

Senior living communities

By ANNA CHANG-YEN | Green Shoot Media

If you find yourself with an empty nest and you're looking to make a move in your golden years, you may find a new nest to feather in a senior living community.

The idea that senior living communities are for "old" people is outdated, as today's developments offer many ways for people to stay active long after they've retired.

WHAT IS A SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY?

The Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 defines senior living communities as housing units "intended and operated for occupancy by at least one person 55 years of age or older per unit." These can include condos, co-ops and mobile home parks.

According to HOPA, at least 80 percent of occupied units must be occupied by at least one person 55 years of age or older per unit. Because these communities are intended specifically for seniors, they are exempted from Fair Housing Act protections against housing discrimination based on age.

Senior living communities often provide recreation for their senior residents, such as a golf course or fishing trips; organized activities, such as wine tastings and musical performances; and increased security.



© FOTOLIA

Today's senior living communities offer activities that range far beyond bingo to keep seniors active and help them enjoy their retirement.

BENEFITS

Residents of senior living communities can enjoy not having to do yard work and maintenance, making friends with other people their age, and a quieter neighborhood that may be more geared to their lifestyle in retirement.

Senior communities also may offer increased security as compared to homes in a regular neighborhood, so seniors can feel safe at home

and their family members will rest easy knowing someone is looking out for them. Newly built homes also may include technology that helps seniors feel secure, such as home automation and security systems.

CONSIDERATIONS

One concern seniors may have is what will happen if they want to leave their home in a senior housing communi-

ty to children who are under age 55. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, this matter is handled by state and local laws, so be sure to ask your real estate agent or attorney about this potential situation.

Some older people may not think they're ready to make the change to a senior living community. Today's senior living communities are a far

REAL ESTATE 101

Senior housing help from HUD

The Department of Housing and Urban Development offers resources for seniors who are looking for housing. Visit <http://1.usa.gov/1Ldfppz> for information about resources and protections for senior citizens in the housing market.

cry from the "retirement communities" of yesteryear. It's a good idea to visit several properties before you make a decision, so you can get an idea of how well your lifestyle will fit with a potential new community. If the community has a homeowner's association, read the by-laws and know what your rights and responsibilities will be.

It's important to have a good idea of what your financial obligations will be. Use of common areas and some recreation, as well as basic maintenance, may be included, but other amenities and activities will likely cost extra. Make a budget that takes these factors into consideration.



© FOTOLIA

Today's senior living communities offer activities that range far beyond bingo to keep seniors active and help them enjoy their retirement.

Senior living communities

By ANNA CHANG-YEN | Green Shoot Media

If you find yourself with an empty nest and you're looking to make a move in your golden years, you may find a new nest to feather in a senior living community.

The idea that senior living communities are for "old" people is outdated, as today's developments offer many ways for people to stay active long after they've retired.

WHAT IS A SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY?

The Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 defines senior living communities as housing units "intended and operated for occupancy by at least one person 55 years of age or older per unit." These can include condos, co-ops and mobile home parks.

According to HOPA, at least 80 percent of occupied units

must be occupied by at least one person 55 years of age or older per unit. Because these communities are intended specifically for seniors, they are exempted from Fair Housing Act protections against housing discrimination based on age.

Senior living communities often provide recreation for their senior residents, such as a golf course or fishing trips; organized activities, such as wine tastings and musical performances; and increased security.

BENEFITS

Residents of senior living

communities can enjoy not having to do yard work and maintenance, making friends with other people their age, and a quieter neighborhood that may be more geared to their lifestyle in retirement.

Senior communities also may offer increased security as compared to homes in a regular neighborhood, so seniors can feel safe at home and their family members will rest easy knowing someone is looking out for them. Newly built homes also may include technology that helps seniors feel secure, such as home automation and security systems.

CONSIDERATIONS

One concern seniors may have is what will happen if they want to leave their home in a senior housing community to children who are under age 55. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, this matter is handled by state and local laws, so be sure to ask your real estate agent or attorney about this potential situation.

Some older people may not think they're ready to make the change to a senior living community. Today's senior living communities are a far cry from the "retirement communities" of yesteryear. It's a good idea to

visit several properties before you make a decision, so you can get an idea of how well your lifestyle will fit with a potential new community. If the community has a homeowner's association, read the by-laws and know what your rights and responsibilities will be.

It's important to have a good idea of what your financial obligations will be. Use of common areas and some recreation, as well as basic maintenance, may be included, but other amenities and activities will likely cost extra. Make a budget that takes these factors into consideration.

REAL ESTATE 101



Senior housing help from HUD

The Department of Housing and Urban Development offers resources for seniors who are looking for housing. Visit <http://1.usa.gov/1Ldfppz> for information about resources and protections for senior citizens in the housing market.



HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Section 202 program: a program that helps expand the supply of affordable housing with supportive services for the elderly by providing very low-income elderly with options that allow them to live independently but in an environment that provides support activities such as cleaning, cooking, transportation, etc.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

AD SPACE