

Caught in the Middle When Moving Mom & Dad

The **Springboard Group**™ Guest Author:

Susan Campbell
More Than Moving For Seniors, Inc.
804-232-6480

You work full-time and are recently divorced. Both of your children are involved in sports and other school activities. Recently, your father's health is making it more difficult for him to get to the store and other activities. He lives alone in the house where you grew up and is not eating well or socializing. As his primary contact, you find you are spread thin, trying to help him and pay attention to your family and work. You realize he needs to move to a retirement community where he will have good meals, social contact and assistance, but the house is filled with 43 years of your family's life. Plus there are many other decisions that surround a move that you don't have time to research. You worry that if he doesn't move, his health may deteriorate more and create greater time constraints for you.

Working with parents to move out of the family home creates many opportunities and challenges. It can be a fun time to reminisce over family history and memories. Or it can be filled with stress because of time constraints and different agendas. Moving can be difficult at any time of life, but later-life moves have additional considerations. And if the move is the result of a health crisis, adult children are often overwhelmed by the many tasks involved.

The best approach is to begin the conversation about moving, looking at the pros and cons of staying in the home and moving to a retirement community. Research and visit a few communities. Come prepared with questions and take notes. It is helpful to have a form with your questions for each community so that you can compare the different amenities offered.

Begin as early as possible with sorting through the house and making decisions about what to move. Create a floor plan based on the new home to make sure furniture fits and doesn't create walking hazards. Use furniture in different ways, i.e., a chest of drawers can hold sheets and towels instead of clothing or a small truck can serve as storage and a coffee table. Remember that parents and adult children may have different timetables and agendas. For the adult children, time may be tight and they may want to make quick decisions. For the parents, the move may represent more than moving from one location to another – it may be a move away from the home where the family was raised.

It's wise to get help, either from family and friends or professionals. There are many tasks that can be handed off so that the adult children can focus on the needs of the parents. Certain tasks require specific attention, like working with

attorneys, realtors and doctors. But other tasks, like sorting and packing, can be delegated to others. Professional help can guide you through the move process with experience, advice and hands-on help and allow the family to pay attention to the more important aspects of the move.

Guest Author, Susan Campbell is a Senior Move Manager with 9 years experience in helping seniors and their families to downsize and move. Susan got her training through moving her father and many other seniors, working with other Senior Move Managers throughout the United States and educating herself about the concerns of a later-life move through research, reading and working with professionals who work with seniors. Her favorite kind of client is a person who feels overwhelmed by the prospect of moving. She enjoys sorting through years of accumulation in a home and bringing order to the move process for her clients. Susan is currently the President-elect of the National Association of Senior Move Managers and will serve as President in 2008-09.

