



There is an Alternative to RETIREMENT HOME LIVING

Aging in place is the concept of planning ahead, thinking of how to modify your home so you can live safely, comfortably and independently as you grow older.

With our aging population and long wait lists for some of the other housing options, aging in place is a trend that is gaining popularity.

Of course 'living in your own home' may not mean the current family home. Many older adults, starting with Baby Boomers, are finding that a move to a smaller more accessible home is a realistic alternative to retirement home living. Smaller properties, one floor designs and living closer to amenities can all be appealing.

The plan may even include making a move from owning to renting. For some, freeing up money from the family home and renting can provide a realistic option where you still live independently but without the worry of home ownership.

No matter where you choose to live, some simple alterations can ensure your safety and independence. Entry to your home, narrow doorways, stairs to a second floor, lack of accessibility in the bathroom and kitchen are all challenges that can be addressed.

An assessment with an Occupational Therapist is a good first step to obtain recommendations for safe independent living in your current home or one you are considering purchasing. A professional contractor who specializes in barrier free renovations will then be able to determine the physical work required to meet your needs.

To simplify entry to your home, a ramp or simple platform lift can be installed at one of the entranceways.

Doorways can be widened to ensure safe passage of a wheelchair.

Stairs do not necessarily mean that the upstairs or downstairs are off limits. Stair lifts, even for stairs with a bend or a landing half way up have become both realistic and affordable. And surprisingly, so have elevators.

Bathroom makeovers can be as simple as the installation of grab bars to modifications that include a walk in/roll in shower or walk in bathtub.

The location of a laundry room can be changed to make one more chore manageable. Of course, the help of a housekeeper could mean the laundry room is just fine where it is!

A weekly housekeeper is just one example of a service that could be

arranged to keep life simple. Grocery delivery, home care, companion services or help with the outside lawn maintenance and snow removal are all options. And if your aging in place plans include a move to a condominium, some of these services will not be needed.

Planning for retirement and the golden years often involves the help of financial planners and tax consultants. But other professionals, such as a real estate broker who specializes in both accessibility and working with seniors is a logical addition.

Whether you plan to stay in your current home with modifications or move to a smaller home, there are numerous services that can help including charities that pick up donations when you begin to de-clutter, home organizers, haul away services, and professionals who specialize in the whole area of barrier free renovations.

Homes that have been modified to accommodate wheel chairs or other mobility aids are in high demand by both buyers and renters. You can be confident that any changes you make to your home will appeal to a buyer - or someone wishing to rent - in the future.

Aging in place is a reasonable alternative for many older adults. When you consider how much effort most people put into planning for their retirement, it makes sense to include working with a reputable real estate broker who understands the niche market of accessible homes and condominiums. ■

*Jeffrey Kerr, Broker, RE/MAX Unique Inc.
416-424-2222
www.AccessibleHomeFinder.com*