

NASMM PRESS ARCHIVE • JULY – DECEMBER, 2008



It's easy to get back to small

The Baltimore Examiner

12/19/08

People don't take enough time to envision their future, which creates a lot of headaches. What's true in life, said Chris Harstein, owner of Home Organizing Made Easy, in Baltimore, is also true for downsizing living spaces.

When Baltimore area residents look to move from large homes to smaller houses, town houses or apartments, facing the reality of fitting their belongings into less space is the primary challenge.

"People need to face the reality of their life as it is today and will be in the future, not how it was in the past," Harstein said, about difficult decisions concerning what household items will stay with them.

It's a wake-up call that more Baltimoreans are facing as the job market shrinks and home values further decline. Tightening budgets have led many to reassess their pursuit of ever-larger homes in favor of smaller homes full of fewer belongings.

But the move between the large space and smaller home brings many of its own challenges, according to transition professionals.

Downsizing "is very overwhelming," said Nancy Brown, owner of Custom Moves LLC, in Bel Air. Brown specializes in helping in the transition to smaller homes by seniors, who are the traditional downsizing demographic. A 2007 American Association of Retired Persons survey found that 6 percent of the 78 million baby boomers plan to move to a smaller residence over the next five years.

Home Deflation

Here are some online resources that can help in making the transition to smaller homes:

» www.furniture.about.com has a free tool to help plan available floor space in a new home. Search under "furniture arranger."

» www.nasmm.org has information of the logistics of downsizing seniors, as well as lists of area senior move managers.

» www.goodwillches.org/goodwill-retail-volunteers.php has a ZIP code searchable list of area stores that will accept donations.

Among the first steps Brown suggests downsizers undertake is to draw the floor plan of the new home, which will show on paper what furniture actually can fit in the new space. The next step is to select items that will make the move based on their functionality and the strength of their emotional importance to the person moving.

"The worse thing is to move to a new place and be surrounded by boxes and no room to move; that can be really tough on people," said Cindy Bernstein, owner of Aim4Order, a professional organization firm in Baltimore.

Bernstein urges clients to convert many photos and videos to space-saving electronic formats, toss paperbacks, and keep only a token volume of a large reference collection.

Transition workers are wary of personal storage facilities because their use often means downsizing people will never confront their collections of belongings but will pay for its endless storage.

Another key to a success in home downsizing is enlisting the help of a professional or "caring friend," according to Harstein. She advises against seeking family help to avoid the specter of past family battles when deciding what items to toss.

A particular challenge of many younger couples or individuals who are moving to smaller digs is excessive amounts of clothing, Brown said. One way to cut down on the danger of moving clothing that won't fit the space and will never again be worn is to compare the linear feet of closet space in the old and new homes.

Lastly and most importantly is to start getting rid of belongings as soon as you have an idea that a move to a smaller home is likely, even if it is a year or more away.

"If they start early, it is a lot less overwhelming," Brown said.



Pay Careful Attention To Aging Parents This Holiday Season

Posted by Westchester.com
Tuesday, 16 December 2008

Westchester Senior NewsMamaroneck, NY – As the holidays approach, a local company specializing in the aging population is urging adults to take heed during upcoming visits with their elderly parents.

Every January, Changing Places, LLC, a senior move management company serving Westchester and Fairfield counties, receives a considerable increase in requests for help from grown children of senior citizens who, over the holidays, note that their parents' health is beginning to decline.

New York is one of nine states that account for 53% of the country's aging population. A cultural shift has placed the responsibility of caring for seniors on their adult children, the "sandwich generation" of Americans ages 45-54. (Source: Right-Sized Living™ CRTS Handbook)

"You'll be spending a lot of quality, one-on-one time with your parents, so take the opportunity to evaluate their living conditions and figure out if any improvements or changes are needed," says Paula Meighan, RN, LMSW, CRTS, a founding partner of Changing Places. "

Some clues which may indicate the need for intervention include: evidence that their memory is lapsing; erratic driving; and bumping into poorly-placed furniture or tripping over the edges of area rugs.

Upon assessing the safety issues within their living environment, Meighan offers immediate strategies which can be accomplished over the holidays to de-clutter and re-organize their possessions to create a healthier environment. These include:

- Address safety issues. Remove area rugs, rearrange furniture, add lighting. Install safety rails in the bathrooms. Make a list of current medications and post it on the refrigerator door.
- Gently start a conversation with about where their heirloom pieces will go in the future. Take notes; it may help down the road to have a written record.
- Go through collections of old photos and home movies. Decide which images should be kept, converted to digital albums, or passed along to other family members.

- Spend a few hours together in the basement or attic, and start to make piles -- “keep,” “donate,” and “discard.” Throw away as much junk as possible before you leave.
- Take your own “stuff” home with you, such as old yearbooks and school memorabilia, toys and games, or clothing.

“You are giving your parents the gift of your time this season. Make sure it’s time well spent, helping them improve their quality of life,” Meighan added.

If the decision is made to move a parent out of their home, Changing Places further advises there are strategies to sort through decades of collections in order to preserve important items and wisely dispose of the rest. The professional services of a senior move management company can include anything from providing consultations to physical assistance throughout every step of moving. For nearly five years, they have helped local residents organize and sort possessions, dispose and sell unwanted items, oversee movers; arrange shipments and storage; unpack and organize a client’s new home.

Changing Places is a member of the National Association of Senior Move Managers (NASMM), the nonprofit, professional association of organizations dedicated to helping older adults and their families with the moving process. Additionally, Meighan and her partners, Patty Gabal and Carol Lightbody, have each received the Certified Relocation and Transition Specialist (CRTS) designation upon completion of a comprehensive, nationally-recognized training program.

More information about Changing Places is available online at www.changingplaces.info. The phone numbers of their Westchester County and Fairfield County offices are, respectively, 914-381-1022 and 203-569-6016. They can also be contacted via e-mail: paula@changingplaces.info This email address is being protected from spam bots, you need Javascript enabled to view it .



November 17, 2008

By LORI PRICE



For The Herald

Decisions concerning the long-term care of aging adults can be difficult for adult children to make. Often the wishes of an elderly parent in need of care may be



unknown to their children as the topic can be an unpleasant one for families, and has therefore been avoided.

According to the American Association of Retired Persons, 30 million households are providing care for an adult over the age of 50 — and that number is expected to double over the next 25 years. The Foundation Programs and Services of AARP encourage families to talk with each other in order to create a care giving plan early so that all family members know the wishes of a loved one and what to expect in the future. AARP offers a comprehensive five-step planning guide for families, which includes important and helpful forms to download and print.

