



FamilyCircle

HOW GREEN IS YOUR TOWN?

EXCLUSIVE: *FAMILY CIRCLE* MAGAZINE UNVEILS THE 10 BEST TOWNS FOR FAMILIES

Study Reveals the Best Communities Across the Country and How They Are Going Green

July 14, 2008 NEW YORK— *Family Circle* today announced the results of the second annual in-depth investigation to identify the best communities across the country that are perfect places to live and raise kids. This year's winners offer more than affordable homes, great schools and good neighbors – they're also making smart moves to save the planet. The results appear in the August 2008 issue of *Family Circle* on newsstands nationwide this week. The issue also shares tips on the best sites to “comparison shop” towns if you're considering a relocation.

“We sought out small cities and vibrant, off-the-radar, communities that are perfect places for parents to raise children,” said Linda Fears, Editor in Chief of *Family Circle*. “These ten towns all have top-rated schools, affordable housing and good jobs—along with a slower, easier pace of life and a lot less stress. The people in our best towns know and care about their neighbors and have real pride of place. What could be better places for families to call home?”

The 10 Best Towns for Families are:

- Ankeny, Iowa
 - **Population:** 36,161; **Median income:** \$69,703; **Households with children:** 42%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 21:1; **Residents who recycle:** 44%
 - On Friday nights, people in Ankeny bring lawn chairs and picnic baskets to Wagner Park to catch a classic, kid-friendly movie. In this Des Moines suburb, the streets are safe and the mood is laid-back and relaxed. “Parents don’t freak out when their teens walk around after midnight,” says a resident.
 - *Going for the Green:* To conserve energy, the new police headquarters will use geothermal power, saving an estimated \$136,000 in heating and cooling costs each year.

- Broken Arrow, Oklahoma
 - **Population:** 78,854; **Median income:** \$65,219; **Households with children:** 51%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 20:1; **Residents who recycle:** 44%
 - Its population has doubled since 1990, but homes here are still a bargain and the streets are safe thanks to a team effort by local police and neighborhood watch groups. “This is the kind of place where farmers can set up their stands and leave because they know people will pay,” says one resident.
 - *Going for the Green:* Residents can use the Green Traveler Web site to start or join a carpool. On Ozone Alert Days, they can ride the bus for 50 cents.

- Brunswick, Ohio
 - **Population:** 38,051; **Median income:** \$68,505; **Households with children:** 43%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 18:1; **Residents who recycle:** 49%
 - Community spirit is number one in Brunswick, OH! Parents meet with the mayor, and the fire and police chiefs to help organize big events like the annual soccer tournament, which draws hundreds of teams from northeastern Ohio. Last year, youth groups and local citizens raised \$25,000 to clear a junkyard of 20,000 tires to create an additional soccer field. Town leaders lend out weed trimmers, lawnmowers and other gardening equipment for free to encourage the preservation of native flora and fauna.
 - *Going for the Green:* At the Eco Arts Chalk Festival in May, kids compete in a sidewalk drawing contest and make their own rain barrels out of recycled plastic drums to catch runoff from roofs for watering gardens and lawns.

- Oro Valley, Arizona
 - **Population:** 36,704; **Median income:** \$74,704; **Households with children:** 31%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 21:1; **Residents who recycle:** 55%
 - With beautiful parks and walking trails interspersed throughout, everything you need is truly five minutes away. Although the population has increased by 25%, the city has retained its small-town feel with teens volunteering at community centers and parents and retirees pitching in at schools.
 - *Going for the Green:* All-new municipal buildings feature recycled carpets and low-voltage lighting and require maintenance workers to use only nontoxic cleaning products.

- Rocklin, California
 - **Population:** 53,064; **Median income:** \$81,790; **Households with children:** 46%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 22:1; **Residents who recycle:** 45%
 - The entire town is a green pioneer: the first city in California to participate in “ClimateSmart,” a state program to reduce greenhouse gases, Rocklin helps offset its carbon emissions by donating some \$8,000 annually to buy up land and prevent logging in nearby forests. Nine of 13 schools here have also been named California Distinguished Schools.
 - *Going for the Green:* After installing solar panels in 2006, police headquarters cut energy bills by 40% and CO2 emissions by 5,000 pounds yearly.

