

Transitioning Beyond the Family Home

Considering options for you (or your parents)

There comes a time for many people when maintaining a home, along with shopping, cooking, and cleaning, becomes too great a burden. In addition, residing in a neighborhood filled with working families can be lonely as busy people shuttle to and from work and school with little time to stop and visit. Add to this scenario declining health and the need for readily available assistance, and you have the foundation for considering a transition from your home to a continuing care residence.

In order to better understand the keys to a successful transition, we visited The Canterbury, a highly respected continuing care residence in Rancho Palos Verdes, currently celebrating its 29th year as part of this community.

In a facility such as the Canterbury, a range of services are offered to allow residents to remain in their new residence as their healthcare needs increase. From independent living, residents can switch to assisted living and even to skilled nursing care if needed. It is common for couples to require different levels of care, and arrangements are made to meet the specific needs of each spouse.

The keys to a successful transition from your home include thorough preparation, a positive attitude, and a supportive network of family and friends. We experienced parts of this life changing process with our long-time clients and friends, John and Jane (names have been changed), who graciously shared their journey.

John and Jane made the decision to move from their home after much thought and soul searching. They determined that the camaraderie of others and availability of services outweighed their desire to stay in their home. They wanted to remain in the Palos Verdes community, where they raised their

Levels of Care

Increasing levels of care are typically available in a continuing care facility:

Independent Living: Unregimented lifestyle with enriching activities and services available.

Assisted Living: Help with all activities of daily living and medications, three meals a day, transportation to physician appointments, housekeeping, and laundry.

Skilled Nursing: 24-hour care provided by medical professionals to chronically ill and frail elderly residents.



Transitioning Beyond the Family Home

family and have many friends. The Canterbury was a logical choice as several of John and Jane's friends are residents and a full range of activities and services are available.

Their due diligence process took the better part of a year. John and Jane visited the facility many times, had meals with residents, brought their children to tour the facility and discussed their concerns with facility staff, family, and trusted advisors, all before making the final decision to proceed with the move.

The staff at Harris Financial worked closely with John and Jane throughout their decision-making process to ensure that all financial and estate planning issues were thoroughly addressed.

Following are several key issues that need to be carefully considered before proceeding with a transition out of your home:

- 1. Facility purchase/rental options:** Evaluate available options for entering your chosen facility, including varying levels of deposits and/or rental expenses. The best option for you depends on your available assets and cash flow, as well as the estimated length of time you will spend in the facility. A comprehensive financial plan and clear understanding of any and all contracts will be invaluable in determining the best option.
- 2. Disposition of home:** Consider whether equity is needed from the home in order to move to the new facility. Be sure to understand the potential tax impact from the sale of a highly appreciated home.
- 3. Rental of home:** If equity is not needed from the home, consider net cash flow opportunities by renting the home and the potential benefit of future appreciation. Be aware of the specific tax rules for the sale of a primary home that has been converted to rental property, and understand benefits and pitfalls.
- 4. Moving options:** A wide range of moving services are available depending upon how much assistance you require. Typical moving companies provide packing, moving, and unpacking services charged at an hourly rate. Specialty movers can provide additional services for a fee, such as help with organization.
- 5. Downsizing:** Downsizing is almost always required in moving from a home to a continuing care facility. Be proactive about disposition of excess goods; options include gifts to family and friends, estate sales, charitable contributions, and storage in offsite facilities.



Transitioning Beyond the Family Home

The Canterbury suggests new residents focus on bringing smaller prized possessions to create that “at home” feeling, and small, well-behaved pets are welcome. The transition and living experience are best when residents take advantage of activities offered within and outside of the facility. Activities may include onsite exercise and educational classes, as well as offsite excursions to concerts, museums and other attractions. Many facilities offer religious services as well. A community dining room offers residents the opportunity to meet and dine with new partners and old friends on a daily basis, though meals can be taken in the privacy of each apartment if necessary.

After the “hard” issues have been addressed, there are still the emotional struggles that come with such a significant life change. Jane experienced some feelings of doubt when sitting in her new apartment and thinking about her beautiful home garden. However, after a having dinner with John and some new friends she confided, “flowers can’t talk with you and they don’t know your name”.

As they enter this next chapter in their lives, John and Jane have the peace of mind that comes with knowing their new residence provides a warm supportive community. There, many burdens of everyday life are lifted while opportunities to enjoy each day abound.

The team at Harris Financial is glad to assist if you or someone in your family is considering making the transition from your home to a continuing care facility. The following are some local resources to provide further information.

Resources:

Harris Financial Advisors, Inc.

25500 Hawthorne Blvd., Suite 1030
Torrance, CA 90505
(310) 791-3226
www.harrisfinancial.net

H.E.L.P.

Helping people meet aging-related legal & care challenges
www.help4srs.org
(310) 533-1996

South Bay Senior Services

Providing case management, information, referral, & community outreach services
(310) 325-2141



FINANCIAL
ADVISORS
INCORPORATED

A REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISOR