

GHI Court Communicator: Frequently Asked Questions

Note that this is a new program. We expect that it will grow and evolve with your input, ideas, and experience.

1. What kinds of events should the court communicator organize?

You could organize house parties, common space clean-ups, or potluck picnics. You could also organize events that build community but don't involve gathering - like helping organize meals or groceries for a member of the court who is sick or going through hard times. You can also encourage other members of the court to organize/host events. Use your creativity to come up with ideas – especially during the pandemic as everyone needs to stay safe and distanced.

2. Are there financial resources available for court events? Do I have to be the one who pays for parties?

Currently, there is no specific budget for this program and how a function is funded is up to you and your court. There are lots of options for inexpensive events, like potlucks or picnics, making it BYOB, or hosting something simpler like tea or dessert. You don't have to have money to have fun - enjoying time together doesn't have to cost money! As a Court Communicator, you are not responsible for paying for and hosting every event - you can think of yourself more like a catalyst for your neighbors getting to know each other and hosting events for each other.

3. What other resources (material, information, ideas, etc.) can GHI offer us to help us in this role?

You will have the contact information and way to communicate with the other Court Communicators. You will be able to trade information and ideas. Over time we will consider whether there can be resources that GHI can lend for court events. We will also work on providing Court Communicators with up-to-date information about GHI contact persons, opportunities, and policies. We also will plan to have events where court communicators can gather virtually and hopefully eventually in person to share their experiences, ideas, and to get to know each other.

4. What information should we include or request for a court directory?

Names of people in unit, phone numbers, email addresses, pets, and anything else that would interest people. All information is collected on a voluntary basis of course, and if people don't feel comfortable sharing, that is fine.

5. What format/medium should the court directory take?

Whatever you think will be most useful: paper, emailed director, creation of a listserv, putting everyone on one email together, etc. If one or more neighbors don't use electronic

communications, it would be nice to ensure they have a paper copy of the directory with periodic updates as needed. To foster communication, it is helpful if you are able to communicate with the court via email. If you aren't able to set up an email list yourself, perhaps one of your neighbors could help you.

6. What if I am already doing all of these things - do I have to become a Court Communicator?

Not at all, and thank you for doing this! There are, however, several benefits for you and our cooperative if you become a Court Communicator: your experience and stories could help and inspire other Communicators on their own courts—your care for your own court can help our whole cooperative flourish, you may get fresh ideas or opportunities by being connected with other Communicators, GHI will know that you are a key person on your court and make extra sure that you are informed and resourced in a way that could benefit your neighbors, and in case of emergency GHI will know that you are a person who is connected with other members on your court and may be able to help them get in touch with someone they are having difficulty reaching.

7. What if another neighbor on our court already hosts a court party?

That's wonderful! We don't need to reinvent the wheel. The Court Communicator Program is about bringing neighbors together, not "being official" so if your court already has this, please support it, and don't feel a need to redirect or recreate it. You can still host a different type of party or event, or host an event at a different time of year.

8. Can our court do things in conjunction with other courts?

Absolutely! The Court Communicator Program will make it easier for multiple courts to team up for events.

9. When would the term start/finish?

It is for two years. We will start in Spring 2021.

10. Will I have authority over my court?

No, none whatsoever. The Court Communicator is in no way the "boss" of the court. Your role is to foster community, encourage others to be involved and get to know each other, not to boss people around, report on your neighbors, or mediate conflicts.