>Communities</i> 166, 41-43	Bill Kauth and Zoe Alowan
Two baby boomers catalyze a new kind of “bicycle distance” tribe, one of shared values, support, and life-long commitment, and offer tips on how to replicate their success.	
In Land We Trust—for the Lake Claire Community Land Trust	325
<i>Communities</i> 170, 58	Stephen Wing
A greenspace in the heart of Atlanta embodies the visions of the neighbors who created it.	
You Are Here: Finding the Feminine Energy that Cultivates Community	326
<i>Communities</i> 170, 28-29, 75	Beth Ann Morrison
Public art, the Transition Movement, chai talks, and a meetup group all form part of a journey toward community.	
How to Create New Nature Reserves	329
<i>Communities</i> 175, 64-65	Dr. Adrian Cooper
Local people come together to create community nature reserves composed of many pieces of private land.	
Honoring the Conversation: Turning a Neighborhood into a Community in Intown Atlanta ..	332
<i>Communities</i> 177, 21-25	Stephen Wing
Face-to-face conversation strengthens the sense of community among the diverse constituencies of a nonprofit Land Trust.	
Supported Growth	338
<i>Communities</i> 177, 34-36	Amanda Crowell
In St. Louis, a community garden sprouts from the efforts of people passionate about growing not only food but community—and not afraid to ask for help.	