



Aging Happens: Experts help make it a moving — not miserable — experience

By Ellen Waldman

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Last month, I had two clients who required much more care than they could receive while living in their own homes. One woman moved into an assisted living facility in Ashland, and the other woman moved into an adult foster care home nearby. Neither one was at all able to manage the preparations required for a move of this size.

Even when you are fully up and running, and completely functional both physically and cognitively, moving is still overwhelming. Add in frailty, memory loss and other debilitating factors, and it becomes basically impossible. In a past column, I mentioned the organization TLC Solutions (www.tlcsolutionsoregon.com, 541-301-0184), founded in October 2005 by Debbie Bassett and Nida Kozaczuk, Senior Move Managers.

This past month, I called on their services to coordinate both of these moves, in the same week! I was so pleased and amazed at the easy-going manner in which they made this all happen. I spoke with Debbie to find out more about this company and how it serves our community.

1. What is a Senior Move Manager?

DB: To use the proprietary term/title, an individual must qualify to be a member of the National Association of Senior Move Managers (NASMM). As Senior Move Managers, we organize and manage every aspect of a move, with high regard for the goals and needs of the person in transition. We have appreciated our membership with the organization, its over 1,000 strong members, and its high standards. Our affiliation for over 10 years has earned us a diamond rating among our peers.

2. What prevents people from being ready or able to move, and how have you helped them?

DB: What is most alarming is the rising number of people struggling with diminishing cognitive abilities. Change for them becomes challenging and difficult because of their fear and anxiety. This kind of transition requires a larger team of professionals and family members to help process and execute a move. Senior Move Managers arrive early on moving day to gather and pack the important and essential possessions. Once at the assisted living facility, foster care home, or memory care community, the movers place their furnishings according to a pre-established floor plan, while the unpacking, organizing, and staging is being executed by the Senior Move Management team. We often take pictures to help duplicate favorite and familiar arrangements. The client arrives to a completely functional and familiar living space.

3. What is the full range of services that you offer?

DB: Transitions are overwhelming events with many details to consider and work through. As Senior Move Managers, we are well equipped to help navigate all these details in order to eliminate chaos, and make the transition as stress-free as possible. TLC Solutions partners well with the individual(s) in transition, family members, and other professionals to streamline and simplify the moving processes.

These processes include downsizing and deciding what to pack, packing for moving, storage and other possible directions, floor planning for an efficient and functional living space, unpacking and organizing according to client's preferences, and coordinating services with other professional providers.

4. What would be helpful for people to consider as they age, with regards to moving and downsizing?

DB: A phrase we hear and use is "less is more" and the Millennial's are truly embracing this way of living. Items that are often kept with the intention of passing on to family is not always working out too well. More adult children are not interested in their family's possessions. Comprehensive decision-making ahead of time concerning one's belongings is extremely helpful.

5. What can people do now to help themselves prepare for the future?

DB: Looking ahead and preparing for transitions can be eased by releasing our superfluous belongings. Whether these get divided among family members, friends, are sold or donated, just starting this process is very helpful. Hiring a professional to obtain an unbiased opinion concerning possessions is best facilitated before change is required/demanded (sooner than later). A Senior Move Manager works one-on-one, and at a flexible pace, to achieve the goals of our clients in preparation for change. It helps to think that our needs change as the seasons of our lives change.

All great info to know, and now back to my two clients. Before they moved, they both helped select the most important items to take with them, including the pictures for the walls. They felt relieved to know that this entire complicated process was being handled by a team of professionals. After they spent moving day on an outing with their long-time care providers, they arrived at their new homes, happily surprised by how familiar it already felt. Seeing a positive outcome like this reinforces my recommendation to hire the professionals and not feel like you have to attempt this on your own.