

What is so Intentional about an Intentional Community?

By Maria Vidal

All communities need to be planned. In today's residential neighborhoods, developers plan and build cookie-cutter homes in small spaces, with no input from their buyers. People who live in these areas are seldom seen outside or interacting with neighbors. An Intentional Community (IC) is envisioned, planned, and created by the residents themselves. Camaraderie among residents in an Intentional Community is the norm. It is a community comprised of like-minded people who want more from their living situation than a roof and four walls. It brings people together who want to take part in a community, not just live in one.

There are all kinds of misconceptions about Intentional Communities that discourage people from considering living in one. The idea of an Intentional Community centers around shared ownership and a new way of life; one in which each resident takes part in creating the community in which they have always dreamed of living! The truth is that the pleasant and warm atmosphere that exists among the residents of ICs is not present in most residential communities or apartment complexes. Sharing a swim-

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- Get into the rhythm of healthy living
- Develop meaningful relationships
- Prosper together

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ming pool and a clubhouse does not turn a neighborhood into a community. How many neighbors do you know?

The number of ICs in the US is between 3,000 and 4,000. Some call themselves "retirement communities", "condos", "villas", "country living" and so on. The Foundation of Intentional Communities publishes a directory of ICs and maintains an e-listing including over 1,600 IC's around the world. In Texas there are 20 ICs listed of which five are established and 15 in the forming stage. This means that they are looking for individuals that are good candidates to proceed.

For those of you that still consider an IC a foreign concept; I want to share some information that took me two years to research. I don't claim to be an expert, but I will share with you the different decisions that you have to make when choosing to live in an IC, and why I decided to develop an IC instead of joining one. However, I just want to wake up your curiosity. Please do some research of your own before making any decisions.

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