



# BEST PRACTICES in AFFORDABLE HOUSING



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### WHO

Elderspirit

### WHERE

Abingdon, Virginia



### WHAT

The ElderSpirit community is a unique intentional community that has combined components in such a way that a lifestyle for pro-active elders has purpose and meaning. The components are: co-housing in a mixed income community, member-management, spirituality, and mutual support.



### HOW

The ElderSpirit Community is the first mixed-income, mixed ownership Elder Co-Housing Community in the United States. The community consists of 29 homes, a common house and a Spirit Center based on CoHousing qualities. Thirteen of the cluster houses belong to owners, sixteen homes are for renters.

The mission of ElderSpirit is to provide co-housing communities of mutual support and late-life spirituality for people 55+ years of age. The goal is to build the structure for an affordable and meaningful alternative lifestyle for older adults. The community was created over a 10-year period via a series of conferences and planning sessions involving many of the people who are residents today. Residents were involved in the construction process, the planning and implementing of the landscaping and creating the policies, procedures and Bylaws that govern their community. ElderSpirit community members maintain ongoing committees such as Care, Common Buildings Management, Common Meals, Finance, Landscape, Membership, Program and Spiritual Life.. Members can also be appointed to two committees that belong to the Development Corporation Board (Architecture and also Buildings and Grounds) and some members serve on the ElderSpirit Board itself. Members share the work that is necessary to maintain the life of the community so that everyone is involved, but no-one needs to feel overwhelmed. This community involvement, self management, and mutual support helps the ElderSpirit community and its residents achieve the highest quality of life possible.

## ELDERSPIRIT CHALLENGES THE PREVAILING CULTURAL VIEW OF AGING AS A TIME OF LIFE THAT HAS DECREASING VALUE FOR THE PERSON OR THE COMMUNITY.

