

Parade

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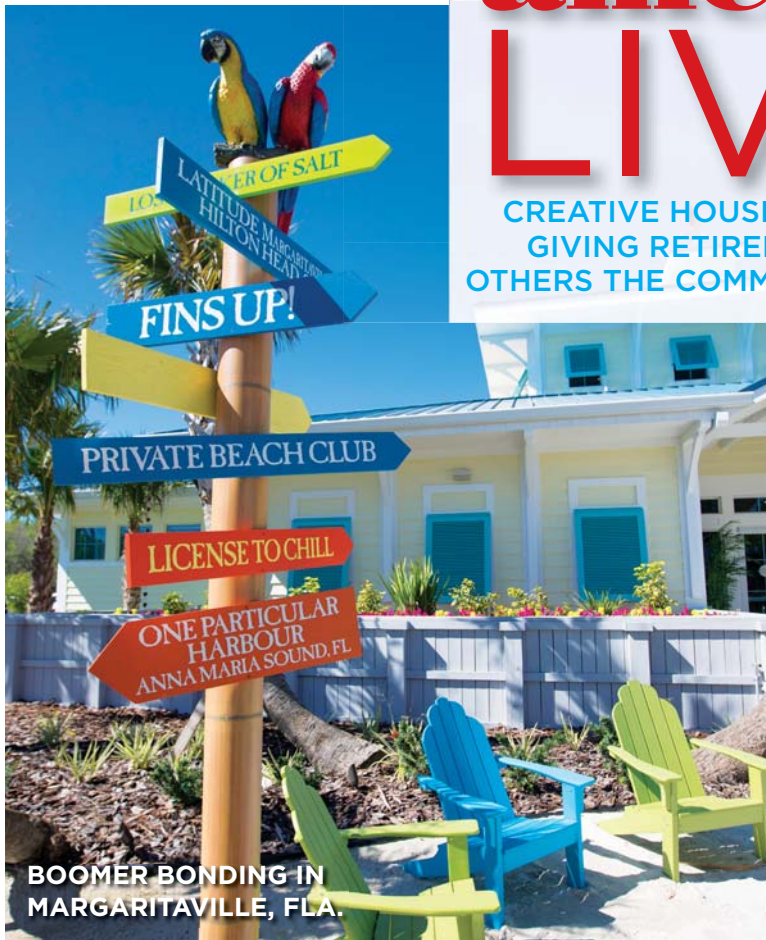
ROOFTOP GARDENING IN SEATTLE



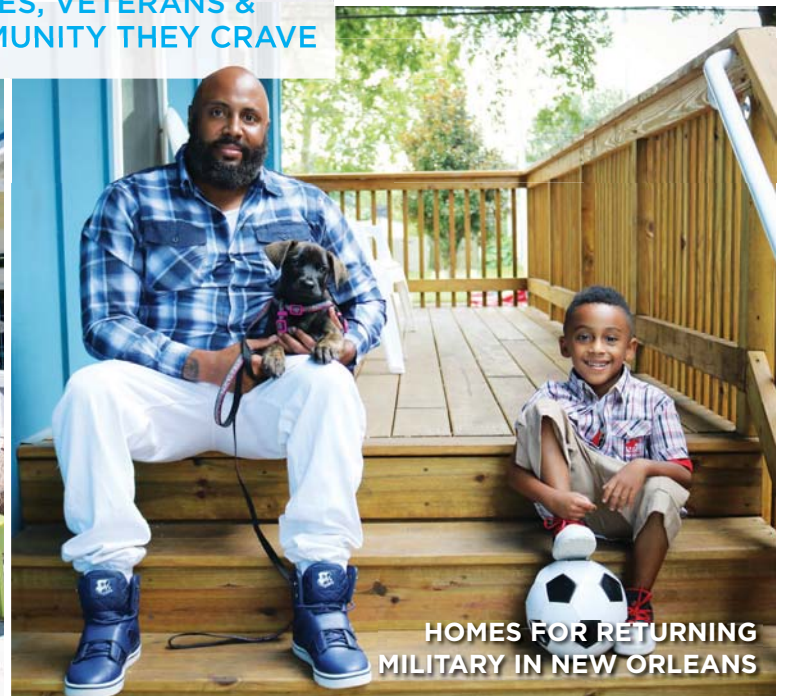
COTTAGE LIVING IN SHORELINE, WASH.

HOW america LIVES

CREATIVE HOUSING OPTIONS ARE GIVING RETIREES, VETERANS & OTHERS THE COMMUNITY THEY CRAVE



BOOMER BONDING IN MARGARITAVILLE, FLA.



HOMES FOR RETURNING MILITARY IN NEW ORLEANS



the NEW american neighborhood



AGING BOOMERS, VETERANS, PRICED-OUT MILLENNIALS AND FAMILIES ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW KIND OF LIVING—COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING DESIGNED AROUND SHARED INTERESTS, VALUES AND NEEDS.

