

RIVENDELL BY THE BAY

Vision & Values

Rivendell by the Bay is an **intentional community home** in the truest sense of the phrase – it is defined by our **intentionality** in nurturing a deeply connected **community** with each other and creating a warm, vibrant space together to call **home**.

Our shared vision for our home is built upon three pillars that define our identity:
Care, Community, and Creativity.

Care

We aren't just a group of strangers sharing a house. We're a chosen family; we thoughtfully invite each and every person to join us because our lives are made better by their presence.

The most fundamental value of Rivendell is the care we hold for and show one another. It defines all that we do, decide, and create in our home.

We treat each other according to the principle of *Unconditional Positive Regard*, in that we believe that we are all imperfect, human beings who are all trying to do our best with what we were given, and acknowledge that each of us has needs that deserve to get met. In any group of people, sometimes these needs align and other times they don't. When they don't, we recognize that no one is wrong for having needs and no one's needs are more or less important or valid than anyone else's. We honor both our own needs and those of the people around us and we try our best to help everyone get their needs met – because we have empathy for our chosen family.

When competing needs lead to conflict, we recognize that it is a normal and expected part of sharing resources, time, space, energy, and love with one another. We collectively take active steps to prepare for conflict, handle it skillfully and promptly when it occurs, and prioritize reconnection afterwards. **We grow closer by navigating conflict together.**

In any healthy relationship, holding and showing care takes time, energy, and commitment on an ongoing basis. For Rivendell to thrive, members should expect to dedicate a portion of their time and emotional energy each week to the house in some way – we get out what we put in.

Community

Rivendell and its residents exist within a much larger community of friends and neighbors. We celebrate and deeply cherish the many connections that each of us, and the house as a whole, have in our lives already and or have yet to form. We strongly encourage and support one another in inviting our people into our home and welcoming them as Friends of Rivendell.

Each resident is free to use their best judgment in inviting friends, family, partners, neighbors, business contacts, and strangers to visit our home. This can take many forms, from casual hangouts, to house parties, to public events. We want our doors always open for good people to become a part of Rivendell's extended community. We enjoy sharing our abundance of home and hearth with those around us, and believe that cross-pollinating our social networks leads to a richer life for us all.

Beyond normalizing an open-doors culture, we want to regularly and frequently use our physical home as a central hub for events that our residents are excited to host and participate in. Each of us should feel welcome to cultivate our passions and connections by running events at Rivendell. Having a meandering river of interests and populations flowing through our soil nourishes us and brings us new life. By way of example, here is just a selection of the sorts of things that we like to do together:

 Backyard Bonfires	 Gardening / Plant Care
 Board Games	 Group Bike Rides / Hikes
 Book Clubs	 House Dinners
 Circling / Authentic Relating	 Improv Games
 Clothing Swaps	 Irish Partner Dancing
 Curated Performances	 Karaoke
 Co-op Community Potlucks	 Movie Nights
 Co-Working Sessions	 Musician Jam Sessions
 Craft Nights	 Mutual Support Groups
 Cuddle Puddles / Parties	 Physics / Math / Science Meetups
 Ecstatic Dancing	 Salons / Talks
 ENM Discussion Groups	 Talent Shows
 Fusion Dancing	 Themed Dinners

CREATIVITY

People are endlessly clever and creative. Rivendell is a place for all of us to lean into our creativity, self-expression, and passion. Our space isn't just a home but also a garden of delights for our fantasies. We encourage people who want to pursue their creative interests to join and do so around (and with!) us.

This can look many different ways: Practicing your craft at home, putting on a performance, collaborating or jamming with housemates, hosting public events, or simply talking about how much you love what you're into.

Any role can be a creative one: Artists, musicians, writers, tinkers / makers / builders, actors, dancers, cooks - anyone from any background is welcome to share their passion with the house.

We want to prioritize creating intentional spaces and times in our home for our pursuits.

Our Shared Agreements

As members of our chosen family, we all get to decide how we'd like to behave both individually and collectively towards one another. We aim to find the right balance between acting with full freedom and disregard for others, and always prioritizing others at our expense. The psychological adage that "every demand for compliance will be met with defiance" strongly suggests that we should seek to **minimize how much we ask each other to change our own behaviors** for the sake of others. At the same time, the lived wisdom of thriving communities reminds us that when people come together to name shared expectations – in ways that fit their own place and values – it strengthens trust, softens conflict, and deepens each person's felt connection to the group's shared purpose.

GROUP DECISION-MAKING

We have the opportunity here to decide on specific behaviors, processes, and activities that we want to follow so that we act in integrity with Rivendell's foundational values of **Care, Community, and Creativity**. We're starting with a blank slate. Defining these will take time, consideration, and debate, and will remain an organic, ongoing process.

The doings of an intentional community encompass many domains, so there are numerous questions to consider. Here are some of the broader topics, each of which is worth deep exploration to determine what shared agreements, if any, we'd like to commit to.

- *Cleaning & organization*
- *Communication*
- *Conflict*
- *Events & activities*
- *Finances*
- *Food*
- *Membership*
- *Safety*

This section will expand as new decisions are reached.

See the next section, below, for additional specific decisions.

FOUNDATIONAL DECISIONS

While almost all questions we might explore through group decision-making within the above categories are open for debate and any agreement we make is subject to future change, the nature of Rivendell also calls for the definition of some decisions that are foundational to the house. These are **permanently governing decisions** that exhibit the basic nature of Rivendell and are not subject to change. Everyone who commits to joining Rivendell should be wholeheartedly invested in upholding every one of these behaviors.

Housemate Selection	We prioritize alignment of values, high emotional intelligence, warmth, maturity, and mutual respect over concerns about filling a room to avoid losing money. This means that we would rather pay for a room to stay unoccupied than hastily choose someone to move in who may not be the best fit just to save a little money.
Housemate Removal	We recognize that forcing someone to leave is extremely destabilizing and harmful to the individual and to the house. It must be avoided at all costs unless there has been or is likely to be real, physical harm to individuals. Short of that, we will continue to look for ways to resolve conflict and return to harmony. Merely not liking someone is not sufficient reason to make them move out.
Advertising & Speaking to Potential Housemates	We value transparency and honesty at our core. The house and its people are imperfect. While we want to accentuate the many wonderful, positive qualities of Rivendell to prospective housemates, we will not hide or minimize any of its drawbacks, imperfections, problems, or conflicts at any point. We encourage existing residents to speak frankly about what works and what doesn't, so that people who are interested in living here will not have any surprises if they move in.
Unresolved Conflicts	It is a collective house value that a conflict between housemates must be resolved promptly. It is not acceptable for a conflict - and its consequent emotional cost to both the involved parties and bystanders - to drag on and become normalized. If the involved parties themselves are unable or unwilling to find resolution, the rest of the house must become involved in the process. We are all collectively responsible to help each other through difficult times.