



Senior Relocation: new resources for a new age

Downsizing. Moving. Home Transition. All have become a rite of passage for the 55+ population of today. But what about the services available to help ease the moving process? Who are the resources and what are their qualifications?

Much has been written in the past few months about Senior Relocation. Articles have appeared in *AARP Magazine*, *Forbes*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times* and many, many more. *Kiplinger's Report* has called it one of the great Baby Boomer opportunities of the future.

The needs of a 55+ client moving from a long time family home can be quite diverse, and are often complicated by issues such as family dynamics, health conditions, personal crisis and financial constraints. It is important for consumers to understand available resources and their qualifications.

Five years ago, the fledgling industry of Senior Relocation organized into the National Association of Senior Move Managers. Today, there are over 400 members of NASMM operating throughout the United States and Canada.

Qualified resources

Recognizing the need for industry standards and policy, NASMM endorsed the Certified Relocation Specialist (CRTS)[™] program in 2006. CRTS professionals provide specialized services to assist those 55+, their families and caregivers through the entire moving process. CRTS are trained to understand basic social, emotional and medical issues related to a senior client, as well as space planning, packing, sorting, organizing and downsizing. CRTS screen and qualify many vital resources to assist with a move, including Realtors[®], moving companies, antique dealers, estate sale specialists, waste removal and more. CRTS professionals focus on alleviating client and family stresses associated with home transition and help the client settle into a new home environment as seamlessly as possible. All CRTS certified professionals are required to pass criminal background checks and meet training, testing, ethics, insurance and continuing education requirements.

The focus of these specialized “move managers” is on the client’s future. The key to their success is granting the client a sense of control over the downsizing (or “rightsizing”) process, while helping them preserve their identity by honoring family memorabilia and personal possessions. A CRTS professional also provides support for adult children who may not fully recognize the impact relocation may have on their parents and their relationships. Such family members often benefit from third party guidance and perspective.

It is important for seniors to be able to rely on secure, caring, knowledgeable and qualified resources such as the CRTS professionals. Many other businesses such as movers and liquidators can help with a move, but have specific agendas and limited resources to cope with very real senior relocation stress factors. In those instances where proper support is not provided before, during and after the move process, seniors can suffer setbacks that range from disappointment to disorientation, depression, isolation and illness.



Financial benefits

To avoid costly mistakes and regrets, major lifestyle changes and home transitions require pre-planning whenever possible. In crisis situation, Geriatric Care Managers can help families and recommend options for a sound lifestyle approach. Yet, when the decision is to move or modify the current home to age-in-place, a Certified Relocation and Transitions Specialist (CRTS)[™] understands the entire home transition process and can help clients reduce stress and costs through established practices.

Client home evaluations are often offered at no fee. After an initial visit, a CRTS will help plan the transition, coordinate resources, manage the sale of assets to optimize worth and establish new home space plans to help save on moving expense. Services are “ala carte”, so the project is tailored to individual client needs and budget. By organizing the home, packing and downsizing, CRTS specialists not only reduce the very real stress of a major life transition, but help make the home more appealing and valuable to potential buyers.

Summary

We have entered a new era in aging. Today’s seniors deserve to have appropriate resources and information so they may make informed decisions and pave the way for the millions of baby boomers in their wake. Moving forward with a late life home transition does not have to be excessively painful or difficult. By understanding proper sources for quality, affordable services, ageing adults gain the support they need and a sense of control over their own entry into the next phase of life.

For more information or to find a CRTS near you, go to www.MoveSeniors.com or call 1-800-519-7316.