—BY PAULA SPENCER SCOTT—

When was the last time you actually borrowed an egg from the guy next door? Do your friends show up in your social media feeds more often than in your backyard? Do you even know your neighbors' names—and would they know if you needed help?

Maybe that's why what's old is new again in housing, from tight-knit neighborhoods where residents look after one another to fresh twists on boardinghouses. The hot word is *communal*.

"The idea of coming together to create a better world goes back

centuries," says Sky Blue of the Fellowship for Intentional Community, which tracks collective living trends. "But now, instead of escaping the mainstream, the trend is to be more engaged."

Whether the draw is company, saving money, greener living or physical and emotional support, communal living seems here to stay. "Words like *economical* and *ecological* share the root *eco*—which is Greek for 'home,'" Blue says. "It's about getting your basic needs met and doing it together."

Check out these standout examples of creative housing.

A village WITHIN A CITY

Busy cities can be hard places to build community. So in Seattle's Capitol Hill district, architects Grace Kim, 48 (pictured, far right), and Mike Mariano, 49, designed a five-story building (top left) that would help do just that. Its nine units are small (810 to 1,300 square feet) to keep costs low and to leave more room for shared spaces, including balconies facing a central courtyard and a rooftop farm. The "secret sauce," says Kim, is an on-site common house with a big kitchen, a dining room that seats 30, laundry facilities and meeting spaces.

Every other day, the 28 "communitarians" eat together. Adults take turns buying each meal's food and overseeing prep.



"Communitarians" in Seattle share meals and cheery common spaces.



"The meal situation is such a relief. In six weeks, I'm lead cook once and help a team twice," says Kim, who lives there with Mariano and their daughter, Ella, 10. "Sometimes you eat and run, and that's fine. More often, it's like a dinner party. For us, food is central." The 11 kids in the building, ages 2 to 17, like to sit together.

Residents own their apartments and pay an association fee, like a condo. Communitarians

appreciate that there's always a neighbor to take in mail or babysit. Not that the teachers, professors, professionals and retirees (in their mid-30s to late 60s) are all BFFs, Kim says. But the community is authentic. "Social media contributes to a false sense of connection," Kim says. "This is real."

Elsewhere, the shared-spaces, shared-meals vision is spreading. There are 165 cohousing communities in existence, with 140 more being planned, says Karin Hoskin, executive director of the Cohousing Association of the U.S. For 14 years, she's lived in Wild Sage, a community of townhomes in Boulder, Colo., with her husband and two teens. "Cohousing provides the privacy we've all become accustomed to with the community we seek," Hoskin says.

COMMUNITY WITH A mission

Like many single dads, Malik Scott gets his kids to and from the school bus, fixes their mac and cheese and supervises their play. A 42-year-old Navy veteran who spent 15 years in the Middle East, he also lives every day with depression and post-traumatic stress. Helpfully, so do many of his neighbors.

In Bastion, a planned community for returning warriors and their families in New Orleans, residents can meet for meditation, counseling, art therapy and programs on financial literacy or legal aid at their community wellness center. They exercise together. They help each other with babysitting, property maintenance and getting to appointments at the nearby VA Hospital.

“We all pitch in and support one another. It’s like the military but not,” says Scott. “It’s a little village here, like the old days.”

Bastion, which opened last year and expands this summer, was designed that way. Its 19 double family homes are set in clusters that face one another, encouraging “maximum collisions” between neighbors, says founder Dylan Tête.

Like Scott, Tête, 40, had weathered a rough transition from 18-hour combat duty and military camaraderie to civilian life. A West Point grad who served in Iraq, he warded off depression with work, including a stint building FEMA housing post-Katrina. “I noticed if I kept myself busy I was OK,” he says.

What wasn’t OK: watching countless buddies discharged from rehab for their traumatic brain injuries

and PTSD with no support in place. “The nature of the injury begins to wear and tear on relationships,” Tête says. “Families go bankrupt paying for assisted living, and geriatric nursing homes are no place for a 27-year-old.”

Thinking that social connectedness was key to building resilience, recovery and reintegration, Tête turned to



Veteran Malik Scott, with his children Khalil, 6, and Laila, 5, says “Bastion is like a second family for us.”

the model of “purpose-filled community” pioneered by the nonprofit Generations of Hope. The central idea: All 73 residents (with 196 years of military service among them) commit to helping one another.

The \$8.5 million price tag was funded by a combination of low-income housing tax credits, city and state HUD grants, fundraising efforts and donations from private sources, such as the New Orleans Saints.

Generations of Hope’s model works for other groups too. Its flagship program, Hope Meadows in Rantoul, Ill., brings together families adopting from foster care and older adults who might need assistance. Like at Bastion, the residents live among one another for mutual support.

