**Resources We Offer to Help You Develop Your Own Community Green**

Community Greens offers a range of materials to help you get involved in greening your community.

**How to Start a Community Green**

The best way to get start in creating a community green on your block is to first simply get to know your neighbors.It is important to develop a relationship around something other than the idea of creating a community green. Once you have solid relationships with your neighbors, you can bring up the idea of sharing your backyards. Emphasize the positive benefits of these spaces, but also listen carefully to any fears or objections your neighbors may have.  It is important for these fears to be expressed, dicussed, and hopefully mitigated.  
  
Once your neighbors agree on the concept, you will have to agree on how the space should used and any guidelines for that use.  You will also have to decide how the space will be maintained, what financial contributions if any will be needed, and/or if your homeowners insurance needs to reflect a sharing of the space.   
  
Community greens come in many shapes and sizes, have been created during many periods of growth and have been included during the original design of developments and established years after the original developments were built.

Ashoka promotes and facilitates the development of community greens by:

* Providing examples of successful community greens. We have found many excellent examples in different kinds of neighborhoods that include detached single family homes, townhouses, and apartment buildings, in both market rate and affordable housing developments.
* Providing educational resources that explain how to develop community greens - both for existing neighborhoods and new construction.
* Working with muncipalities to help them put the systems in place that encourage residents to develop community greens inside their blocks and developers to incorporate community greens into new construction. Through our work with individual local governments we look at how to make it easy for residents to create community greens with their neighbors. We explore such issues as zoning, financing, incentives, design, management, and maintenance. Cities that we are working with or that have expressed an interest in working with us include Baltimore, Hartford, Cleveland, Pasadena, Detroit, and Oakland.
* Providing advice and technical assistance to developers who would like to incorporate community greens into their work.

We have included information about other community greens that can be found throughout the country and world and some of the architectural firms that are incorporating community greens into their designs.

**Design Criteria**

Community Greens come in all shapes and sizes. However, there are certain design elements that will ensure that the common is aesthically pleasing and popular with residents.

1. The community green should be bounded by the dwellings it serves
2. Entry points should reflect that it is a private space
3. There should be a private space for each resident and a buffer between the common areas and private areas. Privacy should be layered.
4. Intended uses should be considered. Areas should be developed that encourage they type of usage residents want to have. Areas of usage should be human-scaled.
5. Native plantings should be used and they should be organically maintained

These criteria were developed with the input of Clare Cooper Marcus, professor emeritus at the University of California at Berkeley, California

**Design Resources**

All of these architecture firms have significant experience designing residential communities that contain either shared interior green space or courtyards.  
  
Thomas Dolan Architecture (TDA).    
  
Wolf Lyon Architects based in Boulder, CO.   
  
Ross Chapin Architects  
  
Cohousing Company  
  
Moule & Polyzoides   
  
Pyatok Architects Inc   
  
Seidel/Holzman

**Oganizations that Help Develop Community Greens**

The Cohousing Network- Cohousing communities combine individual home ownership with communal spaces, including a common courtyard and building (with kitchen, dinning area, lounge and meeting rooms). This site lists cohousing communities, lectures and conferences, resources, and architectural firms. Read about Retrofit Cohousing to learn how to create cohousing in an existing neighborhood.  
  
National Wildlife Federation: Backyard Wildlife Habitat.By liberating more land to be used for gardens, in which shrubs, trees, flowers and grasses can be planted, also provide habitats for birds and animals. For more information about how to turn your backyard and community green into a certified wildlife habitat, check out the NWF's Backyard Wildlife Habitat site, which includes information on how to create a habitat, of how to become a habitat steward, tips and projects, and how to find and see photographs of wildlife habitat in your town or city.  
  
Good Neighbors: Affordable Family Housing offers an extensive survey of well-designed affordable housing, including many developments that contain shared interior gardens.   
  
Wonderland Hill Development Company is the leading cohousing developer in the United States.   
  
The Cottage Company is a development and construction company based in Seattle, Washington that focuses on the implementation of pocket neighborhoods of cottages and not-so-big homes. In most of their developments, the houses are oriented around community greens.