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United States: Consultants Assist Seniors with Moving

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Although most seniors would prefer to remain in their own homes as they age, sometimes a move into a smaller place, a retirement community or a nursing home is necessary for safety, health or other reasons. Moving can be overwhelming, both physically and emotionally. Many older adults have not moved in 30 or more years, finding the process especially stressful. Luckily more and more seniors are discovering a new resource called “senior move managers” or (SMMs)-moving consultants that can help them through such transitions.

Many seniors live far away from their children or have no surviving family. Adult children may be divided between their careers or their own family obligations. In some cases the family may already be emotionally and physically drained from a death or illness precipitating the move. By hiring an SMM, seniors can get help with the many organizational and physical tasks associated with moving.

SMMs help seniors by first developing an overall move plan. They help with organizing, sorting and downsizing, including the difficulty of parting with possessions. SMMs often arrange garage sales, help pack and hire movers as well as help unpack and set up the new home.

Margit Novak, President of Moving Solutions, a Senior Move Manager Company, says the most rewarding aspect of her business is the clients. “Most often they will comment, ‘I couldn’t believe your staff member took such pains to make my new home pretty (or safe)’. Nothing is more important than that.”

Parting with loved possessions can be especially difficult, Novak explains. By using a SMM, seniors can donate their things to charitable causes. “It’s much easier when you know its going to someone who will really use and appreciate it,” says Novak.

There are currently close to 200 SMMs in the United States. The industry is rapidly growing, particularly among baby boomers, most of them women with backgrounds in gerontology, social work, health care or psychology. Others have finished one career and are looking to start their own business. SMMs even have their own trade group, the National Association of Senior Move Managers (NASMM), claiming 110 members.

There are many reasons that make hiring an SMM a good idea, says Donna Willman, a founding member of NASMM, “The most important is probably peace of mind-for the senior and for their family. Moving is stressful at any age, but when you add the decisions required for a downsizing you add a ton of work plus the sense of loss to the mix.” An experienced and understanding SMM can be an objective third party and help seniors and their families through the process, says Willman. For many older adults facing a life transition, SMMs are the perfect solution to a some-times difficult and stressful situation.

For more information, visit the NASMM website at: <http://www.nasmm.com/>.