Sometimes a family might need more advice than can be found online. Mark Hontz, an elder law attorney in Newton, provides legal services for individuals in need of care, their adult children, spouses or other family members concerned about a loved one's future.

In order to ensure ones wishes are legally carried out, clients will seek Hontz's legal expertise. "My clients usually have two areas of concern. One concern is the preservation and distribution of their assets. This concern can involve Medicaid planning, estate taxation planning, trusts, disclaimers and, of course, one's last will and testament," Hontz said.

"A second area of concern is management of decision-making. This area includes durable powers of attorney, health care directives (often called living wills) and guardianship proceedings." Once a decision has been made regarding the care of an elderly loved one, there may still be the transition of moving to deal with, which can be a painful ordeal.

The National Association of Senior Move Managers is a nonprofit, professional association of organizations dedicated to assisting older adults and their families with the physical and emotional demands of middle- and later-life transitions. The association is nationally recognized for its innovative programs, leadership and expertise on issues related to assisting seniors who have to move from their longtime homes to a smaller residence or care facility.

Association members can address all aspects of an elder move, from emotional support to sorting through belongings, preparing written schedules and supervision of the move.

Carolyn Seifried knows first-hand the struggles families endure when confronted with elder-care decisions. She recalls the emotional decisions over personal items, such as what to bring and what to give up, when her own parents made a move.

"When we moved my parents from the 55-and-older community to the continuous-care community, my brother had to give my mother lots of tender loving care when the final piece of furniture was removed from the home and onto the moving van. She was upset," Seifried said. According to Seifried, a great deal of a person's identity, especially for a woman in the older



generation, is tied up in their things and the house where they raised their family. They represent lifetime accomplishments.

“After my father died in 2005, and we moved mom from an independent living arrangement to an assisted-living room, her initial feeling was she no longer had a home,” Seifried said.

At each move, the family was faced with the difficult task of downsizing space and belongings. To make the moves more comfortable for her mother, Seifried tried to create familiarity and continuity in her new surroundings.

“I took the items that we moved and set them up as close to how they had been in the past as possible. Although there was less and less room, I did what I could for her to feel at home,” Seifried said. She was so touched by her parents’ experience and the need for assistance for senior relocations that Seifried left her corporate job and began a business, Home Changes with Heart. Her business, located in Layton, provides move management, assistance and support to individuals and their families. Seifried completed the Certified Relocation Transition Specialist program and is a member of the National Association of Senior Move Managers.

“My job is to listen to the emotions, help them work through them during such moves and be supportive while getting the work done,” she said. Not all elder transition moves are depressing to seniors. Some are ready to make the move to less demanding environments. Possessions and homes they were emotionally attached to may be replaced with positive new surroundings and, for many, a new beginning.

“While helping a woman hang pictures in her new place, (I found) she was happy to get rid of some of the things she’d had for years. She was ready for a new look,” Seifried said.

Mary Kay Buysse, executive director of the National Association of Senior Move Managers, believes its members, who are independent contractors like Seifried, make relocations more positive for their clients. “There is loss and grieving involved when going through lifelong possessions and space planning in a new home. To have a senior move manager assist you through it makes such a difference,” Buysse said.

According to Buysse, senior move managers started up about 15 years ago in the Northeast, when many seniors were moving to Florida and needed more than a moving van company.

“It soon became obvious that with the aging baby boomers, this was an area of explosive growth. We are now seeing assisted care facilities offer this service,” Buysse said.

Moving can be overwhelming and sorting through years of belongings can be emotional, as well as time consuming. Many adult children simply don’t have the time to help parents because they have jobs, they live far away, or they, too, find the task daunting.



Many clients and their families know this is the last move for an elderly parent, and it can ease some of the emotional pain to enlist the services of a neutral party to assist in the transition.

There are 36,000 assisted living options to choose from in the United States, and a wide variety in the level of care that is provided. Senior housing facilities in the Sussex County area offer independent care and/or assisted living.

It is important to assess the needs of a loved one in order to choose the appropriate facility which best meets an individual's physical, emotional and/or medical needs. Some are designed to meet the needs of the frail elderly who require a high level of assistance while others cater to the independent seniors who may require minor assistance with daily living or medication management.

The social workers and admissions personnel at the Home-stead Nursing home in Frankford are first-hand witnesses to the range of emotions expressed by caregivers and residents as the often-difficult decision is made to transition into a nursing care facility.

Typically an adult child or a spouse is making the decision. Since many elderly require constant supervision due to mental or physical disabilities, the choice to place them in a facility where their needs will be met becomes a necessity. Often, a caregiver will feel a tremendous amount of guilt when the decision is made to place a loved one into a continuing care facility.

Lori Baker, a social worker for the Social Service Department for the Homestead, has seen residents express both relief and heartache when moving permanently to a long-term care facility. "Some are relieved not to have to deal with the pressure of living and functioning in the community," said Baker. "Others experience loss and grief from not being independent anymore."

The Homestead offers sub-acute care following a hospital stay when a person is in need of temporary, follow-up care such as rehabilitation, or wound care before returning home. "Some get accustomed to the surroundings and the routine of the nursing home and decide to stay permanently," said Mary Ellen Quinlan, admissions and volunteer coordinator. "Some may feel they were a burden on a loved one and that is a factor which contributes to their decision." Quinlan believes that much of the negativity about nursing homes is in the minds of the generation in need of them. Many of the elderly in today's society remember the stereotypical nursing homes that they may have known a relative to reside at.

"They were more institutional. Those thoughts and memories can be frightening and the reason for reluctance to move into assisted living. As a result, the adult children or the spouse feel a tremendous amount of guilt," said Quinlan. "Assisted living and nursing homes have changed for the better over the decades and many prospective residents are pleasantly surprised."

For information:



According to the State Department of the Public Advocate, an assisted living facility is licensed by the Department of Health and Senior Services to provide housing and meals to residents who need some supportive personal and health services, available 24 hours a day. An assisted living facility provides an apartment with a private bathroom, a kitchenette and a lockable door, and is intended to promote “aging in place,” allowing residents to receive increasing services as their needs change for as long as possible. Assisted living facilities fill a gap for people who are no longer able to live entirely on their own, but who do not need or want nursing home care.

