

FIRST COHOUSING NEIGHBORHOOD COMING TO MONTANA

A group of local families is leading the way in bringing the first cohousing community to Bozeman. Bozeman Cohousing will be the first of its kind in Montana, but there are already approximately 170 cohousing communities spread across the U.S. and hundreds more across Canada and Europe. The group is composed of families with toddlers, elementary students and teenagers including single parents, empty nesters, single adults and retirees. Bozeman Cohousing is looking for more families to become part of this dynamic and collaborative neighborhood.

Cohousing combines private homes with extensive common facilities to create socially and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods. According to the Cohousing Association of the U.S., cohousing communities are, “Designed to foster connection ... Community spaces allow neighbors to easily interact just outside their private homes, and common areas like gardens and dining space bring people together.”

In recent decades, Americans have built their homes in a way that discourages spontaneous social interaction, which may be part of an increasing trend toward loneliness in our society. Collectively, we are witnessing a surge of mental health advocacy especially as it relates to postpartum depression. Cohousing communities offer a way to shift from the detached nuclear family and into a supportive village culture. Member Megan Welborn says, “As someone who transitioned from working full time to being a stay-at-home parent, I didn’t realize how lonely it was going to be. Our families do not live close by, so I was largely alone during the days while my husband worked. I would have loved to live in a cohousing neighborhood as a new mom.”

Cohousing supports families in a variety of ways. While each home has its own private kitchen, the common house has a shared kitchen and dining room where the community comes together to share meals multiple times per week. Families can walk over to the community building to enjoy an already prepared meal and after dinner the kids can run off to play in the shared playground or on the playground while parents linger and chat with other adults after dinner. Bozeman Cohousing has designed their site plan with children’s play spaces adjacent to adult seating and gathering places. This allows parents and children to be integrated into the community and not isolated from other adults.



In cohousing, children enjoy a level of safety and freedom few Americans do today. The parking is clustered on the edge of the neighborhood, making the interior car-free and safe for children. Kids can run over to their friend’s house or to the playground without needing a ride or an adult escort because there are no roads to cross. Not having to arrange childcare, playdates and chauffeur children to after-school activities can be a tremendous relief for parents and a huge benefit to children by allowing them more time for unstructured play.

In intergenerational neighborhoods like Bozeman Cohousing, kids have access to adults who can fill a role they might not otherwise have in their daily lives. Since the invention of the vehicle, families have started to live further apart from one another. Kids are missing out on seeing and learning from their grandparents, aunts and uncles on a daily basis. Each individual in cohousing brings their own unique set of talents. Children in cohousing have easy access to learning a range of new skills from their surrogate “families.” Bozeman Cohousing is bringing back the idea of an old-fashioned neighborhood where neighbors share in social responsibility in a modern and sustainable way.

You can learn more about Bozeman Cohousing at www.BozemanCohousing.com or email: life@BozemanCohousing.com.



FIRST ANNUAL NORTH JEFFCO SUMMER KICKOFF

MAY 12, 2020

Come plan a summer full of family fun with the first annual North JeffCo Summer Kickoff on Tuesday, May 12 from 4-6:30 p.m. at the Montana City Volunteer Fire Station. The North JeffCo Library District invites you to this community event filled with information, activities and opportunities to help children and families make the most of their summer.

This is a one-stop shop to plan your summer vacation. Local organizations, camps, vacation bible schools, sports and the annual summer reading program will all be available to share community opportunities and answer questions. Montana Learning Center, Exploration Works, Jefferson County Weed Department, MSU-Extension Services and many more will have hands-on activities as well as information and giveaways. Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 12, and join us for a summer of possibilities!

