

ElderSpirit Community at Trailview

is a cohousing community for mixed income elders (55 and over) located on 3.5 acres alongside the Virginia Creeper Trail in Abingdon, Virginia. Its distinctive characteristics are mutual support through the aging process and late-life spirituality. Members believe that spiritual growth is the primary work of those in the later stages of life. Agreeing that freedom of religion is fundamental, they encourage one another in the search for meaning and commitment to a spiritual path. Through face-to-face relationships they offer and receive support, express their needs and convictions, listen carefully to each other, and strive to act responsibly, considering their good and the good of the other.

Thirteen of the cluster houses belong to owners; twelve homes are for renters, who must qualify as moderate- to low-income according to the Commonwealth of Virginia guidelines. Our common house contains four small apartments for low-income people. Our planned Spirit Center will be a special place for prayer, meditation, and celebrations. Monthly meetings of residents are run by consensus.

Resident management is one of the fundamental principles of cohousing. We at ElderSpirit prefer the term Community Service, which is defined as the maintenance of the common property and the care of one another. Our basic requirement is participation in one or more committees or work groups.

We who live in ElderSpirit are deeply committed to mutual support and will cooperate and help each other as needed. As we age and experience a diminishment in our abilities, everyone will still be able to contribute to community service, which helps us lower maintenance costs and encourages the building of relationships in working with one another.

Each resident member of the community is expected to volunteer according to one's ability and preference and the needs of the community at that time. Men and women are encouraged to share community service roles equally. The community will seek ways to work together as a group, while allowing people the space to participate according to individual preferences.

There will be at least 10 standing committees to facilitate the residents' management of ElderSpirit and the community service necessary to make it work well.

- Every member of ElderSpirit will be obligated to participate in at least one committee.
- Those who agree to be committee chairs will meet regularly to address concerns of the whole community. As the committees need workers, the chairs will recruit community members based on their expressed interest and skills.
- Individual work obligations will vary according to season, intensity of committee activities, and community needs. We expect that people will make different arrangements; we won't all work the same number of hours every month.
- The work will evolve from the decisions of the committees.
- If a member is away, he or she is excused from work but is expected to make arrangements for the work to be covered.