Nursing homes, on the other hand, provide long-term skilled nursing care. Nursing homes are highly regulated, with requirements covering everything from staffing, dental care and pharmacy services to activities and laundry.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services offers a free guide to choosing a nursing home at www.medicare.gov. The center also offers an online tool called Home Compare that can be used to compare nursing homes. If you do not have computer access and would like to compare nursing homes, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and a customer service representative will read the information over the telephone. You can also get a printed copy of the comparison information in the mail, which typically takes about three weeks.

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services prepares nursing home report cards, which consumers can search online at www.state.nj.us/health/senior and at <http://web.doh.state.nj.us/apps2/healthfacilities/fsReportAll.aspx>.

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National Association of Senior Move Managers
www.NASMM.org
1 (877) 606-2766.

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National Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
has advice on its Web site on choosing a care facility
www.aarp.org
click on "Long-Term Care."



November 5, 2008

By JOAN TUPPONCE
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Allison O'Brien felt relieved after she and her siblings persuaded their 85-year-old parents to downsize and move closer to O'Brien.

It took four years to persuade the couple to relocate from their Houston home to Richmond. The move finally took place this past June.

"Two years ago my father had triple bypass surgery," O'Brien said. "I think it was then that they realized the time had come to talk about making a move."

The couple's three children were scattered across the United States in Washington, Tennessee and Virginia.

"Virginia was top of their list," O'Brien explained. "They had lived in Alexandria in the early 1970s. They were comfortable with Richmond and felt like it was a natural choice."

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O'Brien's experience is becoming commonplace as more adults are helping their aging parents downsize and move to a comfortable environment.

Bobbie Sutherland, director of relocation services at Capital Relocation & Realty, helps seniors look at all types of environments, from retirement communities to independent living.



"We work as a resource for them," she said.

Sutherland finds that most seniors want to be in close proximity to health-care facilities, churches and transportation.

"They are all at the top of the list," she said. "They want to be able to get to all of these so they don't have to depend on other people."

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Finding a suitable home and moving her parents was easy and problem-free for O'Brien because of her job as business development manager for Long & Foster Relocation.

The process of moving, however, wasn't the lone factor she had to consider. Moving is an emotional experience for many people, especially seniors who have been vital members of their communities.

"We knew we needed to look at the emotional side," O'Brien said.

To help her parents feel more comfortable about the move, O'Brien provided them with information and Web sites regarding Richmond churches and organizations.

"My parents had some long-term relationships with their church and [various groups]," O'Brien said. "I started sending them bulletins from different churches and when they were in town we would visit those churches."

The process of finding a home for her parents started about a year before the couple moved. They looked at retirement communities but finally settled on a one-story condominium in a small development about four miles from O'Brien's home.

"It was important for them to be close to me," O'Brien said. "We were lucky. A lot of things fell into place for us."

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Downsizing her parent's belongings proved to be an entirely different story.

"It was logistically overwhelming," O'Brien said. "You have to prioritize."



People accumulate all types of items over the years. By the time they hit their senior years, the clutter can be out of control. Leigh Burke often finds a great deal of clutter stuffed into closets or drawers when she is helping seniors downsize.

"It's what's behind the scenes that is the overwhelming task," she said. "They keep everything because they don't know what to get rid of. They can take some of it with them but not all."

Burke owns and operates Gentle Transitions which helps seniors over age 70 downsize. Her services include packing, unpacking and setting up the new household.

When she works with seniors, Burke encourages them to take the items they love with them. Anything they can part with should be given to family members or sold or donated to a charity.

"It's really hard for them but once we get to their new place they are glad to be free of the clutter," she said.

She recalls one client that wanted to take all of the clothes she had in a large walk-in closet to an apartment with a much smaller closet.

"I brought each piece of clothing out and we went through them," she said. "We picked only a few. People need someone to help them make the choices in a calm way."

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Some seniors who are anxious about moving want to have the rooms in their new home look similar to the rooms they will be leaving.

Susan Campbell, president of More than Moving for Seniors, helps her customers reproduce their rooms by taking photographs and working from the photos when she unpacks her client's belongings.

Her services include everycluttering to packing and unpacking.

Campbell started her company 10 years ago after she moved her aging father. One of her goals is to free family members from the duties associated with moving so they can have more time to comfort and reassure their parents during the move.

"I realized it was better for me to pay more attention to my dad than to worry with what he should have taken [with him]," she said.



O'Brien is glad that she had the time to help her parents face all the issues involved in moving. Although she was part of the process, O'Brien admits her parents are very independent.

"They are healthy, so they want to get out and do things," she said. "They drive, which makes a big difference."

Her parents are happy with their move. They have already settled into a new church and a new community.

"They absolutely love their new home," O'Brien said.



Keep the move positive

By Lynn Falwell and Janice Armour

Saturday, November 1, 2008

For women executives in the sandwich generation, the prospect of parents moving from a lifetime family home can be daunting – even when the idea makes good sense.

It could be that Mom and Dad are enthusiastic about relinquishing the many physical chores and maintenance demands that come with a larger home. They may have bought a smaller home or chosen from the many available retirement communities.

This is all progress – but if you don't live near your parents and feel that they'll need some help with the moving process, several questions may come to mind.

How exactly will your parents be able to prepare their current home for sale, deal with decades of possessions, pack, move and unpack? And what should you and your parents keep in mind about this chapter in their lives – which will be stressful and bittersweet, but can also be very rewarding?

Here are some guidelines to share with your parents to help make their move more manageable and a more positive adventure for all of you.

- **Consider hiring** a senior move manager. These professionals help with every aspect of moving – getting a home in market-ready condition; sorting, organizing and packing; working with appraisers, charities and antique specialists; supervising movers; and settling clients into their new homes (even unpacking, hanging artwork and making the beds).
- **Whether you partner** with a firm or go it alone, start early. Starting the process before you have deadlines looming will allow for calmer, more considered decisions. However long you think most tasks will take, triple the time and you will be close.
- **Sorting and decision making** are emotionally tiring. For that reason, extended sessions over a weekend are counterproductive. Limit work sessions to three hours, maximum.
- **The sorting process** brings up many memories. Some days will be less productive than you expect as you reminisce. Stay directed while enjoying those memories. They're important for saying goodbye.
- **Photograph furniture**, antiques, artwork, etc. for insurance and documentation. You might also consider sharing a CD of these photos with family members, so they can choose from the treasures that you're not keeping.
- **Color-code** boxes or items. Color-coding helps you focus on your next tasks and avoid duplicating efforts. Make sure you use appropriate adhesives that won't damage furniture or framed art.
- **For many people, selling** items is less important than knowing that they will make a positive difference. Start thinking early about causes you support and make a list of donation resources in your area.
- **Don't spend time** going from room to room with particular objects. Stay in one room and focus on one task at a time to work faster. Place an empty carton by the doorway for items that belong elsewhere, which you can organize later.
- **Focus on determining** what you want to bring to your new home, not what you will discard or give to others. Eventually, you will need to determine if the other items will be sold, donated, consigned, etc.



