

DOWNSIZING A HOME DOESN'T HAVE TO BE OVERWHELMING

Local relocation experts talk at Duncaster about ways to make the move to smaller quarters less stressful

Bloomfield, CT – Aug. 7, 2008 – Downsizing is a rite of passage that many older adults greet with a mix of relief and dread. As many look for ways to simplify their lives and provide for their long-term health needs, the idea of moving to a retirement community often looks like a solution. That usually means moving from a large home where they've spent many years to an apartment. With that decision comes the need to downsize their possessions, a process that can be stressful, but can go much easier with a little preparation and the right resources, according to experts at a recent seminar at the Duncaster Retirement Community in Bloomfield.

Making the Decision of What to Keep - "One of the biggest challenges facing older adults who are downsizing is what to do with all their belongings," said Duncaster's Move-in Coordinator, Martha Sterrett. She recommended that people take a good look at their belongings and really decide which items mean the most. "When you walk into your new home, you will want it to feel like home, so plan to surround yourself with the only the furniture and memorabilia that you absolutely love and pare your list back from there." If there are possessions you value, but are not ready to part with, Mrs. Sterrett advises putting them into storage for awhile to see if you miss them. "Many of our residents confess to me that they haven't been down to their storage bins in years. The things they thought were important no longer seem so after awhile, but it's good to give yourself that option."

Holding a Giving Away Party - Your treasures are important to you, so make sure those you eliminate go good "homes." After you make the decision about what you won't be taking, Ms. Sterrett suggested having a "Giving Away" party and asking family and friends to identify items they'd like to have. "You'll feel better knowing that your treasures have been passed along to the people you love. From there, it's easier to part with the rest."

Parting With Things That Are Still Useable – In the process of downsizing you will inevitably come up with items you no longer want, but are still in working order. "It can be especially difficult to know what to do with those items that aren't particularly valuable or important to you but are still in good working condition," says Jason Wlochowski, a senior partner in a company called Dutiful Daughter. Based in Manchester, this family-owned business assists people with disposing of home contents during a life transition. Older computers, televisions and VCRs often fall into this

category. His company will try to match the better quality items with nonprofit organizations. He brings nonworking or hopelessly outdated items to transfer stations and dumps or calls for curbside pickup if available in town.

Handling the Physical Strain - Downsizing is hard physical work and doing the heavy lifting is often the most challenging obstacle for older adults attempting it. Companies like Dutiful Daughter can also be contacted to handle this, take care of dump runs, deliver furniture to relatives or storage bins, organize tag and estate sales and even clean up the house and perform minor repairs afterwards. Some moving companies will also do more than the traditional move from house to house. Tony Lupoli, of Woodland Movers and Warehouse in Hartford, said he is sometimes called upon to deliver some furniture to the new home and some to the home of family members in another location. His crew also often helps with the unpacking since, for some older adults, this is too physically demanding to handle personally.

Dealing With the Valuables - Since some long-time homeowners have accumulated collectibles and heirlooms that may be worth considerable money, disposing of them in an appropriate manner is another part of downsizing. This process should start with an appraisal on these items from a reputable antiques dealer who can help sell or auction them for a commission. Jamie Selig, of Central Street Antiques and Auctions in Windsor, said a large portion of his business involves traveling to homes in the area to look at antiques and collectibles that people want to sell.

"The internet has really expanded our capacity to help people find buyers for a wide range of items and get the most money for their items. It's also a plus that the buyer pays the shipping," he explained, adding that many people are surprised at how "collectible" their items are. Some older golf clubs, for example, can be worth considerable money.

"Clearly, downsizing is an adventure," said Duncaster's Marketing Director, Patty Roohr. "Yes, it can be emotionally hard to part with a long-time home and belongings, but for those with a sense of adventure, this process can actually be very freeing and well worth doing for the security and peace of mind it can bring."

About Duncaster

Duncaster is Bloomfield's signature life care retirement community. This campus of 190 independent residences, assisted living and Duncaster's Caleb Hitchcock Health Center is designed to help residents live life to the fullest by providing security and fulfillment. The community includes an aquatic and fitness center and an on-site health clinic. Residents can

participate in ongoing education, social and cultural programs. For more information, see www.duncaster.org or call (860) 380-5005.