- Royal Palm Beach, Florida
 - **Population:** 29,631; **Median income:** \$68,175; **Households with children:** 42%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 17:1; **Residents who recycle:** 47%
 - Just 15 miles from the Atlantic, this diverse community is home to highly rated schools where kids don’t have to step outside to witness nature up close and personal – they can just look out the window to their backyard! Parents here take students on trips to museums, the Everglades or nearby Phipps Park beach for snorkeling.
 - *Going for the Green:* The town vetoed a townhouse development on an old public golf course and instead is building a park with a lake for fishing and kayaking.

- Shoreview, Minnesota
 - **Population:** 24,921; **Median income:** \$84,774; **Households with children:** 42%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 19:1; **Residents who recycle:** 51%
 - Situated 10 miles north of Minneapolis, Shoreview is a family-friendly town where housing is affordable, crime is low and student test scores are way above average. But what residents rave about is the water – 1,400 acres of wetlands, 11 lakes and a community center with an indoor water park.

- *Going for the Green:* The town awards prizes for home eco-projects like building porous driveways that prevent oil and salt runoff.
- South Burlington, Vermont
 - **Population:** 17,367; **Median income:** \$64,047; **Households with children:** 29%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 14:1; **Residents who recycle:** 52%
 - Residents here flock to Lake Champlain beaches in summer and hit the ski trails during winter, and many enjoy neighborly gatherings – “We don’t have six degrees of separation here—just one,” says a native. South Burlington’s middle and high schools rank among the top in the state on standardized test scores.
 - *Going for the Green:* In addition to setting up the state’s first utility to prevent storm water runoff into Lake Champlain, the town banned development on 663 acres of wildlife corridors that are home to deer, turkey and other animals.
- Webster Groves, Missouri
 - **Population:** 22,583; **Median income:** \$73,446; **Households with children:** 35%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 15:1; **Residents who recycle:** 57%
 - History infuses this tranquil St. Louis suburb’s century-old homes and landmark buildings as well as its 60-foot oaks planted 200 years ago. School classes are so small here kids get plenty of one-on-one attention!
 - *Going for the Green:* To encourage recycling, the town uses a “single stream” curbside program so there’s no need to separate glass, plastics and paper.
- Wheeling, Illinois
 - **Population:** 33,786; **Median income:** \$68,419; **Households with children:** 35%; **Student/teacher ratio:** 16:1; **Residents who recycle:** 47%
 - Thirty percent of residents in Wheeling, IL are immigrants or minorities, and diversity is the reason many of them chose to raise their family here. “Our kids are constantly around people of different backgrounds living in tolerance and harmony,” says one resident.
 - *Going for the Green:* Since 2002 the town has spent \$2 million to convert five vacant lots into half-acre “pocket parks,” with fountains, benches and flowers.

For more information on each of the 10 Best Towns for Families visit www.FamilyCircle.com.

Study Methodology:

Family Circle partnered with On Board, a New York City research firm providing real estate and demographic data to assemble a list of 1,850 places with populations between 15,000 and 150,000 and a high concentration of households with an average income of \$65,000. From that, 800 localities were selected based on family-friendly criteria, including cost of living, jobs and schools. Family Circle also looked for “green” communities with good environmental policies and a high percentage of residents who recycle. *Family Circle* assessed which towns best met those standards and ranked them according to state. The winners were selected from the highest-rated towns in the top 10 states nationwide.

About Family Circle

Published 15 times a year by Meredith Corporation, with a circulation of 3.9 million and 21 million readers, *Family Circle* was recently recognized as one of the top 10 magazines on AdweekMedia’s 2008 Hot List. *Family Circle*, one of the most widely read monthly magazines in the world, features in its pages and online at familycircle.com, smart, relevant advice, sensible solutions and inspiration in a voice that encourages and celebrates success. *Family Circle* has always been committed to women’s issues and in 1973 became the first women’s magazine to fully underwrite a professional women’s sporting event, the Family Circle Cup, an annual women’s tennis tournament held in April in Charleston, S.C., at Family Circle Magazine Stadium.

CONTACTS: Anna De Souza, 212.551.7072, anna.desouza@meredith.com
Katie Griffin, 212.551.7053, katie.griffin@meredith.com