

KENDALL GAZETTE

Ask Helen



Why Should I Move to a Retirement Community in This Economy?

BY HELEN SHAHAM

Q. *My wife and I are in our mid 80's and have lived in our own home for over 50 years. For a long time we were thinking about moving to a retirement community, but now, in this economy, it seems to be the wrong time to make a move. What do you think?*

A. It stands to reason that in these uncertain economic times seniors may think that remaining in their own homes rather than moving to a retirement community is to “play it safe”. Well, this may seem like a viable option as long as one is healthy and independent. However, once you and/or your wife’s needs change, (and everyone in their 80’s knows they do...) life becomes pretty difficult and a move at such time becomes a daunting undertaking. These are the people that end up saying: “I wish I moved here sooner!”

Too often, older adults and their families view senior living communities such as The Palace as a luxury instead of a necessity. Being cared for in a comfortable, safe and secure environment is not reserved exclusively for the wealthy. In fact, throughout The Palace’s 30 year history, thousands of everyday families have entrusted us with the care of their loved ones.

Martha and Michael Backer became a part of The Palace 10 years ago when Martha’s grandmother moved to The

Palace Royale, which offers “catered living.” Michael’s mom has lived in The Palace Renaissance, an assisted living community for the past six years. “Most seniors want to stay in their homes until they can’t go on anymore,” explained Michael. “We found that Martha’s grandmother had waited too long. The reality is that a retirement community is not that expensive when you consider the costs of maintaining a house such as a mortgage, utilities, home & lawn maintenance, security, housekeeping, insurance, and taxes. You also save on costly expenses such as food, entertainment, gym membership, and car expenses (auto payment, gas, insurance and repairs)...it’s all included here.”

For Ceferino “Pookie” Mendez, an aide at home seemed the perfect solution to assisting his elderly mother and providing the peace of mind his family needed. He soon realized that his mother would frequently be seated in front of the television with very little opportunity for social stimulation. “That was no life. She was a prisoner in her own home,” he said. “As much as we wanted to care for her, we didn’t have the ability (or sometimes even the patience) to provide for all her needs. We are a working couple, and it put a great strain on us and on our relationship... At The Palace, they know how to do everything, and all we had to do was to come to visit, to join her in The Palace’s wonderful dinners and parties...”

Continuously, our residents talk about the peace of mind our communities provide for both them and their families. Jeanne Sands, a resident at our Independent Living Community, The Palace Suites, says her family sleeps better at night knowing she’s surrounded by caring, well-trained staff.

And, Alicia Botero’s family doesn’t worry when she is unavailable from 4:30 to 8 p.m. every day because they know she’s simply enjoying all the activities, shows, programs and outings The Palace offers.

It is no secret that South Florida’s housing market has been affected by the global financial crisis; however, most seniors bought their houses decades ago and may have a considerable amount of equity. Waiting for the market to recover in order to get your dream offer can take a few years – years that a person in their 80’s simply may not have... therefore it is better to either accept the market rate or ask us about our Security Agreement which is designed to help you in this economy. You’ll still come out ahead and be able to enjoy carefree living at a senior community.

When you are in your 80’s NOW is the perfect time to do the necessary change. Despite the downturn in the economy, you still have your own needs... You owe it to yourself to arrange for a lifestyle in a safe, comfortable and caring environment. After all, no one likes to be a burden on his family...

Perhaps resident Jeanette Sastre said it best: “Don’t wait for tomorrow. It is not guaranteed. There’s no better time than today.”

Helen Shaham and her husband Jacob have been operating retirement communities for nearly 30 years. The Palace Suites in Kendall is a luxury Independent Living Community for active seniors. In addition, The Palace at Kendall campus is home to two Assisted Living Residences and a Nursing & Rehab Center. They also operate The Palace Gardens Assisted Living Community in Homestead, Homestead Manor Nursing Home and The Palace @ Home, a Medicare Certified Home Health Agency. Their two newest projects are The Palace at Weston – luxury living for those 55 and over; and The Palace Tel-Aviv, a continuing care retirement community in Israel. They have two communities under development – The Palace at Weston Senior Living and The Palace at Coral Gables. More information can be found on the company website, www.thepalace.org or by calling 305-270-7000.