A new and smaller living space should simplify your parents' lives, and your own. By following the right process, you and they can more easily move forward into a new and positive chapter in your family's story.

*Lynn Falwell and Janice Armour are co-owners of It's Your Move Inc., a move management company based in Natick that is a member of the **National Association of Senior Move Managers.***

SOUTHERN OREGON'S NEWS SOURCE

Mail Tribune *Discover Life Daily*

By: ADRIAN SAINZ
The Associated Press
September 14, 2008 6:00 AM

Facing medical concerns, 75-year-old Bill Giesenhagen and his wife moved out of their single-family home near Denver last month and into an apartment in an assisted-living community.

He and wife Maggie downsized the right way, starting to plan their move in 2006 and giving themselves enough time to adjust to their new lifestyle. They also hired a senior relocation specialist to help them get organized and deal with the emotional task of selling off belongings they could no longer keep.

Giesenhagen, a diabetic and open heart surgery survivor, and his wife lost almost half their living space when they moved into an 1,800-square-foot apartment at Classic Residences by Hyatt, in Highlands Ranch, Colo. But there, he is guaranteed to receive fast medical care should he need it — a relief to his wife, who still works and often travels.

"She was concerned about my being by myself at home," said Giesenhagen, a retired general contractor. "We don't have to worry about that anymore."

The Giesenhagens' transition to a smaller home was almost seamless, but for many people 55 and older, making the decision to move from a house into a smaller apartment, condo, assisted-living facility or nursing home can be a source of stress and apprehension.



"It's overwhelming for both sides, both physically and mentally," said Nan Hayes, president of MoveSeniors.com, one of many Web sites which helps seniors find relocation resources.

Ideally, the decision to downsize is voluntary and well-planned.

But sometimes, age makes it hard to maintain a single-family home. Other times, financial circumstances, the desire to be closer to family, health issues, a spouse's death or other crises force a move, requiring emotional decisions by seniors and their adult children.

More than 75 million baby boomers are approaching retirement, and, while most will likely decide to stay put, some will be leaving their longtime residences behind.

Elinor Ginzler of AARP recommends starting the planning process as early as possible, even years before the actual move takes place. Early planning makes dealing with a crisis situation, such as a health issue, a bit more manageable.

It's not an easy conversation to have, especially for seniors who have lived in the same place for years. Lines of communication must be kept open between adult children and senior parents to make the switch easier. Planting a "For Sale" sign on the lawn can be a sad moment for all involved.

Relocation can be disorienting, confusing and depressing. Seniors should not feel like a burden if they need to lean heavily on family and friends for advice and guidance.

They should also learn ahead of time about the services available in their new community, from hospitals and in-home nurses to home maintenance and transportation.

Seniors should ask around for a reputable moving company and review their contract to make sure there are no hidden fees.

There are many resources to help. Certified Relocation and Transition Specialists, for example, are relocation experts that help seniors make the transition into their new living space. But costs for their services can run into the thousands of dollars, depending on the job. Also, ask for references and check for complaints filed with the Better Business Bureau.

Other good places to start researching include: MoveSeniors.com, the National Association of Senior Move Managers, and Web sites such as seniormovesrelocation.com and agentlejourney.net.

"We understand the language of tears during the letting-go process," says Sally Allen, chief executive of A Place For Everything, who helped the Geisenhagens move.

Relocation specialists assess what belongings will be moved and how much space is available at the new location. They review the floor plan of the new home to determine what will fit, and helps the family sort their possessions.

Some people may be reluctant to get rid of possessions that won't fit in their less spacious homes. Families must decide what stays and what goes, and it can be difficult for people to say goodbye to that old wedding dress or little Susie's first pair of shoes.

Unwanted items can be disposed of through auction, estate sales or donation, which the relocation specialist helps organize.

Specialists also can help pack and schedule moving times. Once the movers finish their job, the specialist then goes to the new home, helps unpack and sets up the new layout.

"You try to recreate their space as best you can, especially when you are dealing with dementia and Alzheimer's," says Betsy Peterson, a relocation specialist from Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Senior relocation specialists are also helpful for adult children who live in a different city than their parents and cannot be there for each step of the downsizing process. Seniors with no family and a limited support network also can benefit from outside help. Allen explains, "Our services can be more ruthless, in the sense that it's an outsider's objectivity that the senior and the adult child both appreciate because they can talk to us separately about their feelings."

Act 2: My New Life

October 7, 2008

By: Susan Sulich

Woman'sDay
live well every day

Six years ago, after being downsized out of two director of operations jobs that she loved, and unable to find a new position, Adrienne Simpson, a single mom from Atlanta, fell into a depression. "I just shut down," she admits. But she knew she had to pull herself out of it when she noticed her 12-year old daughter falling with her. On their own for a decade, mother and daughter always cited "girl power" as their source of strength. "One day she said to me, 'Mom, what about girl power?'" recalls Adrienne, now 53. In that moment, she knew she couldn't let her daughter see her defeated.

"I didn't want to go back to corporate America," says Adrienne. "I wanted to have control over my own destiny. So I began thinking about what kind of business I could start." Meanwhile, Adrienne's mother, who had also been living in Atlanta, decided to move back to Michigan to be near family. As Adrienne began looking for a moving company that specialized in helping seniors relocate, she realized no such company existed. Bingo! The idea for her business, Smooth Mooove (www.wemoveseniors.com)

Adrienne spent a lot of time researching her business idea and used personal credit cards to finance the startup. Even though it was a struggle getting the company up and running, she always believed it was the right thing to do. "I loved working with seniors best during my corporate career," she says. She also loved problem-solving and helping others, but as she moved up the corporate ladder, those talents were being used less





and less. "I missed the interaction," she says. Now she's back to doing the parts of her previous job that she always loved best. Her business is thriving and there's even talk of franchising.

"I went from sitting behind a desk for 30 years to being a trucker," laughs Adrienne, who not only runs the company, but gets behind the wheel of the moving trucks too. "This is the most gratifying work I've ever done," she says. "Each night when I go to bed I know that I've helped someone."



