

Growing a community

■ Hundredfold Farm has six families living in its cohousing concept – so far.



Lorraine and Lenny Mazza move into their home on the Hundredfold Farm. They're the sixth family in the cohousing community. (Evening Sun Photo by Matthew Harris)

Bringing more into the fold

Cohousing community west of Cashtown has grown to six families

By TIM PRATT, Evening Sun Reporter
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Until March of 2005, Lenny Mazza was content to work at his successful and well-established chiropractic business in Franklin Park, N.J. Then he heard about the Hundredfold Farm cohousing community being planned on a portion of the Seven Springs Christmas Tree Farm west of Cashtown and was intrigued.

The 14-home community was being designed by future residents as an environmentally friendly attempt at recreating village life as it existed generations ago. The group met at a common house on the property nearly every week for years and planned every detail of the community, from energy-efficient washers and dryers in each home to a greenhouse and wastewater recycling facility. And the group worked together to maintain the expansive tree farm.

That environmental awareness convinced Mazza and wife, Lorraine, to move from Bucks County to Gettysburg to join the Hundredfold community.



Movers from Jenson Movers & Storage Inc., of Philadelphia, move the belongings of Lorraine and Lenny Mazza into their home on the Hundredfold Farm. The couple moved from Bucks County. "It's different here," Lenny Mazza says. "Your neighbors are always coming up and asking what they can do to help." (Evening Sun Photo by Matthew Harris)

While Hundredfold remained in the planning stages, the Mazzas started their lives over again. Lenny started working at Gettysburg Holistic Health Center and the couple stayed busy helping plan their future home.

The Mazzas finally moved in to their new home in late May and joined five other families who already lived in the Hundredfold community.

Construction began on the farm last summer after eight years of planning, and the first four families moved in just before Christmas. Resident Linda Miller moved in to her two-story home on the farm in late April and the Mazzas arrived for their first cohousing experience May 24.

Cohousing is a type of community where residents have equal say in the design and operation of their neighborhood.

Cohousing communities have a common house, which is used for meetings, meals and gatherings. And the property is communally owned.

There is no president or board of directors, but the farm does have committees to cover finances, land use, materials, energy, technology and membership issues. They make decisions that affect the entire community, such as the location of each home, on a consensus-basis so everybody agrees with a decision once it is made.



Lenny Mazza checks measurements in his bedroom for space to fit a dresser while moving into his home on the Hundredfold Farm. The environmentally-friendly community is on Old Route 30 near Cashtown on a property that also holds a Christmas tree farm. (Evening Sun Photo by Matthew Harris)

Farm manager Bill Hartzell believes this collective process helps create a more positive living environment because it forces people to work out their conflicts. And since all involved in the Hundredfold project want to conserve energy, the group dreamed up a community that would be as energy-efficient as possible.

Each of the 14 homes will have photovoltaic solar panels on their roofs. Hartzell estimates 30 to 40 percent of all energy used in homes will come from the panels.

And Hartzell works daily to complete the farm's wastewater treatment and recycling system. He hopes to have the system up and running within the next two months.

Seven homes are already built. Of the seven remaining lots, three are already under contract, Hartzell said. Four lots are still available, he said.

It costs an estimated \$300,000 to move in to the community, but that price includes a home, the lot, a stake in the farm and various infrastructure costs.

Life on the farm

Hartzell has been involved with the Hundredfold project since 1999 when he and wife, Sandy, had the idea to start a cohousing community in Adams County. He now lives on the farm with Sandy and the couple's two sons.

Although Hundredfold is still under construction, Hartzell said the community already feels like home.

"It has definitely lived up to expectations," he said.

Linda Miller, a retired teacher who now works as a courier, said she is happy to finally move on to the farm after years of planning. But her house isn't quite done yet.

The ground floor of Miller's house is still under construction and she lives above. Miller doesn't even have a kitchen, yet. She washes dishes in her bathroom sink.

Her final plans for the house include a full kitchen, living room and guest room. She also hopes to enjoy a wrap-around deck above extensive landscaping work.

Miller said she was attracted to the Hundredfold project by the allure of an intimate community. The location of the homes didn't hurt either.

A long gravel road branches off Old Route 30 at the Seven Springs Tree Farm. The road continues up a steep hill and ends at the Hundredfold community, surrounded by Christmas Trees and forest.

Miller said in her first month-and-a-half on the farm, she he has already seen some of the neighborhood camaraderie that attracted her to the project. Her neighbors came to the rescue when it came time to carry her furniture into the house on moving day. And when Miller takes a stroll down the dirt road to the common house, she said she is often greeted by neighbors.

"It's everything I was hoping for," she said.

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FOR DETAILS:

The Hundredfold Farm is located at 1668F Old Route 30, Orrtanna, PA 17353. For more information, visit <http://www.hundredfoldfarm.org>, or call (717) 334-9426.