



Case Study: Charles Durrett Book Tour

Situation:

Charles Durrett is a principal architect in the firm McCamant & Durrett Architects. Durrett is also an author, speaker and thought leader within the international cohousing and urban planning communities. McCamant & Durrett Architects have actively promoted cohousing concepts since the 1980's, introducing cohousing to the United States with their book *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves* (Ten Speed Press, 1988, 1994). Durrett applied cohousing design to senior communities with his 2005 book *Senior Cohousing, A Community Approach to Independent Living – the Handbook*. The second edition of this book was published in 2009 as *The Senior Cohousing Handbook*.

With the release of *The Senior Cohousing Handbook*, Durrett wished to organize and launch a supportive book tour.

Problem:

The publisher had limited funds and the sale of books could not support the expense of the tour.

Solution:

The tour was strategically cultivated to visit bookstore destinations with a cohousing community in planning, an interest in cohousing emerging, or the demographic to support a future cohousing project. The tour contributed to architecture assignments, advancing communities underway, consulting and the sale of books.

Tactics:

Over 15 destinations were planned. Each bookstore received point-of-sale postcards and a poster with customized information for their store event. Local media was provided with a press release, and in many cases radio interviews were scheduled the same day as the event. A general press release, featuring an interview with Mr. Durrett was broadly circulated and published in several regional magazines, as well as online. E-mail blasts and social media kept all audiences informed.

Results:

Around 70% of the book events were well attended. A key destination, where a project was just beginning, attracted a standing room only crowd, local television coverage, independent bloggers and important press. Follow-up interviews were conducted in this region on major radio stations. Vital new members and good will of the neighborhood was secured for this pivotal cohousing community. Several other projects were seeded or supported throughout the course of the tour. Additional collegiate lectures were added. Each region had some level of local press coverage, ranging from interviews, stories to calendar listings. Also, Mr. Durrett was able to combine his book tour with a greater effort, resulting in a '*Cohousing in Colorado*' week of events involving tours and multiple prospective and completed cohousing communities done in conjunction with Wonderland Hill Development Company.