August 27, 2008

Setting the stage for next phase of life

Local business helps seniors make moving easier

By Leta Edwards

Special to the Statesman Journal

Moving day can send shudders through even those with the most positive outlook on life. What to pack. What to get rid of. Years-old surprises under the bed and under the sofa.

It's bad enough when there's a decade or so of accumulated "stuff" to go through. Imagine what it's like to have to downsize from a half-century or more of acquisitions in preparation for a move to a new and often much-smaller place to live.

South Salem resident Carol Simila helps make downsizing — or the currently preferred term, rightsizing — less daunting, including the planning, packing, unpacking and placement of items in their new location.

Simila is a certified relocation and transition specialist. As a senior move manager, Simila's business, Home Sweet Home Transition Services, assists older adults and their families, not only with the actual moving experience, but with the emotional and physical aspects of sorting through and downsizing a lifetime of memories.

"Most older adults making a transition have not moved in 20, 30 or 40 years and need to downsize considerably," Simila said. "Gradually, as they enter their 70s and 80s, people begin to



feel overwhelmed by the volume of possessions and the unending task of maintaining them. The organizational and physical tasks associated with planning and implementing such a housecleaning and move can be overwhelming."

Simila describes her job as helping clients move from expansion to contraction mode when she's preparing them to move to a home that's the right size. Her tools range from cardboard boxes and tissue paper for packing fragile heirlooms to a simple room planner that helps give a preview of where pared-down furnishings will fit.

Simila's clients come from throughout the Mid-Valley. When relocations are required outside the area, she connects clients with senior-move managers at their destinations.

Support following illness or death

If illness or death precipitates the move, those left responsible for moving, such as children and spouses, might already be emotionally and physically drained.

Jerry Beckman is comfortably at home in the South Salem senior-living community of Terrace Lake Park, but it took him two moves to feel settled following the death of his wife a year and a half ago.

During her illness, Beckman had been kept busy caring for her, shopping and tending to the couple's pets. When she died, he knew he couldn't stay in their Creekside home that had so many memories. He also knew he didn't have the focus and energy to tend to the details of a move.

Beckman found Simila's card on a bulletin board at the South Salem Senior Center and also found the support he needed to make the move.

"In about two and a half days, Carol had arranged for movers," Beckman said. "When the day to move came, she told me, 'go have some coffee.'"

Later, when Beckman saw his newly rented townhouse, the furniture was in place, pictures were on the wall and everything was arranged in the kitchen.

"I only asked to have them move one thing, where the TV was," Beckman said.

Beckman's next move was to Terrace Lake Park, and Simila was his support once again.

"She was fast," Beckman said. "And both times I moved she called the next day to make sure everything was where I wanted it."

Simila says that the amount of time it takes to move a client depends on the complexity of the move, including how large the current residence is and how many possessions must be wrapped for moving or storage. She says a three-bedroom home usually takes about a week to move.

Handling treasured possessions

When preparing seniors for a move, Simila helps them to focus on what they will really need in their new place.

"They are not going to need four sets of dishes, for example," Simila said.

She is particularly sensitive to items that seem to have sentimental value.

Collections accumulated during many years are common moving challenges for her.

"Clients have devoted so much time and energy into building them," Simila said. "They often are very valuable and can be sold. The family also takes them."

When BettyLu and Herb Anderson married 15 years ago, each had lost their spouse, so they essentially merged belongings acquired during two lifetimes. BettyLu, 85, and Herb, 92, are now right-sizing from their two-story, three-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath South Salem home to a 960-square foot, one-bedroom, one-bath cottage in a Lake Oswego retirement community.

BettyLu seems hardly fazed by the boxes and belongings that fill nearly every open space throughout the house, as Simila and an assistant pack and tag and help her decide what to take and what to set aside for relatives, donation or sale.

"I'm excited about the move because I'm able to do it in slow motion," BettyLu said.

"It is the right thing to do and the right time," Simila said. She said she's seen seniors wait too long and be forced to downsize because of illness or physical disability. "If you wait too long, you lose your choices."

Treasured possessions are treated by Simila as they are lovingly embraced by her senior clients. If they are not moved, Simila helps the owner choose family and friends to pass them on to, or suggests a charity, such as Salem's Daue House, operated by the Assistance League.

Occasionally, she arranges for an appraiser to determine whether an estate sale would be useful.

"Estate sellers are interested in valuable antiques and jewelry, as a rule," Simila said. "Most of my clients don't even ask about sales because family has been given most of the really valuable things."

Repeat clients

Midge Hawkins, 86, is using Simila for the third time. The first time she downsized from a large apartment in a complex with residents of all ages to a smaller unit in a complex for seniors only. This time Hawkins is relocating from her Salem residence to one in Keizer.

Simila carefully wrapped a pitcher collection in white tissue paper as Hawkins studied the room layout for her new residence in Keizer.

"She surprised me in that she reads my mind. She really does know what's important," Hawkins said. "I think, 'Oh dear, I'll never find it,' but I always do."

Lifestyle and safety concerns

Simila is always aware of lifestyle and safety issues for the seniors she helps move.

"I might ask, 'What is really going to enhance your lifestyle; will having that trunk in the middle of the room be a hazard?' Most everyone has a walker or some device. We have to make it barrier free."

Simila strongly believes in what she refers to as aging in place, and she helps to make that happen for those who want to remain in their current home.

"I love to see people do that, if they're willing to do what needs to be done to make their current house safe," Simila said. "Most situations could be made safe."

She said, "A lot of people would age in place if builders built houses that span the ages in the first place — from raising children safely to living as a senior with zero-grade entries and no interior stairs."

Simila says she often finds herself in the role of a mediator, but her focus remains on the person she is moving and their well-being.

"Regardless of who hires me — children, a social service agency, family — the senior is my client."

The Washington Post

Mom's House, Your Responsibility

Managing the home after a parent dies can be fraught with difficulties. Here's a guide to bringing about a successful sale.

By Mara Lee
The Washington Post
Saturday, July 19, 2008;

Carylin Waterval's mother had no will -- and no time to prepare one.

At 63, she was diagnosed with lung cancer and died within three weeks, leaving behind a small business and a four-bedroom house in Ashburn. Waterval, who lives in Alexandria and whose brother lives in Texas, found herself in charge of all the financial paperwork -- bank accounts, stock holdings, tax records and unpaid bills. Even though Waterval, 42, is an accountant, she found the volume overwhelming.

