

Spectrum of housing options begins with a new home

*By Ellen Waldman
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I recently received an email from Mr. H, “87 years plus.” He asked about options for his living situation. He listed living with a grown child, in a retirement home, a nursing facility, or a “rest home.” If these are the choices, he asks, “Where then will your most real home be?”

Good question. The answer is anywhere you live can be your “real” home. People have said, “I’m only leaving my house feet first.” They can’t imagine their life being anywhere else. Some end up staying in their home beyond the time it’s safe to be there. This drives some of their adult children crazy with concerns.

How do you know when it’s time to move out of your current home? The best scenario is where you can see the bend in the road ahead and start adjusting your own course. Here are some other guidelines. If you need personal help in your home 12-24 hours a day to meet your basic needs, this could be a clue. If you live alone and don’t see anyone else for several days, the time to move is at hand. Perhaps a spouse has passed on, or you received a diagnosis that’s not going to improve with time. Even when the writing is on the wall, people resist this change. Sometimes it practically requires a crowbar to get people out of their house!

If this phase of your life includes a change of address, you’ll need to know what’s available. The spectrum of housing options in Ashland and the surrounding communities is vast. Understanding what each one offers, how they’re different and what each costs takes a lot of research.

Here’s the full range of local options. This article addresses the first two choices; more information will follow in future columns:

- A new home better suited to your growing needs;
- An active retirement (or independent living) community;
- Assisted living facilities;
- Dementia care (memory care) facilities;
- Adult foster care homes;
- Skilled nursing facilities; and
- Living with your family in their home.

The first option is a different home. A new-to-you home in a local neighborhood could be more suited than your current one. A single-level is important, for instance. This home will need to be adaptable for “aging-in-place” as things continue to change. A better location might also allow you to walk into town for errands.

The second option is a retirement community. They have created their homes and units with aging in mind. A community also makes it possible to socialize and participate in fun and enriching activities. However, if you needed personal care at your current home, you’ll need to provide that here as well. Local options include:

- Award-winning Mountain Meadows in Ashland, “dedicated to the pursuit of active retirement living” (mtmeadows.com; 541-482-1806). They offer a full range of homes and condos at various prices.
- In Medford, one retirement community is The Springs at Veranda Park (thespringsliving.com; 541-326-0067). These units are rented on a monthly basis. Fees are in the \$2,500-\$3,000 range. You can find other options in the Senior Resource Directory.
- The Rogue Valley Manor in Medford is a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) and has its own unique long-term options (retirement.org/rvm; 541-857-7600). The cost for homes and units here are quite varied, plus there is an entrance fee.
- A new development in the Twin Creeks community in Central Point was created by a local builder in coordination with Age-Friendly Innovators (agefriendlyinnovators.org; 541-261-2037). These homes are fully suited to aging individuals and have received the Lifelong Housing Certificate from Rogue Valley Council of Governments (rvcog.org/LifelongHousing/2012LifelongHousingBrochureFinal.pdf). It’s becoming a model for communities around the state and beyond. Oregon leads the way!

My suggestion is to begin checking out these and other options while you have the luxury of time and choice. This is a major part of pre-planning for your future needs.