

Aging Happens: Making 'the move' may require help from experts

*By Ellen Waldman
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The other day, I ran into one of Ashland's premier builders, John Fields. You know him by his buildings at the corner of Main and Second streets and the development at Clear Creek and East Hersey streets, among others in town. He told me he was reading these columns and said, "I'm strategizing." He was referring to making plans for his own retirement years. This is a good idea for all of us.

If you've been following the columns, you would have read about the full spectrum of housing options. Since housing should be a big part of everyone's strategy, here are some other valuable resources.

I recently met with a local author, Ellen Rubenson. She has written a great book, "When You Get Older, Where Will You Live ... A Practical and Creative Guide." This 400-page book spans every housing option you can imagine. Ellen is also a case manager at a Medford hospital and dedicates a quarter of the book to "finding medical care in your community and at home."

You would be well-served by consulting this very readable resource book sooner than later. It's available at the Ashland library, Bloomsbury Books and on Ellen's website: www.WhenYouGetOlder.com. Just about any questions you might have about housing and medical care is addressed in her thoroughly researched and well-written book.

One area that often bogs down even the most determined family members, as well as their more elderly parents, is figuring out all the moving preparations. For an older person, this whole project is so overwhelming that they would rather stay at home in a less-than-ideal situation than confront the daunting move itself. Family members may not know how to help their parents plan for this often difficult move. Instead, here is where bringing in the experts will make all the difference.

I worked with a couple, The Frosts, who lived in their own home. Their adult children were sure it was beyond the time for them to move out. Their parents did not see it that way. How did it happen that they moved into a retirement community and were actually very happy there? The family contacted local senior move specialists, TLC Solutions (www.tlcsolutionsoregon.com; 541-301-0184). This piece alone was enough to get things out of the talking stage and into some real action.

Here's how TLC helped this family. The owners, Debbie and Nida, came to visit their home and assess their needs. The Frosts owned a lifetime of belongings, some of which might look like junk to others, but to this couple, they held important memories. TLC also went to visit the new apartment and created a floor plan incorporating the most important pieces to the Frosts. The items not going to the new home were divided into categories: to the family members, to a storage unit, to be sold at an estate sale or to be donated to a local non-profit.

Now here's where the magic happened. On moving day, family came and took their parents for a whole-day outing. Everything else was managed by TLC Solutions. At the end of the day, the Frosts showed up at their new apartment. As much as possible, their belongings were arranged exactly as they had been in

their former home. Their pictures were hung on the walls, the china cabinet held their loved items, the beds was made and the boxes were gone.

This is such a relaxing way to move when you're older. It's great if you can recognize the value in allowing the pros to do what they do best. Time and time again, people who have refused to move, or were not safe at home any longer, were able to make this transition, thanks to this type of full-service help.

Your assignment, as John Fields suggested, is to start thinking about what you can do to prepare yourself. Reading Ellen Rubenson's new book and checking out her website, plus getting acquainted with the moving pros, are some simple ways to get on track. Why not start now?