Selling a house after a parent's death can be a lengthy and daunting undertaking. Household bills still have to be paid. Then there's the matter of deciding who wants what, how to ship it to them and how to dispose of the rest. There's finding a real estate agent, deciding how to present the house and arriving at a price. And all this work may have to be done from out of town.



Until you sell the house, you have to manage it.



Elinor Ginzler, senior vice president for livable communities at [AARP](#) and an author of "Caring for Your Parents: The Complete Family Guide," said you have to "get an enormous number of death certificates" to get utilities shut off or put in your name.

When Ginzler had to take care of her father's house in New Jersey after he died, she immediately took things that were valuable and portable to her home in the D.C. area and changed the locks.

Nancy Loyd, left, and Mary Ann Brewer run Busy Buddies.
"We cry with our clients," Brewer says. (By Mara Lee for The Washington Post)

Rhonda Macdonald, an estate lawyer in Vienna whom Waterval and her brother hired, said that if the adult children give her the account statements from the month their parent died, last year's tax return and a summary of all the accounts, she prepares everything from there.

Managing the household bills isn't the only concern. Macdonald said it shocks most executors to find out that the house's insurance lapses automatically at the policyholder's death. If there were a burst pipe or a fire during the months between the death and the sale, it would not be covered, even if the premiums were up to date.

Often, that company will not insure the house for the adult children because vacant houses are more subject to mishaps, she said. "You need to shop around for someone who will cover it," Macdonald said.

Once you have the management in hand, it's time to think about clearing out the house, which is likely to be the most time-consuming step.

Many people handle the work themselves, but if you want to hire help, there are two models -- an estate sale and a senior move manager.

Estate-sale companies cull items and organize a sale. They generally take a 25 percent cut, but there has to be at least \$6,000 worth of possessions for them to take a job. If a lot of the furniture is being passed to relatives, an estate sale may not be an option.

Senior move managers help adult children decide what they want to keep, donate and sell, taking a project-management approach. They hire shippers, find charities who will come and pick up the stuff, and may hire an estate sale firm or auctioneer.

Ginzler said you should interview several representatives from both types of companies and make sure you understand the fees for both kinds of services. She said you should consider not just what you can afford, but also how well you meshed with the interviewees. "This is a partnership," she said.



Nancy Loyd and Mary Ann Brewer, co-owners of Busy Buddies, a senior move management service in Springfield, didn't realize how intimate a partnership it would be before they began their business 14 years ago. "We cry with our clients, if the child starts crying," Brewer said.

About 15 to 20 percent of their clients are handling a parent's estate. Busy Buddies' jobs usually cost \$2,000 to \$4,000, depending on the size, how much furniture is shipped out of town, and whether they are asked to perform such duties as meeting with real estate agents for clients who live far away.

Loyd said that before clients hire them, "they just kind of wander around from room to room, making piles of stuff."

That can be wasted time if the kitchen items in one pile and toys in another are all headed to charity. The charities would be happy to sort it once it's in the warehouse.

If the rent or mortgage is pricey, a quick resolution is needed, but if the house is paid for, children shouldn't feel rushed.

"This is time-consuming," Ginzler said. "Don't underestimate it. Pace yourself. Know your own limits."

When she was driving back and forth between Washington and New Jersey, she thought she would spend all weekend going through her father's house. "I could only tolerate one day. It was exhausting physically, and exhausting emotionally. You know, that was okay."

Ginzler didn't hire someone to empty the house, choosing instead to do it with the help of friends who would spend one day sorting and one day going out in New York.

In her father's house, she discovered letters to her parents responding to her birth announcement. She found her father's scrapbook from World War II, which she had never seen while he was alive. She found a scrapbook of her mother's 1936 trip to Europe.

Because her father was such a saver, "I would find I would come home, open up the closets and start purging."

It took Ginzler from December to September to finish the job.

Even though her mother's house was nearby, Waterval said being local didn't make the job easy, just easier. "It's just finding time, because I have my own family," she said. She has two children, ages 8 and 4. "If I didn't have my mother-in-law to handle the estate sale, that would be mind-boggling," Waterval said.



Karen Waterval, her mother-in-law, had retired a few years ago after 33 years in the estate-sale business.

She and her partner Nancy Meigs handled about 50 sales a year, and about half were for people whose parent had died. In most cases, all the contents could be made ready for sale within five days, Karen Waterval said.

Sometimes the children sold the stuff first so the house would be empty when buyers toured it; other times, the estate-sale company would box up some of the things to make the house look less cluttered but keep it furnished until it sold.

After you've figured out where the contents are going, you're ready to sell the house.

Theresa Burt, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker's Georgetown office, said she counsels children to keep their parents' things in the house as it's shown.

She tells children not to worry about dated wallpaper or cabinets. "A lot of people fall in love with potential," she said.

The most recent sale she represented in which adult children inherited a house was in the District's Cleveland Park neighborhood, for two daughters, one out of town and one local.

"They didn't know how to price it," Burt said, which she says is nearly always the case. She showed them recent comparable sales and recommended \$1,625,000. It sold in November for \$1,720,000.

Waterval sold her mother's house after two weeks on the market in May, for \$425,000, \$25,000 less than the initial asking price.

Ginzler said selling your parent's home when the housing market is declining may be frustrating, as you might think it's worth more than the offers you get.

But she said you should remember: "This is not about getting the most, most money for you or for the estate. It is about the proper disposition of things."

Boom!
Boomers & Beyond

Senior move managers help older adults relocate

By Janie Nafsinger
Boom! July 1, 2008



Robbin Martell and her daughter, Lacey Barnes, own SOS Moving Management in Northeast Portland. Their business includes a showroom where SOS clients can sell furnishings they no longer want after they move.

Once upon a time, moving to a new home entailed throwing clothes and books into a few cardboard boxes, loading them into a friend's van and heading back to Mom and Dad's for the summer. But life is more complicated than it was when you were 20 – and that includes changing residences.

Older adults move for lots of reasons. They're trading the big house where they raised their children for a condo in the Sun Belt. They're remarrying and combining households with their new mates. They've grown frail and need assisted living.

Between deciding where to live next, finding a real-estate agent to sell the house and getting rid of stuff (where did it all come from, anyway?), moving can be exhausting, scary, even depressing.