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what’s next

Like-minded Americans of every imaginable interest and need are discovering there’s comfort and strength in numbers.

For special-needs families: “Intentional neighboring” projects intended to support older children and adults with developmental disability and autism are in early planning stages, says Generations of Hope director Tom Berkshire. Although neighbors don’t replace support profes-



For Parrot Heads: Want to live on Flip Flop Court? Model homes in Jimmy Buffett’s Latitude Margaritaville, a 55-plus development in Daytona Beach, Fla., opened in February; a Hilton Head, S.C., location is under construction. And, yes, frozen concoctions will be served at a poolside bar called Changes in Attitude.

sionals, they commit to volunteer hours to look after one another and provide a social network. “That’s the piece that’s been missing [for these populations],” says consultant Mark Dunham.

For older LGBTs and friends: In 2019, the first age 55-plus homeowners will move into Village Hearth, a 15-acre community in Durham, N.C. Its 28 single-story cottages start at \$254,400. As Village Hearth’s website notes, “Many LGBTs have no children or close family, so it’s up to us to support each other through the aging process.”

For single moms: CoAbode, a web-based mom-matching service, is expanding its platform to help women find compatible roommates with similar parenting philosophies to split housing costs and raise kids together. A Friend Circle forum connects those who are looking for babysitting, carpooling and learning-disability support.

RETIRING TOGETHER

When she gets up, Marianne Kilkenny puts a piece of paper in her Asheville, N.C., bathroom window. It signals “Good morning; I’m OK” to her next-door neighbor, Maria Epes, who does the same. At night, they light battery-operated candles to say good night.



Top: Neighbors dine together in Kilkenny’s community. Above: Shared outdoor space is a trademark of the pocket neighborhood, a term coined by architect Ross Chapin, author of *Pocket Neighborhoods: Creating Small-Scale Community in a Large-Scale World*, who has designed or developed more than 40 communities, including Danielson Grove (pictured) in Kirkland, Wash.

That’s just a few of the small ways the 68-year-olds keep an eye on each other. They live in a “pocket neighborhood” Kilkenny is designing for adults. By spring 2019, a local developer she’s working with will add a circle of 10 modular homes, all incorporating barrier-free universal design principles, to the semirural land next to her. Her

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goal: shared gardens, driveways, dinners and lives, so she and some peers can “age in community.”

“As boomers see how their parents and friends are ending up in nursing homes, they’re looking around and wondering what will happen to them. There aren’t many other models to choose from, so more of us are trying these kinds of different communities,” says Kilkenney, author of *Your Quest for Home: A Guidebook to Find the Ideal Community for Your Later Years*.

Previously, she lived in a “Golden Girls” house in Asheville, with four women over 45. Pooling resources enabled each to live in a better neighborhood and, though they led separate lives, “it was comforting to know others were around,” Kilkenney says—for cooking together, borrowing ingredients, checking out one another’s dates and running to the ER when one herniated a disc. The co-livers once threw a neighborhood party, which revealed how much better they had it. “Nobody had done that before, nobody [but us] knew each other!”

CO-LIVING for singles

Young singles face different living challenges. Enter a new kind of dorm-meets-hotel-



The bedroom in a unit in Ollie at Baumhaus

style rental called co-living.

“It felt small when I moved in,” says tech consultant Kaitie Kirchner, 26, of the 510-square-

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COURTESY OLLIE

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foot one-bedroom apartment she rented last year in Pittsburgh's Ollie at Baumhaus. "But now I don't even notice. I'd take this size apartment again, with all its amenities, over more space."

Amenities indeed: The rent in Ollie at Baumhaus, where micro-studios start at \$1,564 per month, includes hip furnishings, Wi-Fi, cable, housekeeping, linen service, gym and a live-in "community manager" who organizes social activities. (Ollie is a play on "all inclusive.")

Brothers Chris and Andrew Bledsoe, former financiers, founded Ollie to fill a hole they saw in housing: Urban apartments that had been designed for nuclear families were too big—or too pricey—for the growing number of singles.

Ollie's vision is to put many small apartments in one building (lowering costs) but adding all the extras that make life easier and raise quality of life.

Matthew Alexander, 28, who lives in Ollie at Carmel Place in Manhattan, says he seldom engaged with neighbors in his previous apartments. "Here we hang out watching football games in the common space or up on the terrace with a view of the Empire State Building," says the Maine native, who works in human resources and says that for the first time in seven years in New York City he can afford to live without a roommate. "For now, it's perfect."

"We have 10 locations signed up and more than 60 in the pipeline," says Chris Bledsoe. "It's the future of housing."



Go to Parade.com/community for more on cohousing developments, including San Francisco's Starcity.