In recent years, a new crop of moving professionals – known as senior move managers – has stepped up to help this nation's rapidly growing 55-and-older population handle the details of relocating. Some of these specialists offer services from start (referring clients to Realtors) to finish (arranging keepsakes in the new home). Along the way they might help diffuse family tension over who gets which heirlooms.

“We're counselors, referees, buffers, an objective party,” says Robbin Martell, who owns SOS Moving Management in Northeast Portland with her daughter, Lacey Barnes.

Martell, a local pioneer in the senior moving industry, started her company 15 years ago out of her home. In January, SOS Moving Management relocated to Northeast 106th Avenue and Halsey Street in the Gateway area, where it opened a 3,800-square-foot furnishings showroom. SOS conducts estate sales for clients if necessary, and any unsold items go to the showroom to be sold on consignment.

Before starting a job, Martell meets with the client's support team – children, caregivers or others – “though sometimes there isn't one,” she says.



She finds out where her clients are moving, helps them decide what belongings they want to get rid of and clears out the home. Barnes, her daughter, coordinates the moves. “I plug in the lamps,” Barnes says.

For big moving jobs, Barnes and Martell bring in other movers. SOS also works with other businesses offering senior services, including attorneys, mortgage companies and long-term care providers. “If we can’t do it, we know someone who can,” Martell says.

“The letting-go process is big. This way, letting go can be one thing at a time, and it helps the whole lifestyle change.”

The owners of two other Portland-area senior moving specialists agree that the stress of relocating takes a special toll on older adults.

“When you’re moving their things, that’s their legacy, that’s their life,” says Bill Smith, who opened his Lake Oswego business, Take Care Move Assistance, in July 2007.

“I think the real benefit of having somebody like us come in is that we’re objective about it,” adds Cynthia Fooshe, who co-owns Later Life Moves NW with Sheryl Lutz.

“Both of us have parents who already have gone through this,” Fooshe adds.

Smith, who retired early from telecommunications construction and management, entered his new career as a senior move manager after recognizing it as a growing industry. His clients so far have ranged in age from their late 60s to late 90s. Some of his oldest clients have children in their 60s who may be physically unable to help with their parents’ move themselves.

One elderly husband and wife whom Smith recently moved had family members come from Canada to take care of them while Smith relocated the couple from a condo to a local retirement facility. “They were able to spend quality time with Mom and Dad rather than worry about the move,” he says.

Fooshe and Lutz started their Southwest Portland business in 2006. Lutz is a real estate broker, Fooshe a professional organizer who also has a master’s degree in marriage and family counseling (which comes in handy because, she says, “you really are working with family dynamics here”).

Their company handles every aspect of moving except the actual move – “we make recommendations to the client on movers,” Fooshe says.

Fooshe meets with the client and the mover, and once the move is completed, she unpacks boxes and helps set up the new home.



I really like helping people get organized,” she says. “It will be difficult, but I see it as a real new beginning.”

* * *

SOS Moving Management, Take Care Move Assistance and Later Life Moves NW are all members of the National Association of Senior Move Managers. The association, founded in 2002 with 22 members, has grown to more than 400 members nationwide. For more information about senior move managers, including information on local companies, visit the association’s website, www.nasmm.com

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NASMM PRESS ARCHIVE • JANUARY – JUNE, 2008



Family Moving Guide - How to Help Your Elderly Parents Move

Spring/Summer 2008

By Allison Bisbey Colter

If your parents are getting ready to relocate to a smaller home or a retirement community, they're about to make one of the biggest changes of their lives. You may not be in a position to help with the heavy lifting, but there a number of ways to help make the process easier for them.

Be Respectful

One of the most important things you can do is to be respectful of what your parents are going through. "Adult children need to realize what a vulnerable position their parents are in when they move from their life-long home," says Nancy Pelham, a Dallas professional organizer and owner of Helping Hands Personal Service.

"They're having to let go of very meaningful things" -- not just possessions, but the home they're accustomed to, their friends and neighbors and perhaps their sense of independence.

Avoid being condescending. People tend to coddle the elderly, but "they're the same on the inside as everyone else," Pelham says.

Help Plan

Because relocating is such an emotionally-charged experience, it typically takes seniors longer than it would younger adults to sort through their possessions and decide what to keep and what to get rid of, so get started early.

Parents may need help organizing a garage sale or transporting items to charity or packing what's left. Once the move is over, they may need help cleaning and putting things away and settling into the new environment.

Be Patient

When an adult child helps an older parent move, there can be a lot of emotional baggage.

"Sometimes things get testy," says Mary Kay Buysse, executive director of the National Association of Senior Move Managers. "The adult child has a million other things (he or she) needs to be doing."



There may be competition among siblings for a piece of furniture or family heirlooms the parent is passing along, or resentment if one sibling feels another isn't helping enough. Try not to make the experience more difficult for your parents than it already is.

Use the Time to Reminisce

When an elderly person goes through closets and attics, going through things they haven't looked at in years, it's going to take longer than an adult child would like. Rather than rushing your parents, use the time to share stories and reminisce. It will help them.

Provide Emotional Support

It's important not to downplay your parents' feelings of sadness or anxiety about letting go of their old life. But it can be helpful to remind them of how much easier their life is going to be in the new place.

"Help them see why or how they will be benefiting," Pelham says, noting that a new home might have a more active social environment, or be easier for them to get around.

Allison Bisbey Colter is a freelance writer in New Jersey whose work has appeared in The Wall Street Journal and American Banker. She is a former editor at TheStreet.com and a former reporter for Dow Jones Newswires.



Family Moving Guide: Nation Preps for Wave of Senior Citizen Moves

Spring/Summer 2008

By Allison Bisbey Colter

Most seniors would like to stay in their current homes as long as possible. Still, the time comes when the four-bedroom house becomes too much work, or they need help with daily activities and have to consider downsizing to a smaller place that needs less upkeep or is closer to family members.

The number of seniors who find themselves in this position is steadily rising as the population ages. "Something's happening that has never happened before," says Mary Kay Buysse, executive director of the National Association of Senior Move Managers, a Washington, DC trade group. "Two populations are hitting later life simultaneously: There are 68-year-olds caring for an 88- or 90-year-old parent.



Buyse says 70-somethings -- the so-called “Silent Generation” -- are finding it more challenging to move their parents than 45-year-olds might.

“Then too, people have never been so dispersed; so many older adults do not have family nearby” to help them move, Buyse says.

The first of the nation’s 78 million Baby Boomers are reaching retirement age, portending a future wave of senior moves, although so far they are largely staying put. A survey sponsored by the American Association of Retired Persons indicates that just 6% of Boomers plan to live in a smaller residence over the next five years.

Still, this generation is so big that there will be more of them doing everything. Buyse says Boomers who enlist NASMM members to help with a parent’s move often use the same senior move manager when they move into an active retirement community.

Senior citizens have unique needs when it comes to moving. They may not be up to the physical burdens of lifting, reaching and bending. If they’re moving to a smaller space, they also need to determine what to bring, where to put it, and to deal with the sale or donation of items that will be left behind. “Most people who are moving from their life-long home have considerable possessions,” Buyse says. “They need help finding a new home for a lot of it.”

Senior moves are also emotionally difficult, particularly if they aren’t voluntary: Change in routine, saying goodbye to friends and neighbors, concerns about a new place.

“A lot of older adults become more isolated, and they have to move from living alone or with one other person to congregate-living,” Buyse says. “It’s like going back to college and living in a dorm.”

In the past few years the senior move industry has sprung up to help seniors -- and their children -- with the transition. NASMM’s membership has mushroomed to 450 from just 70 two years ago. They helped with some 15,000 senior moves last year. They serve as the nearby family that the senior might not have, making the moving-company arrangements, packing and unpacking boxes, and helping set up a senior’s new home.

Allison Bisbey Colter is a freelance writer in New Jersey whose work has appeared in The Wall Street Journal and American Banker. She is a former editor at TheStreet.com and a former reporter for Dow Jones Newswires.



Helping a Senior Downsize

Spring/Summer 2008

By Allison Bisbey Colter

When Nancy Pelham's mother, now 80, was ready to downsize to a smaller home, she made a list of the possessions she wanted to give away and sent a separate copy to each of her four daughters, instructing them to put their name next to anything they wanted and send it back.

"She said, 'I'll decide who gets what, but if I don't know what you want,' I can't give it to you, Pelham says.

Pelham, a Dallas professional organizer and owner of Helping Hands Personal Service, advises older clients who are preparing to move to a smaller residence to do something similar.

If seniors don't have adult children who want these possessions, they may have nieces, nephews or grandchildren. "But if they discover there is no one (in the family), they can start thinking about how to maybe make some money off this to help pay for the new place or cushion their lifestyle."

That could mean hiring someone to run an estate sale or taking items to a business that sells things on eBay.

Figuring out exactly what to keep can be a challenge, if say, a senior is moving from a 3,000 square foot house to a 1,000 square foot apartment or an even smaller space at an assisted living facility. Pelham helps clients get a floorplan of their new space, and will measure it herself if necessary, making note of such items as where the outlets are and the number of closets.

Another important consideration is whether seniors will have their own kitchen, just a microwave or will be eating in common areas.

With this information, Pelham can help seniors decide exactly how much furniture and other possessions they have room for in their new home. Computer software or simple cutouts made to scale can help seniors visualize where things will fit.

Pelham has some tricks for keeping clients organized before the move: Colored sticky dots can be used to designate what seniors are taking with them, what they are selling and what they are giving away. A spare room, or rooms, can serve the same purpose.

Mary Kay Buysse, executive director of the National Association of Senior Move Managers, has another tip:

If an older adult has 10 kitchen cabinets, and there are three at the new living space, tape off three cabinets in the old space and say, "Everything you want to take has to go there."

Buysse adds: "Lots of people have one or two pieces of furniture that really stand out, that are a part of their history; make sure there is space for that."

Allison Bisbey Colter is a freelance writer in New Jersey whose work has appeared in The Wall Street Journal and American Banker. She is a former editor at TheStreet.com and a former reporter for Dow Jones Newswires.

ThisWeekOnline.com

Helping seniors make the move

Published Friday June 6th, 2008

by Hanne Armstrong, This Week Staff

Downsizing a home can be tough at any age, but two local companies are helping to take the stress away for the zoomer generation

At some point many, if not most, of us, will face the problem of moving from our home of many years into smaller, more manageable quarters. Moving at any time of life is a challenge, but when necessitated by your own health or ability to look after yourself, it can be extremely painful and stressful.

Downsizing is never easy, but it can be especially tough for those in the same home for many years.

In the Moncton area there are two companies which, for a fee, will help you or your loved one through the emotional, organizational, and physical problems of 'senior downsizing', or 'rightsizing'.

"Downsizing is a tough one," says Kim Eagles, Professional Organizer and owner of Kaos Solutions. "We help narrow things down and keep things positive. Concentrate on where you're going, not where you've been, and on what you're keeping, not what you're leaving behind."





Kim started her company in 2005, and has a Level 2 Certificate in Chronic Disorganization. Kaos Solutions tends to focus on residential and office moves, but Kim is qualified and sensitive to the problems seniors face when confronted with leaving their home.

Karen Geldart, on the other hand, is in the start-up phase of her business, Graceful Moves, which specializes in helping seniors move.

"I got the idea for my business when I watched an elderly neighbour in Riverview go through a necessary move," Karen recalls. "I already had a Masters in Education and Counselling, am a licensed real estate agent, and have now taken training courses and belong to the National Association of Senior Moves Managers."

Both Kim and Karen went to the U.S. for their training, as the industries of Organization and Senior Moving are established there and not yet in Canada.

"I sit with the seniors," explains Karen, "and we make a floor plan of their new place. That makes parting with things a practical thing, maybe not so emotional. I let them share their memories with me if they want to, and help liquidate their assets to finance the move. Sometimes that means a garage sale, an auction, or even calling in a appraiser."

Both Kim and Karen seem sensitive to the feelings which seniors might experience when forced to move, and both have the same advice to offer: begin 'downsizing' before it becomes a necessity. What do you never use any more? What is broken and won't be repaired? What do you want to give to certain people or places? Then act on these observations.

When asked if this is a sad job, Karen replied,

"It can be, when there's conflict in a family. But it's a new phase of life, and everything's different for everybody. You're helping people, both the senior and their adult children."

Karen has done one presentation on her company's behalf, and has another planned for June 11 in the Community Room of the Sobeys on Vaughan Harvey. It begins at 7 p.m., and seating is limited. Karen will be joined by Investment Advisor Julie McSorley of RBC Dominion Securities.

She can be reached by email at karen@gracefulmoves.ca, or by phone at 875-3262. Kim can be reached at 384-5267 or online at kaossolutions.ca. When the time comes, either for yourself or a cherished relative, it might be an idea to consider involving a neutral professional in that downsizing move.

